Introduction

Sustained Dialogue and Public Deliberation

The Role of Public Conversation in a Growing Civil Society and Commons

Roger Lohmann, Jon Van Til, and Dolly Ford

Over the past three decades, at least two important modes of public conversation have been developed with the aim of strengthening civil society and the fabric of the social commons. Serving as assistant secretary of state in the 1970s, Harold Saunders was involved in crafting the process of "shuttle diplomacy" with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, bringing into eventual dialogue the disparate leaders of Israel and Egypt. Saunders's work continued through the 1980s and 1990s with the Dartmouth Seminar, developing public conversation between Soviet and American citizen leaders, and has since spread to many other nations under the rubric of "sustained dialogue." During the same period, the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio, developed a variety of programs aimed at building public deliberation in communities in America and abroad. These two threads converged when Saunders went to work for Kettering and diverged again with the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue.

With the launch of IISD in Washington, D.C., Saunders and his collaborators (many of whom were students at or recent graduates from Princeton University and the University of Virginia) sought to start a social movement, particularly in dealing with race relations on university campuses. The organization's interest has since expanded into Anglo-Maori relations in New Zealand, Catholic and Protestant community organizations in Northern Ireland, and identity-bridging efforts in South Africa and India. Public deliberation remains a priority at Kettering, which has become something of a national lending library for ideas on the subject while remaining largely aloof from the academy, with certain highly selective exceptions.

Despite their obvious importance, models of sustained dialogue and public deliberation have registered only minimal recognition among third-sector researchers and scholars and in social work. This research community has generally been more focused upon large-scale structural and definitional matters than the process and face-to-face concerns addressed in sustained dialogue and public deliberation. We propose to begin to examine aspects of this work through the approaches of social work and social science research.

This volume assembles a diverse collection of authors who critically assess the emerging literature on sustained dialogue, which includes a book-length study of the Dartmouth Conference by James Voorhees (*Dialogue Sustained*, U.S. Institute of Peace, 2002), a number of pamphlets on public deliberation (for example, "Creating Citizens Through Public Deliberation," Kettering Foundation, 1997), several papers and speeches by Saunders (most importantly, "Sustained Dialogue to Transform Deep-Rooted Human Conflicts"), and a handbook for improving race relations on colleges campuses through

the process of sustained dialogue ("Diving In," by Teddy Nemeroff and David Tukey, 2001, included in this volume).

Several of the key terms around which this project is organized require some brief clarification. First and foremost are "public deliberation," "sustained dialogue," and the accompanying ideas of pracademic and the engaged campus. Before proceeding further, let us look at each of these terms briefly and then concentrate on their implications

Public Deliberation

In conventional use, the term "deliberation" can be contrasted with the idea of dialogue largely in terms of its emphasis on certain key mental tasks, including consideration and cognition, with perhaps an emphasis on the plural nature of such considerations. In conventional use, in legal trials, for example, the jury deliberates to reach a verdict; the judge decides. Both, of course, are faced with similar rational and cognitive challenges, albeit at different levels of knowledge, training, and experience with the process of reaching legal decisions. And, of course, the plurality of the jury, like any other group, implies that any thinking that goes on must be communicated interpersonally in some manner, most typically in face-to-face encounters. Those elements combining rational thought and interpersonal communication in a group context define a beginning-level understanding of deliberation. Adding the term "public" raises several additional dimensions. It typically suggests that the thinking and communicating going on in a group may be in a setting open to all or on an issue of general interest or universal concern or a matter of governmental policy or action. All of the authors in this volume begin with this common, elementary conception of public deliberation and then take it in a variety of directions.

Sustained Dialogue

When paired with deliberation, the idea of dialogue suggests both similarities and important differences. The usual meanings of "dialogue" are similarly focused on interpersonal communication in small group settings. The origins of the term alert us to the importance of language or speech and also the additional element of duality. The connotations of deliberate consideration and rationality of deliberation may or may not be implied in various references to dialogue. In any event, dialogue is not merely conversation in group settings. There is also the added element of stratification or division into two or more subgroups or "sides" and typically an additional note of conflict as well. Frequently, the element of dialogue that looms largest is some chasm of differences between the sides. Divisions and chasms associated with dialogue may be as large and public as opposing nations in the Middle East (as in the work of Saunders) or as small and intimate as conflict in a marriage between husband and wife or parents and children (as in the contribution here of Newfield and Newfield). Into dialogical situations characterized by group conversations among sides and over difference, the modifier "sustained" introduces an element of prolonging or duration. This may refer to either to the duration of the differences at the time talk begins or to expectations that these

particular dialogical conversations will go on for a long time.

Theoretical Perspectives

There has been a genuine renaissance of interest in democratic political theory in recent decades,[1] and within that upsurge, a growing number of writers have focused not just on democracy but on the role of deliberation in particular.[2] Even a partial list of the major contributions in political philosophy would include John Rawls (1993, 2001; Rawls and Freeman 2007), Jean Cohen and Anthony Arato (1992), Will Kymlika (1995), Rodin and Steinberg (1986, 1996), and numerous others, including many cited in the reference list at the end of this volume. In political science, one might also note Barber (1984, 1998a), Fishkin (1997), and Warren (2001); in public administration, Crosby, Kelly, and Schaefer (1986); Roberts (1997); Schachter (1997); and King, Feltey, and Susel (1998).

Among works by deliberative theorists, an essay by Gutmann and Thompson (2002) is one of the most widely cited.[3] It concludes:

> Deliberative democratic theory is better prepared to deal with the range of moral and political challenges of a robust democratic politics if it includes both substantive and procedural principles. It is well equipped to cope with the conflict between substantive and procedural principles because its principles are to varying degrees morally and politically provisional.

By reading the phrase "substantive and procedural principles" as referring to theory and practice, one can interpret this powerful statement as arriving from a theoretical direction at what we are calling the "pracademic" perspective on deliberative democracy. There is, Gutmann and Thompson say, an important role for theory in arriving at principles such as reciprocity, but political theory cannot remain authentically democratic if it limits or abridges the legitimate decision-making powers of autonomous citizens. But how are we to ensure this does not happen? Their answer is clear: "Deliberative democratic theory can avoid usurping the moral or political authority of democratic citizens and yet still make substantive judgments about the laws they enact because it claims neither more, nor less, than provisional status for the principles it defends" (176). In the key phrase "provisional status," the reader is reminded of Benjamin Barber's separation of an autonomous realm of political knowledge independent of theory or philosophy:

> The historical aim of political theory has been dialectical or dialogical:
> The creation of a genuine praxis in which theory and practice are . . .
> reconciled, and the criteria yielded by common action are permitted to
> inform and circumscribe philosophy no less than philosophical criteria are
> permitted to constrain the understanding of politics and informed political
> action. Yet in much of what passes for political philosophy in the age of
> liberalism, reductionism and what William James called 'vicious

abstractionism' has too often displaced dialectics and dialogue. The outcome has been neither political philosophy nor political understanding but the conquest of politics by philosophy.

(Barber 1988, 4)

All practitioners of deliberation and dialogue, regardless of their degree of theoretical sophistication, must, at some point, struggle with the implications of Barber's assertion. Barber alludes to the nearly forgotten efforts by Dewey to "recover" philosophy and reminds us of an essential paradox in the writings of Jane Addams, not to mention in all of progressive thought from Herbert Croly ([1909] 2005) on: authentically democratic practice must be guided by theory but cannot be controlled or directed by the views of political philosophers, government experts, or professionals without becoming a mere puppet show. Perhaps no one in the history of social work was more aware of this than Jane Addams.

Recent critics continue to raise concerns about the viability of participatory democracy. (Berger 2009; Bohte 2007; Fiorina 1999; Irvin and Stansbury 2004, 56; and Smith and Huntsman 1997). Bohte questions whether most citizens have sufficiently detailed policy knowledge to make viable contributions to modern governance. Irvin and Stansbury seek to shift the question from "how to" encourage greater citizen participation to "whether to" at all. Fiorina and Smith and Huntsman are skeptical of the likelihood that large numbers of citizens have much interest in extensive participation in governance. Verba et al. (1993) call attention to the skewed nature of participation, with wealthier and better educated citizens disproportionately more engaged. Burtt's (1993) critique of Barber's (1988) model of strong democracy notes that people raised in a society that has active citizenship might enjoy participating; the challenge is in how to get people started, how to achieve such an activist society from our present condition.

Pracademics

Growing out of this literature is the convergence of certain practical and theoretical concerns. We indicate this mixture of practice and academic with the term "pracademic." The term will be unfamiliar for many readers. It is a portmanteau term, combining "academic," in senses both of person and of subject matter, and "practice" or "practitioner." The implications of the approach we signal by the use of this term are explored more fully throughout, but particularly in chapter 8. Suffice it to say here that the interests of faculty members, students, and alumni of social work programs and such related disciplines as public administration, criminology, journalism, public affairs, and nursing are consistently pracademic ones. In marked contrast to much of the academic literature on public deliberation in political philosophy, for example, the pracademic concerns reflected here represent a mixture of conceptual and theoretical concerns and a powerful applied question: So what do we *do now*? Habermas's revival of the ancient Greek distinctions among theory, practice, and technique comes to mind here, with pracademics as a group all guided ultimately by theory but divided between those most interested in the broader implications of practice and those interested in specific techniques. Some of our authors, for example, believe firmly that there is no one right

way for citizens in a democracy to engage one another in deliberation or dialogue, that the choice of how to do so is properly theirs alone, while others spend considerable amounts of time and energy spelling out a diversity of such ways.

The Engaged Campus

Closely associated with the theory and practice of deliberation and dialogue is the notion of the engaged campus. The modern university is many different things to its multiple constituencies. For pracademics, the image of the university as an ivory tower offering refuge from the distractions of the outside world rings largely false. The contemporary university offers an opportunity to educate future practitioners in the arts and sciences but also typically offers a base from which to continue and extend one's practice interests. The ivory-tower image is a strong one in the popular imagination (and often a frustrating one for scientists and humanists who know how the many competing demands of university life distract from their other interests). For pracademic faculty and students, however, the university can offer a base of operations to carry out a lifetime of projects and attempt to bring about changes in the world. As a result, wherever you have pracademics you are likely also to see movement in the direction of what we like to think of as the engaged campus.

One of the themes that figures importantly in this volume is the concept of the engaged campus as a starting point for a broader proliferation of deliberation and dialogue into community life. At West Virginia University, as at other institutions, deliberation and dialogue have touched the lives of hundreds who have participated in public forums, efforts to organize a campus network, and other community discussions. These dialogues have intersected with the interests of a wide variety of campus organizations and actors to put us well on the way to becoming a truly "engaged campus."

The "Engaged Campus," as described by Saltmarsh (2004), evinces such characteristics as:

1. *Mission and purpose* that explicitly articulate a commitment to the public purposes of higher education

2. *Administrative and academic leadership* (president, trustees, provost) that is at the forefront of institutional transformation in support of civic engagement

3. *External resource allocation* made available for community partners to create richer learning environments for students and for community-building efforts in local neighborhoods

4. *Disciplines, departments, and interdisciplinary work* that incorporate community-based education, allowing it to penetrate all disciplines and reach the institution's academic core

5. *Faculty roles and rewards* that embrace a scholarship of engagement, reflected by incorporation into promotion and tenure guidelines and review

6. *Internal resource allocation* adequate for establishing, enhancing, and deepening community-based work on campus for faculty, students, and programs that involve community partners

7. *Community voice* that deepens the role of community partners in contributing to community-based education and shaping outcomes that benefit the community

8. *Enabling mechanisms* in the form of visible and easily accessible structures on campus to assist faculty with community-based teaching and to broker community partnerships

9. *Faculty development* opportunities available for faculty to retool their teaching and redesign their curricula to incorporate community-based activities as well as reflection on those activities within the context of a course

10. *Integrated and complementary community-service activities* that weave together student service, service learning, and other community-engagement activities on campus

11. *Forums for fostering public dialogue* that include multiple stakeholders in public-problem solving

12. *Pedagogy and epistemology* that incorporate a community-based, public-problem-solving approach to teaching and learning

Engaged Through Deliberation and Dialogue

This book both considers and illustrates ways in which members of a social work (or any other) faculty and students on any campus can act upon Saltmarsh's "twelve-step program," demonstrate leadership in issue or problem discussion, and become active instigators of processes of deliberation and dialogue in the larger communities where the campus is located. This may be a city, a state or region, or even an entire country. Through certain pedagogical devices—class assignments, individual projects, marketing devices, organizing efforts (like a "Deliberation Day" event), the sponsorship of community forums on topics of interest and concern—undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students and faculty can find ways to engage with communities through public talk.

This volume has been positioned as an interdisciplinary text in a social work publishing program for good reason. Several of the authors have no formal connection with social work, and some of them undoubtedly have other projects in mind and may even be uncomfortable with suggestions of the historical importance of social work to the deliberative tradition. In such cases, the characteristic social work response is a familiar one: Okay, let's talk about it. The legitimacy of differing points of view has long been one of the strengths of the social work.

1

The Structure of Sustained Dialogue and Public Deliberation

Jon Van Til

Sustained dialogue and public deliberation are forms of structured human interaction that address, name, and frame issues of mutual concern. These approaches involve processes of deliberative democracy, or public talk, wherein citizen participants engage in designed and moderated discussions with the goal of increasing understanding and reducing conflict among themselves and the solidary groups to which they may belong.

Two major forms of such interaction are specifically identified as "sustained dialogue," as developed by Harold Saunders and colleagues at the Kettering Foundation and the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue, and "public deliberation," as developed by David Mathews and colleagues at the Kettering Foundation and the National Issues Forums. Other forms of sustained dialogue and public deliberation are as old as human society itself and have been practiced within traditional communities, town meetings, community workshops, and countless other locales within the commons or third spaces of society (Cf. Fisher, in process).

Dialogue requires a belief that it may succeed. Paolo Freire makes this point when he writes: "Dialogue cannot exist . . . in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love" ([1970] 1973). Harold Saunders, who named the process of sustained dialogue following on his experience as a U.S. State Department official participating in "shuttle diplomacy" between the leaders of Israel and Egypt, writes: "It is in th(e) human process, not in the official negotiating room, that conflictual relationships change" (1999).

Sustained Dialogue: Bridging Deeper Conflicts

Communication among human beings enmeshed in deep and longstanding conflicts rooted in ethnicity, culture, and historical violence is often Hobbesian in nature: nasty, brutish, and short. It often takes a third party to convince individuals caught in the net of noise and hatred that entering into dialogue can be in both their interests.

Thus it was in 1974 that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger led a team of American diplomats in the task of creating an understanding between the leaders of Israel and its Arab neighbors. For three years, Kissinger and his associates, including an assistant secretary of state named Harold Saunders, shuttled between Tel Aviv, Cairo, and other Arab capitals in an emerging "peace process" that culminated in 1977 in a historic speech by the Egyptian president to the Israeli parliament. Capped by President Jimmy Carter's Camp David accords in 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty in

1979, this was the official peace process—a diplomatic and mediation activity of governments.

When he left government, Saunders began more than two decades of work in nonofficial dialogue—what he later called "the public peace process," a continuing dialogue among citizens in the policy-influencing community outside of the government. As he cochaired a task force of the Dartmouth Conference in the 1980s, an ongoing dialogue between nongovernmental leaders in the United States and the Soviet Union, he came to the recognition that "citizens talking in depth together can become a microcosm of their communities, experiencing a change in relation ships and then learning to design political actions and interactions that can change their larger bodies politic" (1999, 6). In the 1990s, Saunders named the processes he had participated in "sustained dialogue," identifying a process of five stages by which enmity and suspicion become transformed into understanding and accommodation (see chapters 2 and 3 of this volume). Box 1.1 shows Saunders's stages of sustained dialogue.

Box 1.1

Stage One: Deciding to Engage

- Find willing and appropriate participants

CPS01 is Boxed Text Bulleted List

- Agree to meet
- Reach an understanding of the nature, purpose, and rules of the dialogue

Stage 2: Mapping and Naming

- Set the tone and habits of the dialogue
- Set out the main problems that affect relationships among the participants
- Identify all significant relationships responsible for problems

Stage 3: Probing Problems and Relationships

- Probe specific problems in depth
- Frame choices among approaches
- Weigh choices to set a general direction for action

Stage 4: Scenario Building

- List obstacles to change
- Design steps to address these obstacles
- Identify people who can take these steps

Stage 5: Acting Together

- Decide whether the situation in the community can be solved by steps designated

in stage four

- Identify what resources and capacities can be used to take them
- Take steps

Public Deliberation: The Work of Issue Forums

Saunders developed his writings on sustained dialogue during his service as director of international affairs with the Kettering Foundation, a research organization devoted to social innovation. During that same period, Kettering staffers, under the leadership of foundation president David Mathews, formerly president of the University of Alabama and secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, played a central role in the development of National Issues Forums.

Issues forums build on concepts of deliberative democracy, seeking to create a basis for shared discussion and increased understanding among citizens on specific issues of public concern. Critical to this process is the careful naming and framing of public issues by the participants in the issues forums. In the naming process, an issue is selected for exploration, and its definition is crafted to reflect the concerns of involved citizens and to assure a full and fair consideration of the issue and its ramifications. In the framing process, the most central aspect of public deliberation, three or four principal options for responding to the issue are developed, assuring that the forum will address the issue in a full and fair manner. Each approach reflects something that people value. The tension within and between approaches fuels the deliberation and enriches the weighing of pros and cons for each approach.

Box 1.2. The Nature of the Issue Forum

Deliberation is different. It is neither a partisan argument where opposing sides try to win nor a casual conversation conducted with polite civility. Public deliberation is a means by which citizens make tough choices about basic purposes and directions for their communities and their country. It is a way of reasoning and talking together.

National Issues Forum deliberations are framed in terms of three or four options for dealing with an issue—never just two polar alternatives. Framing an issue in this way discourages the diatribes in which people lash out at one another with simplistic arguments.

To deliberate is to weigh the benefits and costs of various options based on what is truly valuable to us. Think of the way people used to weigh gold on an old-fashioned scale. How much will each consequence tip the scale? What are the costs and benefits of doing what we want to do? Answering these questions requires a setting in which we can explore and test ideas about how to act.

Deliberation also involves weighing the views of others. Careful listening

increases the chances that our choices will be sound because a wide range of people have pooled their experiences and insights. No one person or small group of people has all the experience and insight needed to decide what is best. That is why it is essential for an inclusive group of citizens to combine their perspectives.

While we can't know for certain that we have made the right decision until we have acted, deliberation forces us to anticipate consequences and ask ourselves whether we would be willing to accept the worst possible case.

Deliberation is looking before we leap.

(Matthews and McAfee 2003, 10)

Why Dialogue and Deliberation?

The achievement of true dialogue is an ancient goal of human beings. The sacred texts of world religions speak of the beauty of ongoing understanding and communication among brothers and sisters, lovers, children and parents, neighbors, communities, and nations, and between humans and the deity. The excerpt in box 1.3, developed by a group of Californians of Jewish and Palestinian background who meet in one another's living rooms, expresses the aspirations of those who seek dialogue as a way of increasing social understanding and achieving peace and reconciliation.

Box 1.3: Why Dialogue?

Beginning with compassionate listening, dialogue can dissolve boundaries between people, heal relationships, and release unprecedented creativity. Dialogue can result in a wellspring of new social intelligence previously unimagined. Dialogue moves us out of our isolated existence and beyond our restricted views.

We begin to understand diversity in perception, in meaning, in expression—in people. With this authentic speaking and authentic listening to each other, to Earth, to Life, together we can invent a way of living that works for the benefit of all.

Dialogue Is Not Debate

- Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position. Debate causes critique of the other position.
- Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions. Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.
- Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change. Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.
- In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other people's

reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it. In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

- Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs. Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

- In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements. In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

- In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions. In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other positions.

- Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend. Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.

- Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution. Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

- Dialogue remains open-ended. Debate implies a conclusion.

(Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group, San Mateo, Calif., http://traubman.igc.org/dialogue2.htm [accessed 6/4/2004; confirmed 4/4/2010])

The Emerging Academic Literature

Specific literature on sustained dialogue and public deliberation is mainly to be found in publications that have emerged from or been sponsored by the Kettering Foundation and the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue. This "in-house" literature reports the founding work in these fields, often in the words of those who have developed and supported these methods of structured social change. Particularly significant here are the books by Saunders (2001) and Voorhees (2002); the many Kettering issue books, papers, and pamphlets regarding the structuring of issues forums and other means of public deliberation; and *Politics for People* by David Mathews (1999).

Important as these testimonies and guidebooks to organization are, and their value is indisputable, no movement can sustain and reproduce itself unless it is subjected to an independent and critical examination by researchers drawn from a wider range of theoretical, methodological, and ideological backgrounds. Such a literature is beginning to emerge regarding sustained dialogue and public deliberation, but it remains partial and largely undeveloped.

Perhaps the most developed academic literature on these subjects focuses on theories of deliberative democracy (Cooke 2000; Fishkin and Laslett 2003; Gates and O'Connor 2000; Gutmann and Thompson 2002; Mouffe 1999; and Rodin and Steinberg 2003). A more empirical focus on experiences of public deliberation is found in the studies of David Ryfe (2002), John Gastil (Burkhalter, Gastil, and Kelshaw 2002; Gastil and Dillard 1999), Christian Hunold (2001), Christopher Plein (Cf. Plein, Green, and Williams 1998), Carmen Sirianni and Lewis Friedland (2001), and David Williams

(1992).

A much wider net is cast by a range of writers who consider the broader societal context underlying sustained dialogue and public deliberation (Cf. Brooks 2000; Florida 2002; Lohmann 1992b; Putnam 2000; Stewart 2002; Van Til 1982, 2000; and Wheen 2004). And a specific literature may be found regarding the role of sustained dialogue in Northern Ireland (Mitchell 1999; E. Porter 2000; N. Porter 2003; and Van Til 2008).

Beyond the two major approaches of sustained dialogue and public deliberation, each developed and nurtured at Kettering by Saunders, Matthews, and their colleagues, there exist many related forms of guided social interaction that closely relate in goal and process. These range from on-campus forms of sustained dialogue to conversational structures to literally dozens of related efforts to mount and develop dialogue and deliberation throughout society. A few of these approaches are introduced in the following subsections of this chapter.

Sustained Dialogue on Campus

Sustained dialogue on campus emerged from conversations in the late 1990s between Saunders, then a member of the board of governors of Princeton University, and several undergraduates at that university. Following on this conversation, while they were Princeton students Teddy Nemeroff and David Tukey focused on the application of the principles of sustained dialogue to the issue of relations between white and black students on the campus. That same theme was subsequently taken up by Priya Parker and other students at the University of Virginia and then at other campuses through the efforts of IISD.

While relations between the two races on campus cannot be said to exist in the state of hatred and hostility that characterized the earlier situations Saunders faced in dealing with the Arab-Israeli, U.S.-Soviet, or Tajik Muslim–elite conflict, relations between the groups were characterized by distance, uncertainty, and misunderstanding. The Princeton process, implemented in the form of twice-monthly meetings over dinner by groups of a dozen or so, was extended in the following years to a number of other elite colleges such as the University of Virginia, Notre Dame, Dickinson College, and Colorado College, as well as to several high schools. By 2004, several public universities, such as West Virginia and Rutgers, moved to extend the range of sustained dialogue on campus to issues of class, status, and gender relations.

Box 1.4. Diving In, by Teddy Nemeroff and David Tukey

Where does one dive in? The problem of race relations in any community seems too complex to tackle from any starting point. This is certainly true on college campuses where a microcosm of society at large exists and the issues that we face are as serious and real as those facing the rest of the world.

> Racism is a profound human problem rooted in the complex sphere of human relationships. When one realizes this, it becomes apparent that no government can solve racism with laws, nor can any one race do it without the cooperation of others. . . .
>
> One purpose of Sustained Dialogue is to give you a place to dive in. Sustained Dialogue separates itself from other projects that seek to ameliorate ethnic and racial conflict in a very simple regard: it is sustained. The process engrosses all who become involved and carries them toward possible methods for combating the issue of racial tension on campus. As the process progresses, one realizes that it can be self-proliferating. As such, simply getting the process started is taking the right direction toward improving race relations.
>
> (See this volume, page **000)**

Dialogue in the Practice of Religion

This is often central in both the processes of religious communities and their interreligious activities. The Quaker scholar and administrator Thomas Jeavons (1994, 144) observes that in effective Christian service organizations, "participants believe that serving and caring for one another are as important as serving and caring for others." Dialogue and deliberation are hallmarks of such organizations, Jeavons finds: "Where people are sharing their work because they share a common faith and sense of mission, and they have a genuine respect and affection for one another, their communication will generally have this quality about it" (145).

On his website, the Columban priest Sean Dwan (see box 1.5) drew directly on dialogue and deliberation in his prescriptions for interreligious dialogue. He presents two aphorisms that he identifies as essential for engaging in dialogue with other religions: " 'Nothing human is foreign to me' (attributed to Lucretius) means that if a particular action is performed by a human being I, as a human being, ought to be able to make some sense of it. The second maxim comes from Spinoza who said 'I have always labored carefully when faced with human actions, not to mock, not to lament, not to condemn, but to understand.' " Dwan also presented a set of ten commandments for dialogue and deliberation, as developed by Leonard Swidler.

Box 1.5. Leonard Swidler, "Dialogue Decalogue"

1st Commandment: The primary purpose of dialogue is to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality and then to act accordingly.

2nd Commandment: Dialogue must be a two-sided project—within each religious community and between religious communities.

3rd Commandment: Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity.

4th Commandment: Each participant must assume a similar complete honesty and

sincerity in the other partners.

5th Commandment: Each participant must define what it means to be a member of his own tradition; conversely, the one defined must be able to recognize him/herself in the interpretation.

6th Commandment: Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-and-fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are.

7th Commandment: Dialogue can take place only between equals (not between a skilled scholar and a "person in the pew" type).

8th Commandment: Dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust.

9th Commandment: Participants must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious traditions.

10th Commandment: Each participant must eventually attempt to experience the partner's religion from within.

(http://www.columban.ph/SeanDwan_interreligious_dialogue.HTM [accessed 13 March 2005)

Simple Conversation

This approach is aimed at advancing dialogue and is presented by the organizational consultant Margaret Wheatley in her book *Turning to One Another* (2002). Wheatley explains: "I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest, human conversation. Not mediation, negotiation, problem-solving, debate, or public meetings. Simple, truthful conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well" (3).

Wheatley describes such dialogue as sustained ("we need time to sit together, to listen, to worry and dream together") and capable of bridging differences ("we need to be able to talk with those we have named 'enemy' "). She uses poetic imagery to develop her point that much that is of value in this world begins when "a few friends" come together to talk.

Wheatley's approach is deeply personal, rooted in a secular humanism that draws on the power of individual and group passions. It is her vision that dialogue blends the public and private, and should not be over-designed and programmed. Box 1.6 explains the principles on which simple conversation is founded.

Box 1.6. Simple Conversation

We acknowledge one another as equals.

We try to stay curious about each other.

We recognize that we need each other's help to become better listeners.

Coalition Building

This is yet another approach to dialogue and deliberation. Focusing on the appreciation of diversity, this approach has been formalized by the National Coalition Building Institute with the support of such major philanthropic organizations as the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Typically referred to as NCBI, the institute's roots lie in reevaluation counseling, a staple of the human-potential movement as it emerged in the 1960s and 1970s.

In reevaluation counseling, two individuals meet in an intense sharing of past hurtful experiences, seeking an "emotional discharge" that frees them "from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt" (www.rc.org). The NCBI approach seeks to transform the healing process into action by means of a group airing of the pain of segregation, discrimination, and oppression on the bases of race, class, sexual orientation, and the like. NCBI workshops are often presented on campus and focus on such issues as "building environments to welcome diversity," "healing ourselves to change the world," "becoming effective allies," and "empowering leaders to lead" (Brown and Mazza 1997).

Box 1.7. Basic NCBI Principles

Building Environments to Welcome Diversity

Guilt is the glue that holds prejudice in place.

Welcoming diversity means that every person counts and every issue counts.

Treating everyone the same may be unintentionally oppressive.

Meetings go better when everyone is included.

Recognize and work with the diversity already present in what appear to be homogeneous groups.

People can take on tough issues more readily when the issues are presented in a spirit of hope.

Building a team around us is the most powerful way to bring about institutional change.

Healing Ourselves to Change the World

We all carry records about other groups that prevent us from building effective alliances.

Effective anti-racism leadership in the present means healing scars from the past.

When we respond top a present situation with intense emotion, we are usually acting out of a past unhealed difficulty.

Underneath every oppressive comment lies some form of injury.

People who feel good about themselves do not mistreat others.

When witnessing oppressive behavior, having a chance to vent leads to clearer thinking about what is useful to do next.

Diversity leadership requires reclaiming courage.

Being an ally to another group requires us to heal the negative messages we have internalized about our own group.

Healing discouragement leads to more effective activism.

(Brown and Mazza 1997, viii)

Other Forms of Sustained Dialogue and Public Deliberation

Various other forms manifest themselves on both the national and global levels. In the present volume, the reader will be introduced to variations on the theme as developed in a number of locations.

A review of the homepage on democratic dialogue of the U.N. Development Programme identifies fifty-five individual programs whose work centrally involves democratic dialogue. A selection from that list includes the organizations whose approaches to sustained dialogue and public deliberation are found in box 1.8.

Box 1.8. Democratic Dialogue Homepage, United Nations Development Programme

1. AmericaSpeaks—Engaging Citizens in Governance. AmericaSpeaks is a national non-profit neutral convener of large-scale public participation forums, committed to the task of engaging citizen voices in local, regional and national governance.

2. Carter Center, The—The web page includes information on all of the organization's Peace Programs: the Americas Program, the Conflict Resolution Program, the Democracy Program and the Global Development Initiative.

3. Conflict Transformation—The Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT) is a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding the knowledge and practice of conflict transformation and peace building within U.S. and international communities.

4. EU Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation—The European Centre for Conflict Prevention acts as the secretariat for the EU Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, an open network consisting of some 150 European organizations working in the field of conflict prevention and resolution in the international arena.

5. Future Search—The Future Search Network is a cross-cultural, multilingual network of volunteers worldwide providing Future Search planning meetings, employing the methodology of dialogue and mutual learning among diverse stakeholders as a catalyst for discovering common ground and concrete action.

6. Hewlett Foundation—The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation played a major role in developing and supporting the conflict resolution field for nearly two decades; the Conflict Resolution Program supported organizations that anticipated and responded to domestic and international strife.

7. International Conflict Research (INCORE)—The International Conflict Research Centre, set-up by the United Nations University and the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland, undertakes research and policy work that is useful to the resolution of ethnic, political and religious conflicts.

8. International Institute for Sustained Dialogue—The International Institute for Sustained Dialogue is an independent organization formed in collaboration with the Kettering Foundation. The Institute's purpose is to promote the process of sustained dialogue for transforming racial and ethnic conflicts around the world.

9. National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation—Thataway.org is the host for the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to strengthening and uniting the dialogue community.

10. National Issues Forum—The National Issues Forums (NIF) is a non-partisan network of organizations, in the USA, who bring people of diverse views together to discuss critical issues and to find common ground for action on such issues. Reports on the forums are shared with local, state and national stakeholders to give them insight into what the public is thinking.

11. Public Conversations Project—The Public Conversations Project (PCP) is an organization that seeks to foster a more inclusive, empathetic and collaborative society by promoting constructive conversations and relationships among those who have differing values, world views, and positions on divisive public issues.

12. Public Dialogue Consortium—The Public Dialogue Consortium (PDC) is comprised of a diverse group of educators, consultants and practitioners, based in the United States, who promote high quality communication on public issues.

13. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue—The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue is an independent and impartial organization based in Geneva, Switzerland that

is dedicated to the promotion of humanitarian principles, the prevention of conflict, and the alleviation of its effects through dialogue.

14. United Nations Development Programme—UNDP, the UN's global development network with a presence in 166 countries, is focused on assisting communities worldwide to build and share solutions to the challenges of democratic government, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment, information and communications technology, and HIV/AIDS.

15. World Café—The World Café is a methodology and metaphor for understanding and working with the complex process by which we collectively construct our world, which has been introduced in a variety of group settings. World Café conversations are an intentional process for leading collaborative dialogue, sharing knowledge, and creating ever-widening possibilities for action and circles of conversation around questions that matter.

16. World Dialogue—The Centre for World Dialogue is a Cyprus-based independent NGO that provides a forum for the discussion of global issues through conferences, meetings, seminars and a quarterly journal "Global Dialogue". It is committed to engaging people in a free and open discussion of ideas, and to promoting greater understanding and cooperation at all levels.

17. WSP-International—WSP-International assists societies torn by war to overcome conflict and to build lasting peace. It does this by promoting processes of consultation, research and analysis with all sectors of society, including international assistance agencies and donors.

(http://www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org)

Dimensions of Dialogue and Deliberation

Review of the many forms of sustained dialogue and public deliberation that have been developed by creative individuals and groups across the globe, reveals a number of differences in form and substance.

1. In some cases, groups meet over a long period of time; in others, a single meeting is held. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be a "sustained" or a "one-time" activity or anything in between.

2. In some cases, the form and process of the dialogue is deeply engrained in the culture of participants; in others, participants learn processes of dialogue as a new skill. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be an "organic" or a "designed" activity.

3. In some cases, a single issue (or small set of issues) is identified and becomes the central focus of dialogue; in others, issues arise from the group discussion itself. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be "problem focused" or "spontaneously generated."

4. In some cases, meetings of groups engaged in dialogue and deliberation are closed to observers and not recorded in any way; in others, meeting are open to observers and comments are recorded for public consideration. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may

be "confidential" or "open" in its process.

5.   In some cases, individuals meet on a basis of full equality within the group, regardless of their status in other walks of life; in other cases, different statuses are recognized within the group process. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be "egalitarian" or "stratified."

6.   In some cases, issues of diversity (on dimensions such as race, class, gender, etc.) underlie group structure and process; in other cases, diversity is not central to the structure and process. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be "diverse" or "homogeneous" in design.

7.   In some cases, the group process focuses on finding common ground among participants by working through issues; in other cases, groups consider issues by means of advocacy, expert presentation, and formal discussion. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be "deliberative" or "debate-based" in structure and process.

8.   In some cases, discussions take place under the guidance of a trained moderator who guides and focuses the discussion; in others, they are conducted without the use of a moderator. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be "moderated" or "unmoderated" in structure and process.

9.   In some cases, unmoderated discussions may take place under the guidance of a facilitator, who does not actively enter into the discussion, but merely guides the process. Thus, unmoderated discussions may still be facilitated.

10.   In some cases, a group is convened in an effort to reconcile members of groups with long histories of antagonism toward each other; in others, groups are convened whose members do not have histories of antagonism toward each other. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be "conflict based" or "conflict neutral" in its form and content.

11.   In some cases, group process is aimed toward the presentation and consideration of options on selected public issues; in other, the group addresses issues as they arise among members. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be "issue framed" or "issue open."

12.   In some cases, group process focuses on the resolution of public issues within a public forum; in other cases, group process focuses on individual concerns within the context of an essentially private meeting. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may involve "public talk" or "private talk."

13.   In some cases, the goal of the process involves achieving consensus on a problematic public issue; in other cases, the goal of the process involves understanding personal differences within and among participants. Thus, dialogue and deliberation may be "action aimed" or "discussion aimed."

Mapping Sustained Dialogue and Public Deliberation

The five major forms of sustained dialogue and public deliberation identified and

discussed above show important differences on the thirteen dimensions just identified. "Classical" sustained dialogue, as developed in the Dartmouth conference differs from "campus-based" sustained dialogue in that it is strongly conflict based, recognizes stratification among its participants, and often convenes over a period of years, although both use the same five-stage process.

Public deliberation, as embodied in National Issues Forums, differs from classical sustained dialogue in that the forums tend to meet only once, are reported, and are not conflict based. Other forms of dialogue and deliberation, such as the conversations reported by Wheatley and NCBI sessions also differ considerably on the dimensions from the classical pattern.

Insert table 1.1 here

Naming and Framing: How Level Is the Playing Field?

Dialogue and deliberation, involving as they do thinking and talking, are sometimes viewed as pallid cousins of "doing", or acting. But action without thought and deliberative dialogue can often misfire, and the modern world has taught that s/he who names and frames issues cleverly and well often wins the day.

Dystopian novelists like George Orwell (*1984*) and Ray Bradbury (*Fahrenheit 451*) have shown the power of the political slogan, a lesson not lost on contemporary political strategists. From the "Contract with America" through carefully named legislation such as "No Child Left Behind" or the proposal of "personal accounts," the Republican Party has proven particularly adept at guiding public opinion toward the support of its policy agenda in recent years.

The political scientists E. E. Schattschneider and Peter Bachrach have probed the dynamics of "nondecision-making" in political life, identifying ways in which organization as a "mobilization of bias" keeps some issues and options "off the table." Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1962: 950) wrote:

> The distinction between important and unimportant issues, we believe, cannot be made intelligently in the absence of an analysis of the 'mobilization of bias' in the community; of the dominant values and the political myths, rituals, and institutions which tend to favor the vested interests of one or more groups, relative to others. Armed with this knowledge, one could conclude that any challenge to the predominant values or to the established "rules of the game" would constitute an "important" issue; all else, unimportant.

If sustained dialogue and public deliberation are to address issues in society fairly, the processes they engender will need to be open to major ideological orientations and points of view.

Sustained Dialogue, Public Deliberation, and the Future

The many forms of sustained dialogue and public deliberation considered in this chapter and in those that follow are not merely designed to bring people together to share ideas; they are also intended to change the world and to bring better futures into view.

Those who study the future develop images what is possible, probable, and preferable. They often create scenarios depicting what may come to pass in the form of "histories of the future". Four such images of the future are typically presented (see Van Til 1982):

1. Continuity, in which the future most nearly resembles the recent past

2. Hard luck, in which the future deteriorates from the present

3. Good luck, in which existing systems work more effectively to provide an improved future

4. Transformational, in which a significant idea or material change gives rise to new and improved societal arrangements

A criterion important to apply to processes of sustained dialogue and public deliberation is their ability to comprehend the wide range of possible and probable futures that may emerge around specific problems and issues. It is always prudent, after all, to plan for the worst and hope for the best. But an even older statement reminds us that without a vision, the people perish. In any case, a basic test to apply to experiences of sustained dialogue and public deliberation may involve the degree to which the process ignites at least some sparks of change.

2

The Sustained Dialogue Model

Transforming Relationships, Designing Change

Harold H. Saunders and Priya Narayan Parker

Sustained dialogue is a *process* for transforming dysfunctional and conflictual relationships. That process of transformation can generate the capacity to change society more broadly. Sustained dialogue can become a change process.

Dialogue itself is a particular way of talking and relating. It "is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take other's concerns into her or his own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other's valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other" (Saunders 1999, 82). When sustained with a core group of participants coming together time after time, dialogue can become the carefully designed and rigorously implemented change process that we call sustained dialogue. To understand and to use this process to its fullest capacity requires a shifting of mental gears. Underlying sustained dialogue is a new paradigm for the study and practice of politics. We call it the relational paradigm.

Why should we as practitioners spend time talking about abstractions such as paradigm, worldview, and concept? There are two reasons: First, when experience causes citizens to take personal responsibility for changing a situation that hurts their interests, it is critical that their subconscious worldview includes the possibility that their action can make a difference. Soviet citizens, for instance, normally felt it impossible for anyone but government to solve society's problems. While the American worldview has traditionally encouraged citizen initiative, Americans over the last three generations have relied increasingly on government to solve problems and have steadily withdrawn from political life because they have felt their views made no difference.[4] Second, experience shows that the lenses we use to bring the world into focus and to give meaning to events around us—our worldview and concepts—determine how we act. The lenses we have used to interpret social, political, and economic life are more and more out of focus.

Change begins with new conceptual lenses—a new mindset. So we begin our discussion of sustained dialogue as an instrument for transforming relationships and designing change by presenting a political paradigm for the twenty-first century, which in a leap of faith we call "the citizens' century."

The Relational Paradigm

The relational paradigm: *Politics is a cumulative, multilevel, open-ended process of continuous interaction over time engaging significant clusters of citizens in and out of*

government and the relationships they form to solve public problems in whole bodies politic across permeable borders, either within or between communities or countries.

That is a mouthful. What is important to understand are two ways in which this paradigm differs from the paradigm that has dominated U.S. political science for the past three generations. First, it broadens the focus of study from government and related political institutions—political parties, interest groups, lobbyists, and public opinion—to include *citizens outside government*. We speak of "whole bodies politic" to include citizens both inside and outside government. We see the energies and capacities of citizens outside government as the greatest untapped resources for meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. Any paradigm that excludes them by focusing primarily on political institutions is ineffective because it fails to take advantage of those resources and is immoral because it marginalizes most of the world's people.

It is important to recognize that there are some things only governments can do, but it is critical to recognize that there are some things only citizens outside government can do—transform conflictual relationships, modify human behavior, and change political culture. Only governments can negotiate peace treaties; only people can make peace.

Second, the relational paradigm moves beyond a simple view of politics as a linear series of actions and reactions to an understanding of social, political, and economic life as a cumulative, multilevel, open-ended *process* of continuous interaction. Such a process may be impossible to study using the quantitative analytical techniques of recent social science. But that is where people live—and how the world really works. People need spaces in which they can experience that process of continuous interaction and discover the capacity to influence the course of events that can be generated through such interaction. Sustained dialogue provides one such space.

Focusing as it does on the citizen as a potential political actor, this paradigm contributes to a worldview that holds out the possibility that a citizen outside government can influence the course of change. Indeed, changing a citizen's mindset—a citizen's view of her/his needs and capacities and of the surrounding social, economic, and political context—may be the first element of a change process. Whether citizens come to see themselves as responsible for solving their problems—instead of leaving solutions to government—is a critical ingredient of change.

People may not usually see themselves explicitly as political actors or change agents. Their mindset may be the product of the surrounding worldview. It sometimes takes an acute catalytic event or a personal tragedy to cause a citizen to begin acting, but perhaps more often there is a gradual awakening of a feeling that things have gone too far and that something needs to be done. When experience or pain causes them to think about acting, it is important that their subconscious worldview includes the possibility of their being change agents. The relational paradigm is designed to open that door.

In this context, it is important to recognize that individual citizens do not have to act alone in developing a mindset and a capacity for change. Citizens' organizations may act as catalysts in a process of change—as articulators of a paradigm that encourages citizens to see themselves as actors.

Once citizens begin to think of themselves as political actors, they can proceed in a variety of ways with different combinations of other actors. At one end of the spectrum, some citizens together may have the capacity to initiate and organize change on their own. Other citizens on their own timetable and in differing degrees of involvement may seek out the experience an organization formed around a particular instrument for generating change. At the other end of the spectrum, those citizens' catalyst organizations may initiate change themselves by introducing processes of change, training citizens in their use, and helping those citizens connect with others sharing their objective. The catalyst organization's role is to help create spaces for citizens to discover and affirm their capacities to influence change. It is always seeking a balance between a role as teacher in response to citizens' approaches and as an active promoter of citizen engagement.

Sustained Dialogue: Transforming Relationships

Sustained dialogue as a change process differs from most other instruments for change in its focus on the relationships that cause problems and generate conflict. These are the relationships that must be transformed if people are to overcome the obstacles to collaborative problem solving, whatever its form.

Given that focus on transforming relationships, sustained dialogue practitioners work within a concept of relationship carefully defined in terms of five arenas of interaction in constantly changing combinations within and among the parties in dialogue: (1) *identity*, defined in human as well as in physical characteristics—the life experience that has brought a person or group to the present moment; (2) *interests*, both concrete and psychological—what people care about—that bring them into the same space and into a sense of their dependence on one another, their *interdependence*, to achieve their goals; (3) *power*, defined not only as control over superior resources and the actions of others but as the capacity of citizens acting together to influence the course of events with or especially without great material resources; (4) *perceptions, misperceptions, and stereotypes*; and (5) *the patterns of interaction*—distant and close— among those involved, including respect for certain *limits on behavior* in dealing with others. In some ways, interaction is the essence of relationship.

The concept of relationship can be both a diagnostic and an operational tool. One can analyze observable interactions through this prism and can actually get inside any of these components to enhance understanding or to change a relationship. In dialogue, one's own sense of identity can grow. Another's identity can be understood, and a person can be humanized as misperceptions and stereotypes give way to realistic pictures. Common interests can be discovered. Patterns of interaction can change from confrontational to cooperative. As respect for another's identity grows, individuals impose limits on their behavior to reflect that respect; their understanding of their own identities may even grow when they see themselves through others' eyes. As one understands this dynamic process of continuous interaction, one learns that power in part may emerge from careful and sensitive conduct of the process, rather than only from

wielding material resources. The experiences in many countries at the end of the 1980s indeed saw parties with no raw power succeeding authorities who controlled the tanks and guns, the security apparatus, and government structures.

In short, if sustained dialogue is an instrument for societal change, then we need to begin with two essential factors: one is the citizen who is ready to become an agent of change; the other is a citizens' organization that can help create a space in which citizens can discover how to make change happen by using an instrument of change, such as sustained dialogue.

The Five Stages of Sustained Dialogue

Knowing that relationships cannot be changed in a single meeting, sustained dialogue is a process that continues through repeated meetings. As such meetings in the 1980s unfolded, we began to recognize that participants move through a discernible pattern of changing interactions. Ultimately, we conceptualized sustained dialogue as a five-stage process.

Stage 1: Deciding and Preparing to Engage

Community members identify a problem, determine stakeholders, identify moderators and participants, and create terms of engagement and ground rules for the group. This is a period of exploratory dialogue. A process of change begins when individuals start talking with likeminded others about a problem they see as hurting their interests, when they try to create a sense of urgency about the problem, and when they awaken in others a sense that as individuals or as a group they can do something about it. We call this period of informally coming together to talk about a problem and what to do about it "dialogue about dialogue." This experience can produce four products:

First is a judgment that action is needed. They talk together about the problem and particularly how it affects each of them—how it hurts their interests. They begin to get their minds around—to name—the dimensions of the problem in human terms. They come to a sense that something must be done.

Second, a citizen decides that he or she must act. Citizens are spurred to engage in public life when they see a connection between a problem and their interests. The tipping point from recognizing that something must be done to an individual's decision to act seems to lie in citizens' discovery of something he or she personally can do that could make a difference and the belief that others are likely to join them in such action. Two major obstacles to collective action are lack of skills for collective work and belief in the inability or unwillingness of others to join in collective action. This exploratory space provides an experimental face-saving venue to begin acquiring skills of collective work and testing others' willingness and capacity for such work.

Third, citizens select an instrument for change. Together—either from their own initiative or after agreeing to work with a catalyst organization—they decide to use a particular instrument for change. There are many instruments for organizing a group's work together. We focus here on sustained dialogue, but we recognize that citizens must

diagnose their own situation—name the problem that they must deal with—and choose an instrument suited to their purposes. For instance, in a relatively coherent community where people are able to talk, they may choose a collaborative problem-solving process. In conflictual situations, they may choose a process, such as sustained dialogue, that focuses on transforming the dysfunctional relationships that block open communication and collaboration.

Once these citizens have chosen an instrument, they must prepare to put the instrument they have chosen into practice: (1) They may form a team and divide the labor of getting started among them as an informal steering group. They need organizers, funding, perhaps governmental acquiescence, and trained moderators. (2) They select others they feel need to be involved and draw them in or prepare to invite them to join at the appropriate moment. (3) They seek intensive training in use of the instrument. (4) They set a time and place to begin and invite participants.

Fourth, citizens—perhaps working with the catalyst organization—create a formal space specifically designed for the change instrument they have chosen. In the case of sustained dialogue, now having completed stage 1, they will create a space in which they can systematically work through stages 2, 3, and 4 and from which they can move back into the community in stage 5.

Stage 3: Downloading/Mapping and Naming Problems and Relationships

Participants share their experiences related to the issue at hand, and together, with the guidance of two trained moderators, attempt to expand their own picture of the dynamics of their community. Their purposes are:

- to get out on the table the array of problems and relationships among them and to examine how those problems affect real interests;

- to share participants' personal experiences with the relationships that would need to be changed to resolve those problems; and

- to identify and choose the two or three problems on which participants will focus in-depth attention one at a time.

It may be difficult to share personal experiences involving racial or ethnic tensions, but this is key. Probing the dynamics of the relationships that cause problems is essential to changing those relationships.

Stage 3: Exploring Problems/Setting a Direction for Change

Participants identify two or three specific problems in the community, select one to analyze more deeply, and begin assessing whether there is a commitment and willingness for action. There is always a dual agenda:

First, they will probe one problem at a time to expose the relationship dynamics that create the problems, focusing on such questions as:

- What are the main elements of the problem? What is the problem behind the problem?

- Describe the main people or groups involved in this problem.

- How does this problem affect what you or your group value most? Can you explain this is in a personal story?

Second, participants suggest possible directions to take in tackling the problem. The purpose is not to detail a course of action but to frame broad choices.

Third, they will weigh those choices and try to come to a sense of direction they feel should guide next steps.

Fourth, after full discussion of each problem, participants should step back and take stock of where they are headed by asking:

- Where is the situation going? What future would we prefer?

- Would we like to change course? What are the costs?

- What changes in relationships would be needed to move to the kind of community that would deal effectively with this problem?

- Where could we find common ground for changing relationships?

The key question is whether participants are ready to work together to design a series of interactive steps that could change relationships. If that seems like too big a step to take right now, it is worth talking about why it is difficult.

Stage 4: Forming Solutions/Scenario Building

In a sense, the group is a microcosm of a larger community, and, by this stage, relationships within the group have changed. Figuratively, participants are no longer sitting across the table talking at one another; they are sitting side-by-side, thinking *together* about how to generate changes they all agree should occur. Their task is now to develop a series of interactive steps—a scenario—that can gradually change how groups feel about each other. To do this, they should:

- List the resources the larger community can draw on

- List the main obstacles to change; these can be feelings as well as practical factors

- List the steps to overcome each obstacle

- List who can take those steps. What steps could you persuade your group to take? What steps would you be personally responsible for?

- Now list those steps in an order to show both their sequence and how steps by different groups can interact

Stage 5: Acting Together

The purpose here is to decide whether to take their scenario into the larger community and, if so, to develop practical ways the scenarios developed in stage 4 might be put into action.

- Do conditions in the community permit implementing the scenario?

- Do capacities exist for carrying it through?

- Who needs to take what steps?

- How can other potential actors be drawn into the scenario?⁵

The important overall point is that sustained dialogue is a process—not just a series of meetings. Participants learn that what happens between meetings is at least as important in the process of changing relationships as what happens in meetings. Participants must internalize the process if it is to change them and their relationships.

As participants work their way through stages 2 through 4, they learn several important things:

They learn to create a cumulative agenda. Questions left unanswered at the end of one meeting are thought about between meetings and shape the agenda for the next meeting. Participants learn that the instrument for change is not a series of meetings but a continuous process in which change is happening within them and among them wherever they are.

They learn to talk analytically and empathetically in dialogue rather than argumentatively in debate. They learn a different way of relating—collaboration and thinking together rather than confrontation.

They create a common body of knowledge. This goes beyond simply learning what the other thinks and what her or his position is to learning what the other considers really important and why. This kind of knowledge opens new doors to solving problems because it opens doors to transforming relationships.

Individuals develop capacities to become boundary spanners in communities, internalizing both practical skills as agenda setters, speakers, and analyzers and relational skills in bridging deep human divides.

They learn to design change together with the particular purpose of reaching outside their dialogue space to engage necessary elements of the larger community. In engaging the community, they build networks. Participants in sustained dialogue take their design for change to a larger scale. In doing so, they recognize that they have learned to work change in their own group and that in order to influence the larger environment that constrains them or could open doors to new opportunities, they need to connect with other likeminded groups and engage elements of the larger community. They move from their dialogue space back into the community. In doing so, they may create new spaces. Training can be an integral part of engaging the community. Training can create spaces where much of the thinking and planning for collective action can take

place.

Evaluating

A group engages in continuous evaluation as an integral part of its process. Once participants start acting in the community, they will constantly ask themselves, "How are we doing?" As they assess their progress, they will adjust course or design additional actions. At this point, others—including involved catalyst organizations—may also assess what is being or has been accomplished. They may use the five stages—as well as their own objectives—as a framework for evaluation.

3

Sustained Dialogue in Action

Harold H. Saunders and Priya Narayan Parker

Sustained dialogue has been developed and tested in many circumstances over more than two decades. We have used it in zones of conflicts as varied as the Soviet-U.S. relationship; the civil war in the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan; transitional South Africa; the stalemated conflict in the area of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno Karabakh; the interaction between the Muslim Arab world and the West; Iraq; and U.S. colleges and high schools.

We in IISD have conducted some of these dialogues ourselves among international or intranational adversaries. In other cases, we have trained local organizations to conduct dialogues in their own settings at a community level. The issues have ranged from race relations and youth violence to economic development and nation building. Each may focus on different component of relationship.

As noted in the chapter 2, the starting point for any effective sustained dialogue process is a shift in mindset of at least one concerned citizen. On university campuses, each sustained dialogue program started with a shift in the way an individual student viewed herself or himself within the context of race relations on campus—a shift from being a victim or observer of a racialized system to being an actor within that system. For the IISD-conducted Arab-American-European trilateral dialogue, a concerned Arab American believed she could create a space to improve relationships and understanding between these major regions, and she embarked on a two-year "dialogue about dialogue," to create that reality. In Harare, a citizen's organization reassessed its own "instrument for change," specifically a massive media campaign against youth violence, and, after concluding that such a plan would not work, decided to learn how to implement sustained dialogue to address youth violence.

The initial or preparatory stage of sustained dialogue—the "dialogue about dialogue"—has varied enormously from case to case, and the initial framing of the issue has influenced the development of the further stages of the process. Because the projects differ widely, it is important to keep in mind what Teddy Nemeroff—an American asked by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa to integrate sustained dialogue into its programs—refers to as the "essence of Sustained Dialogue" (Nemeroff 2004). Reflecting on his experience with different communities in South Africa, Nemeroff recognizes the need to keep open the possibility of combining different methodologies simultaneously within the sustained dialogue framework so as to support and complement the process while preserving that "essence." He continues:

> Each potential setting for a dialogue may require very different techniques
> for getting participants to speak openly about and change relationships.
> They may even require the incorporation of entirely new methodologies,
> such as IDASA's use of Appreciative Inquiry. The key is not what
> techniques are used, but rather that the process is directed through a

specific series of stages and that these stages are focused on a transformation of relationships.

As sustained dialogue is applied in a growing variety of contexts, practitioners are constantly adjusting the tools and moderating style they use and the type of training that seems appropriate. However, in all cases, sustained dialogue is a process that serves as what another colleague has referred to as an "incubator for social change" (Slim 2004a). Sustained dialogue creates the opportunity for people to come together, build relationships across lines of difference, and think and work together to transform relationships and design change.

National and International IISD-Conducted Dialogues

Tajikistan

The Inter-Tajik Dialogue, was an initiative of the Dartmouth Conference Task Force on Regional Conflicts. The Dartmouth Conference was a group of influential U.S. and Soviet citizens that met periodically from 1960 through the end of the Cold War. In 1982, they formed task forces to meet between plenaries. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Regional Conflicts Task Force continued to meet. One of their projects, designed in 1992, was to "see whether a group could be formed in the middle of a civil war—Tajikistan—that can learn to shape a peace process for their own country" (Saunders 2005, 127). Meeting for the first time in Moscow in 1993, the group then convened regularly in thirty-six dialogue meetings over the next ten years. Saunders, as cochair of the Dartmouth Task Force and comoderator of what came to be known as the Inter-Tajik Dialogue within the Framework of the Dartmouth Conference, describes the development of the dialogue group in four periods (Saunders 2005, 127–30).

First, the initial six meetings between March 1993 and April 1994 "played a significant role in opening the door to formal negotiations mediated by the United Nations in May 1994. Three participants in the dialogue became members of the negotiating teams while remaining in the dialogue." Second, when negotiations began, the group decided to focus on a developing political process for reconciliation among Tajikistani citizens. Some of the ideas they developed found their way into the peace treaty. Third, five dialogue participants became members of the National Reconciliation Commission, which was mandated by the peace treaty in 1997 to "work through detailed solutions to problems that had not been resolved in the peace agreement." "The Dialogue itself also became a space where senior members of the civil society and citizens closely associated with officials could talk informally about critical issues" (Saunders 2005, 129). In each meeting, they normally produced a joint memorandum on an important issue.

Finally, in 2000, the group formed its own nongovernmental organization, the Public Committee for Democratic Processes. It decided to institute a network of public

issues forums; a national project to develop a curriculum, a textbook, and teaching materials for a course in resolving conflict and peace building; committees to tackle community economic development; and "mini-dialogues" in seven regions of the country to deal with "state, religion, and society" in the only country in Central Asia with a legitimate Islamic Party.

The Inter-Tajik Dialogue in the course of its thirty-six meetings, repeatedly cycled through the sustained dialogue stages, mapping and naming the problems and relationships in the country as they changed over time, selecting specific areas for change, and writing joint memoranda on the significant national issues of the moment. The participants truly became what Saunders often refers to as "a mind at work in the middle of a country making itself." IISD vice president Randa Slim (2004b, 4) reflects:

> The Public Committee in Tajikistan presents for us the best example of joint action [from a sustained dialogue]. It is an NGO that grew out of a sustained dialogue process and has now become an important and influential mediating organization in the peace-building process in Tajikistan. They make our best case for how an SD process became an incubator for social change at the national level through the founding of an organizational change agent that has taken upon itself the task of establishing tens of similar other organizations around the country that are dedicated to the same mission of transforming the character of the relationships in Tajikistan through dialogue and peace-building work.

One of the reasons for the Inter-Tajik Dialogue group's success was the work of the participants outside the dialogue group. Over the ten years of the process, participants in the dialogue were simultaneously involved with official national negotiation and planning processes and in general had the capacity to take what was spoken of informally to the formal political processes. During these peace negotiations, the comoderators shared their analytical memoranda with the UN mediator and with their foreign ministries. In 2006, the national dialogue was reconstituted with the president's approval to take stock of Tajikistan's social, economic, and political development and to set goals for the next seven-year presidential term.

Arab-American-European Dialogue

As mentioned earlier, the AAED started with an individual "who [was] concerned with the situation at hand and wanted to do something about it" (2004b, 5). She and others felt a need to open a dialogue channel outside government among influential citizens in these three regions regarding the relationship between Islam and "the West." "In the Middle East case, the preparatory 'dialogue about dialogue' went on for two years before potential participants agreed to attend the first dialogue session. During these two years, the conveners needed to educate some of the groups targeted for engagement about the sustained dialogue process" (2004b, 3)

The AAED has met for three days three times a year to focus on building relationships and discussing current issues most relevant to the political, social, and

economic relations among the three regions. While stage 1, or "deciding to engage," went on for two years, the dialogue group spent one year in stage 2, downloading, venting, and sharing experiences and thoughts with one another regarding this relationship. As the group began mapping and naming the relationships among and within all three major regions, they established an executive committee to create cumulative agendas from meeting to meeting. These allowed the group to set a direction and begin to engage collectively in a deeper analysis of the nature of the relationships and issues. By the end of the second full year of dialogue meetings, group members were beginning to enter into the public realm, writing joint articles, visiting one another's countries for meetings with nonofficials, and thinking about how better to use their social capital as well as a nuanced understanding of the relationships in order to have an influence on the international debate.

The key to the initial accomplishments of dialogues like this is, first, change within and among the participants themselves. As relationships among individuals from key constituencies from somewhat conflicting, or at least perceived to be conflicting groups change, participants build what has come to be called "social capital." Social capital can be defined as the "norms and networks that enable people to act collectively" (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). Through convening over and over again citizens from different political backgrounds who have legitimacy within strikingly different movements as well as the "ear of the government," dialogue processes are able to play an increasingly influential role in shaping the international discourse. Especially when relations and understanding between societies decline, sustained dialogues such as these create more open linkages outside of government to build the capacity to create new options in a growingly interdependent world.

Community-Level Issue-Based Dialogues in Southern Africa

In addition to conducting dialogues the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue works with citizen's organizations around the world to help them develop the capacity to conduct sustained dialogue programs in local communities. Between August 2003 and July 2006, for example, an experienced leader from the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network worked with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa to establish a peace-building program, called the Dialogue Unit, aimed at building the capacity of citizens to resolve their own conflicts in a way that supports the growth of democracy in Southern Africa (Nemeroff and Adams 2005, 2). The Dialogue Unit has used sustained dialogue as a way of engaging community leaders and has implemented it in a variety of mostly community-based contexts. Three of their most successful projects are described in this section: a sustained dialogue to help consciously explore the problematic relationship between legal and illegal traders in conflict over space and resources at a trading post; a project to address youth violence in Harare, Zimbabwe; and an initiative to examine the role of a process like sustained dialogue in economic development in rural KwaZulu Natal.

Sustained Dialogue at the Denneboom Interchange

The Denneboom Interchange is a train station in Mamelodi, a formerly black township just outside of Pretoria that serves as a major transportation hub for the area. A facility that was originally intended to host 380 traders has become a business area for approximately 1,200 informal traders or street hawkers (Nemeroff and Ratlou 2005, 2):

> The traders that have been allocated these stalls are officially registered with the government and are required to pay rent for their space. The rest are operating in the facility illegally and have taken up much of the available open space . . . the numbers of illegal traders have grown rapidly in the last three years . . . the consequences of these numbers has been a decrease in economic viability for all traders operating in the facility as the business with the commuters has spread thinner, a deteriorating business environment for other groups operating there, and an increase in crime and violence as ever more closely packed traders have come into conflict with each other or other facility users.

To make matters more complicated, the local government created the Local Economic Development department, whose role, among other things, was to regulate the activities of the informal traders, disrupting the formerly self-regulated system among the traders. "The distorting effects of government regulation broke down the community's ability to resolve its own problems by denying them ownership, and creating divisions based on interests" (Nemeroff and Ratlou 2005, introduction). The Institute for Democracy in South Africa worked with local community members to create a sustained dialogue group involving the key stakeholders in the community with the aim of helping "facility users (transport operators, informal traders, passengers, and local political leaders) and the government officials responsible for managing it . . . build more effective working relationships so that they can better achieve development and prosperity" (Nemeroff and Ratlou 2005, 2).

The Denneboom project illustrates the importance of an insider-outsider relationship. The dialogue was comoderated by the IDASA sustained dialogue project coordinator Teddy Nemeroff, an expert in sustained dialogue methodology but not a member of the Mamelodi community, and Richard Ratlou, a longtime activist and resident in Mamelodi with "extensive experience dealing with community level politics, public participation in governance, and conflict management" (Nemeroff 2005d, 1). Together they formed a strong moderator team by combining their areas of expertise with local knowledge and connections. Ratlou describes one such meeting:

> During that meeting the official was having trouble understanding Teddy's explanation of how SD could help the issues at Denneboom. He could understand the process but didn't see how it made sense for local conditions. I therefore broke in and explained how I understood many of the governance problems in South Africa and how SD could contribute to the facility and this made him willing to come on board. This allowed us to meet with other officials and politicians to secure buy in.

Ratlou describes the sustained dialogue process: "Because we don't take decisions but continue discussions, it allows us to see how people's opinions change over time. It also gives us time to understand how people operate, seeing whether they are honest and what agendas they are pursuing at the dialogue and in the community as a whole" (Nemeroff 2005d, 2–3). Having met over a sustained period of time, Nemeroff describes the progress at the beginning of 2006:

> Dynamic changes towards greater transparency and engagement at the Denneboom Interchange. . . . Through a series of both highly substantive analytical conversations and some very heated and emotional arguments, this process has secured a greater commitment by government to address issues and work with citizens at the facility, engaged previously marginalized groups, exposed leaders that were not contributing productively to the situation, and identified a number of specific steps that can be taken to improve management. This dialogue has also opened the door for similar processes at other train stations in the Pretoria area.
>
> (Nemeroff 2005f, 13)

The Denneboom sustained dialogue was a good example of a sustained dialogue project that brought people together across lines of difference to focus on very immediate and practical issues facing the community. Through the sustained interaction, the participants themselves start interacting differently and their relationships begin to change. The process itself develops a better understanding between parties, as well as a greater capacity and willingness to want to solve problems that serves multiple interests and betters the community as a whole.

Zimbabwe: Youth Violence

A Zimbabwe-based organization wanted to address the problem of youth violence in Zimbabwe. Initially planning a countrywide media campaign to address the issue, they organized a coalition of fourteen local NGOs to support the program. However, as the program progressed, the organizers realized that their original plan for a media campaign was not going to be feasible in the current political situation, and they had to change course midway. The organizers decided that they would be most effective by working with the youth directly and wanted to create safe spaces for affected youth to come together to create new patterns of relationships and address the growing problem of youth violence.

In May 2004, three Zimbabwean nongovernmental organizations, an Italian international NGO, the Coordinating Committee of the Organizations for Voluntary Service, the Zimbabwean partner the Amani Trust, and the IDASA began an initiative to conduct sustained dialogue groups to address issues of youth violence in Zimbabwe. Together, they designed a sustained dialogue initiative that involved launching eight youth dialogue groups simultaneously throughout the city of Harare, to "reduce the political exploitation of youth and strengthen their self-reliance by engaging key local

leaders in dialogue. . . . They have engaged 120 youth leaders in Harare, from across the socio-economic and political spectrum, to build relationships, better understand issues of concern to them, and to develop actions they can take to improve their lives and the lives of their peers" (Nemeroff 2005b, 1).

IDASA first conducted training with twenty-four activists who divided into eight "Initiating Teams," each of which set out to assemble a dialogue group of fifteen youths, based on specific criteria. The initiating period lasted four months, and once the group was formed, moderators were selected and trained by IDASA, which also created ongoing support and training systems for the moderators involved. Each youth group selected two of the following topics for discussion: unemployment, HIV/AIDS, the role of youth in nation building, political tolerance, and delivery of public services. They held monthly half-day meetings at venues in their communities. IDASA also conducted two further advanced training workshops for moderators during the project.

This project took place under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, but the groups continued to meet and progress through the five stages of sustained dialogue. In a summary progress report, Nemeroff cited the following project results: increased knowledge about issues discussed, increased sense of agency, strengthened relationships among participants and willingness to "agree to disagree," increased sense of the value of talking and knowledge of conflict-management techniques. Additionally, he notes, "these significant impacts on the participants have led to some important results for the youth communities they were drawn from, including increased youth leadership, the mitigation of community conflicts and youth violence, and the development of plans for addressing community challenges" (Nemeroff 2005b, 6).

In September 2005 the group organized an international conference in Siavonga, Zambia, to share findings and develop future action plans, which three members of IISD attended. As of this writing, the Committee of the Organizations for Voluntary Service has decided to continue the project and has gained funding for the next phase.

KwaZulu Natal: Economic Development

The idea of using sustained dialogue to focus on relationships affecting economic development in South Africa was first explored in South Africa's rural province of KwaZulu Natal. "This project was initiated . . . by two local organizations that realized past efforts at development had failed and they concluded that to successfully develop Ethalaneni and the surrounding villages they would first need to cultivate among

residents a capacity to concert" (Nemeroff 2005g, 2). [6] Ramon Daubon and Harold Saunders discuss the importance of a dialogue process that engages citizens from within local communities to develop a "capacity to concert" around issues of importance to them. "People and their capacity to orchestrate their own development are the foundation of sustainability—that economic development is not only about economics but also about people's capacity to concert" (Daubon and Saunders 2002, 179). Realizing that outside funding and donors were, for the most part, not succeeding in reducing the level of poverty, some people began looking for new options to engage the poor in the decision-making and relationship-building processes of development. The idea now emerging is to

have local community members engage in a dialogue around their own needs, desires, and relationships, meanwhile building the social capital that recent studies have shown to be necessary for long-term growth (Narayan 2000).

With this idea in mind, Nemeroff writes: "A group contacted us about this training because of its conviction that dysfunctional relationships and low level conflict were preventing the community from advancing. . . . Essentially, the community lacks a certain kind of social capital. Community members lack an understanding of the long term goals of development and a realization that cooperation is in everyone's interest."[7] Conducting a series of iterative trainings with village leaders, chiefs, youth, and women simultaneously, an insider-outsider team helped the community to begin building the bridges among the various groups and to better understand how they as poor people can become assets in development. It seemed that one of the biggest impediments to development was internal jealousies and an unwillingness to cooperate among different factions of the community with outsider-funded development initiatives. "Poor communities in which relationships are an obstacle to development often appear to lack the self-awareness to realize that is the case. . . . People there see each other as the problem rather than their way of relating."[8] The trainings, all conducted in Zulu, brought together all facets of the village, changing the power dynamics within the village itself as the dialogue participants recognized how destructive their relationships had been.

This project included a series of village-based dialogue groups in the rural Nkandla district. The dialogues led to a range of community-development projects as well as "a change of mindset about what is required to develop the community with a greater recognition of the need for local responsibility" (Nemeroff 2005f, 2).

Sustained Dialogue Campus Network

The Sustained Dialogue Campus Network owes its growth to concerned students finding sustained dialogue a useful approach to effecting change on their campuses, specifically to improving campus racial climates. The mission of SDCN is to "help university and high school students create a healthy and open climate on their campuses. SDCN trains, mentors, and connects student leaders who work through dialogue to design cohesive, engaged and diverse communities nationwide." As more students initiate programs on their campuses, SDCN, directed by former student leaders experienced in the process, facilitates the sharing of the common body of experience students have developed on how to initiate and moderate sustained dialogue. SDCN program directors enable students at each new school initiative to learn from previous mistakes, challenges, and practices. All of the materials created for sustained dialogue on college campuses, though based on the initial work and writings of Saunders in *A Public Peace Process* (1999), have been written by students who have started programs, including the moderator manuals, initiator guides, and training curricula.

The first student-run sustained dialogue began at Princeton University in 1999. Since then, students have assisted one another in starting new programs on eighteen campuses, as of the date of this writing. The SDCN was established in 2002 and now

helps interested students learn the skills and tools they need to start their own sustained dialogue programs.

The "dialogue about dialogue" process on campuses is often much shorter than in other communities. Many students report that they heard about sustained dialogue as a useful "instrument of change" when they addressed concerns to a campus administrator or faculty member. Since administrators' inter-university networks are usually wider than students', the former are more likely to know about approaches at different schools, and. at this point, many have heard of sustained dialogue.

Once students have contacted SDCN for more information and have decided that they want to use dialogue as their tool for change, the students enter stage 1. SDCN program directors and graduate volunteers then train students in initiating the process, connect them to other student leaders, and coach them through the process of starting such an initiative. SDCN and student leaders also organize an annual national conference for sustained dialogue leaders, moderators, and supporting administrators from all campuses to come together for a weekend at a host university. The purpose is to connect, share, and learn about one another's efforts; to receive additional training; to help one another with current program challenges; and to improve the various programs.

The program directors, Clark Herndon and Tessa Garcia (2005, 2), wrote:

> Among the most important principles of the Campus Network's philosophies is the belief that students should be the ones who are the agents of change in their communities. SDCN takes very seriously its mission to train, mentor and connect, and draws a sharp line of distinction between providing a curriculum for students to follow and training them to do for themselves what only they have the power to do. This philosophy has shaped the way trainings are conducted, the way SDCN Program Directors interact with students, and the way the relationships between the organization and the program exist. Students are taught to analyze and internalize the SD theory so that they might be able to apply it to their situations however they see fit under the guidance (and not behind the *leadership*) of experienced SD practitioners.

Institutions of higher education share many features that make transferring sustained dialogue from one campus community to another relatively straightforward. Typically, the sustained dialogue program has developed into a recognized student organization on campus that recruits students and administrators from diverse backgrounds to come together for an academic year of sustained dialogue, in most cases to address race relations on campus. The student leadership forms groups of twelve to fourteen participants based on a variety of criteria, with two trained student moderators for each group. The groups meet once every two weeks for two hours through the course of the year. Most programs develop similar patterns that correspond to the practicalities of the academic year. For example, leadership teams usually spend the summer and the first month of the school year in stage 1. Once students identify and recruit participants and form the dialogue groups, the groups meet regularly throughout the school year, each maintaining its own membership composition, exploring relationships and the dynamics

of race on their campus. Toward the spring semester, groups begin thinking of action projects they can take to influence campus racial climate.

Sustained dialogue groups on campuses face a major challenge in that the student community in which they seek to make changes loses, and gains, one-fourth of its membership every year. Nevertheless, a number of different action projects have emerged from campus sustained dialogue programs, including education campaigns and forums, creative "mixed" social events that challenge students to change ingrained patterns of interaction, high school sustained dialogue mentoring programs, projects that address institutional memory and issues of retribution, and, of course, the creation of many more dialogue groups to involve as many students as possible in a new type of conversation and a new way to learn about race and racism—from one another.

Relationships in Action

In sum, it is useful to come back to a point made briefly earlier: an important insight in the application of the concept of relationship as an operational tool lies in the recognition that in each situation where sustained dialogue may be used, different components of relationship may be uppermost among the causes of conflict. Nemeroff (2005a, 2) notes: "Perhaps the most significant distinguishing feature between one issue area and another is the relative importance of specific elements of the relationships being discussed. Different kinds of relationships require different techniques of moderating and are likely to yield different types of results from dialogue processes."

For example, a major focus of dialogues on college campuses surrounds identity, perceptions/misperceptions and stereotypes, and the sharing and exploration of one's racial identity. There is less focus on the parties' "interests," per se. On the other hand, in Denneboom the major focus was on interests and patterns of interaction. In that case, one of the major problems at the trading post was the underlying personal and professional relationship between the various parties—lack of trust. It was therefore vital to talk explicitly about the patterns of interaction and how each group interacts with and responds to others based, for instance, on who puts whose stand where. What are the rules of interacting in the market? In short, the concept of relationship not only helps practitioners better understand the dynamics of the situation; it also helps them focus the dialogue and shape its goals.

Challenges

New challenges inspire new experiments and new solutions. As of this writing, there are four major challenges facing the practice of sustained dialogue:

   1. How does a practitioner diagnose whether sustained dialogue is an appropriate instrument for change?

In discussing the work of sustained dialogue with practitioners of other instruments of conflict resolution, they often say, "You are doing the same thing we are

doing." Our response is usually, "No, we are not, and it's good that we are doing different things. We need to understand better which approaches work best in different situations." As practitioners we need to increase greatly our capacity to diagnose a situation and determine the appropriate instrument for change. In the case of sustained dialogue, our goal is not to sell a tool but rather to provide an approach that will help citizens transform their relationships and develop the capacity to design change in their communities on the basis of a thorough understanding of what the situation calls for. It is a continuing challenge to determine when to present sustained dialogue as the tool to use and when to direct people elsewhere.

Sustained dialogue seems to be a useful approach in situations where relationships are strained or broken and people feel the need to work together across lines of difference to address issues of common concern so they can hurdle the relational obstacles to joint action. How can one determine whether indeed that is the problem?

One helpful approach is for an "insider-outsider" team to conduct an assessment of the community. To determine whether sustained dialogue is appropriate in a specific situation, the assessment team should include community "insiders" who have experienced and understand the dynamics of the current situation, and an "outsider" who is familiar with the sustained dialogue project and can be more objective about the specific community and its problems.

One colleague describes his thought process when diagnosing a situation to determine whether the situation is ripe for sustained dialogue: "I no longer think, will dialogue work in this situation? Rather I ask myself, how could we use dialogue in this situation and is it worth the time and effort, or is there another approach that would be more effective?"[9] It is sometimes easier to determine when sustained dialogue is inappropriate than when it is appropriate. For example, because dialogue demands a sense of equality within the group, it is extremely difficult for dialogue even to begin, or to create any sense of urgency that dialogue is worthwhile, when the power imbalance between two groups of people is too large. Those in control may see no need to talk to "them" or may see no need or have no desire to change existing relationships. People on both sides need to feel a sense of personal interest and some likelihood of change before they are willing to engage.

Currently, some time is being spent in South Asia reviewing situations in which people see no possible "political solution" and are seeking justice through the legal system, which is inherently confrontational. Some people argue that a dialogue process aimed at reconciliation can in fact be counterproductive for the community, depending on the timing of the initiative. We continue to learn from experience.

2. How can sustained dialogue be introduced in a way that strengthens citizens' capacity to sustain and enlarge their initiatives rather than drowning them?

People are usually attracted to sustained dialogue as an approach precisely because it is a *sustained* intervention.[10] However, any type of sustained effort takes time, resources, and commitment. Often, citizen groups decide to engage in dialogue because they realize their current efforts are not working because of relationships blocked within the group. In that case, the initiators must be careful in balancing internal

processes of change with the need for external help. To date, the only experiences IISD has had in fully introducing and transferring sustained dialogue to another organization is with IDASA and—perhaps the challenge is similar—through SDCN.

    3.   How can the transformation of relationships in the dialogue room generate change in the larger community?

As a dialogue progresses and participants in the sustained dialogue group begin transforming themselves, they become aware of this dilemma. It usually arises when someone asks the question, "What can we *do* about it?" Participants begin to brainstorm different scenarios of action in stage 4. They discuss the interdependent steps members of the group might take in order to implement a plan. Finally, they develop their plan of action and have to take it into the community. Depending on the context, the groups often face a number of different challenges at this stage.

The first issue the group often has to address is what some refer to as "reentry." In many cases, the dialogue group can initially meet without many people knowing about it. But as soon as the group attempts to create change outside of its own circle, its members have to address their communities. Sometimes, the participants are seen as "selling out" to another community for engaging in the first place. Groups in conflict tend often to demonize the "other," and a dialogue process can threaten a group's sense of self-identity. Many leaders resist engaging with other groups for fear of compromising their own group identity.

A second challenge in generating change in the larger community lies in the problem of scale. While the size of the community varies greatly (on college campuses it may be as small as 2,300, as in the case of Dickinson College, whereas in Tajikistan the group was influencing a process that affected a national population of about 7 million, and in the Arab-American-European dialogue, the "communities" are entire regions of the world), the size of the sustained dialogue group is still the same (about fourteen people). Groups have to think creatively to use the social capital they have been able to create through the sustained dialogue process in such a way as to effect change in the larger community.

There are several ways to address the problem of scale. One is to create multiple simultaneous dialogue groups. When the problem to be addressed lies broadly in the relationships among groups, this approach is often necessary, though it brings with it its own challenges. For example, at both Princeton University and the University of Virginia, after the first year of efforts, students engaged in the process decided that the best way to change the racial climate was to engage more students in the sustained dialogue process. Five years later at the University of Virginia the students had formed an organization that identifies, selects, and trains new moderators every year and currently runs fifteen to twenty dialogue groups. However, experience shows that it is difficult to maintain the quality of the dialogue groups and moderators as the numbers increase. The more groups the student leaders have to organize, the more moderators they have to train, and the less able student leaders are to monitor the groups and coach the moderators through the year.

Another way to address scale comes in the initial period of participant identification and group formation. Initiators should recruit participants who both reflect

the different perspectives of the communities involved and also have wide "circles of influence." The wider the reach of each potential participant, the easier it will be to influence change on a greater scale. IISD vice president Randa Slim explains: "Each SD participant operates within a small circle of influence composed of followers/colleagues/constituents and we have by now firm evidence that learning and skills gained by the SD participant get shared with his/her immediate circle of influence" (Slim 2005, 6). During initiator training, we often tell people that stage 1 is the easiest to talk about and explain and the hardest to carry out effectively. In the Arab-American-European dialogue, Dr. Slim spent two years laying the groundwork for the group and building personal relationships with participants, just to convince them to engage in the process. In the case of Tajikistan, initiators interviewed one hundred Tajikistani citizens before selecting their first ten participants. While participants must by definition be actors *outside of government*, it may be important, especially in national and international dialogue groups, that the participants have the "ear of the government," as well as other influential groups.

4. How can it be shown that sustained dialogue works, that there are identifiable links between the process and specific changes in the community?

Conceptually, there are three ways of approaching the evaluation of sustained dialogue: by reviewing the conduct of the five stages in terms of their own objectives; by assessing the impact of the process on participants and their capacity as citizen actors; and by measuring the change that occurs in the community.

An example of the last would be an assessment of student racial climate on a campus before and after the sustained dialogue process; some work along these lines is underway. An inherent problem with developing evaluation tools is that the dialogue itself must be an open-ended process, without specific goals from the beginning. Goals must be generated within the dialogue itself. We have found that stating what effect the dialogue will have often limits the thinking of both the group and the moderators.

Within sustained dialogue we have separated the process into two separate approaches: monitoring and evaluation. We have defined monitoring as "an on-going systematic procedure for checking the effectiveness of dialogue implementation and to recommend changes to improve performance," and evaluation as "a systematic assessment of the design, execution and effectiveness of the dialogue process to address problems identified by the community" (Nemeroff 2005e, 1). While we have developed some tools to do both, there are major limitations, particularly on the evaluation side—it is notoriously difficult to attribute causation in social and political matters. There are, moreover, challenges in capturing data, high costs in making comprehensive assessments, and a danger that assessment will by itself disrupt the intervention. Current efforts focus on evaluating each phase of the process within a theory of change, i.e., how initiators create the space, how the space creates leaders for peace, and then how the leaders build peace in their community.

In any case, it is clear that both the evaluation and the monitoring system must be embedded into the design of the dialogue process. Ideally, moderators can be trained to self-monitor within the design of the project.

Any political process is the product of continuous experimentation. So it has been,

is, and will be with sustained dialogue as we respond to these challenges—and hopefully many more to come.

5

Let's Talk

Dialogue and Deliberation in Higher Education

Lisa Bedinger

> Educators come to Highlander and ask what is your method; what is your technique; what is your gimmick? . . . To get people to understand that education is a process and that whatever method or technique seems best in that given situation is the best one to use. This is better than a method that you clamp onto every situation and force people into it like you are torturing them. If they are not long enough, stretch them; if they are too long, cramp them up so they will fit your methods! Deform them anyway you can so they fit your methods.
>
> —Myles Horton

In recent years, I have had the privilege of working with staff, faculty, and students from several Vermont college and university campuses. These individuals have been an inspiration for me. They have provided opportunities for themselves and others to engage their best thinking and speak from their hearts in order to take on some of the most problematic issues facing their campuses and the larger world. Most consistently, the dialogues initiated on each campus have taken on brave and needed explorations of how we as human beings have become separated from one another: dialogues on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class background, and religion. Part of the pracademic challenge in this context is to put additional tools into these individuals' hands in order to give them more information and greater understanding of what is possible in guiding these dialogues and deliberations. This chapter also strives to assist them in meeting their own hopes and aspirations, the needs of various situations and groups—as Myles Horton speaks to in the epigraph—and assisting all involved in continuing to engage in desperately needed conversations.

Introduction to the Field of Dialogue and Deliberation

This chapter has its basis in the field of dialogue and deliberation, an emerging field born in the cross-section of organizational development; conflict studies; education, both formal and popular; political science and democracy studies; psychology, social work, self-help, and personal growth; communication; and community activism and organizing, as well as rich religious and cultural traditions, such as Native American, Quaker, and Mennonite. Of particular interest to the dialogue and deliberation field are human interaction that is "high stakes, high risk and/or high benefit" (Glock-Grueneich 2006) and theory and methodology that increase the likelihood of desired outcomes and

decrease the likelihood of unwanted outcomes in these circumstances.[11] Dialogue and deliberation (D&D) is inherently goal-oriented and practical yet simultaneously contains the ability to transcend these original goals. D&D seeks to identify principles of discourse and improve upon them so that these guidelines can be replicated and taught. Thus, one goal of D&D is transforming the messy reality of human interaction into organized structures that create improved possibilities for planned interactions. A second and equally valuable goal is to develop our capacity as human beings to respond to the unplanned that will always be part of human interaction. The field of D&D has developed both responsively and proactively. It has responded to existing challenges and crises of human interaction and has recognized and created new opportunities for interaction that envision our world differently and lay a path to move in new directions. Ultimately, D&D is about systematizing the learning gained through the quest to understand and improve human interaction in order to increase the knowledge available for future interactions.

Definition of Terms

In naming a field "dialogue and deliberation," we need to look also at what is meant by these terms.[12] Within the field itself, there are numerous definitions of dialogue. Some point to the goal of the interaction, and some aim to describe what happens within an interaction. It is not a goal of this chapter to propose a consistent definition of dialogue for the field. Instead, this chapter flags the inconsistency and invites practitioners of D&D to struggle with this inconsistency in order to see what understanding may emerge from this effort. Initially, I define dialogue as *a type of human interaction to which participants bring an intention to understand and learn*. This definition stresses listening for understanding and the potential for learning based on considering the viewpoints of others. It does not include trying to change others yet is enhanced and furthered when participants can remain open to the possibility of their own change. It assumes that although goals and objectives may be achieved, learning takes priority over task orientation.[13]

The term "deliberation" already carries much more consistency in its definition and use than "dialogue." Deliberation refers to the process of human beings carefully considering and critically thinking together. Thus, I define deliberation as *a type of human interaction to which participants bring an intention to critically explore avenues of thinking and action.* The consistency in the use of the term "deliberation" may be directly related to its limited use in common parlance whereas dialogue is a term most people assume they know the meaning of.[14]

Finally, in considering what will be useful information for those using dialogue and deliberation in the context of higher education, this chapter will be concerned with what Patricia Wilson (2004;) and practitioners of organizational development and others (Glen,2006) call *social technologies*. These are *named, structured processes developed over time and honed through repetition and refinement*. Social technologies are useful

shortcuts to wisdom that others have gained through the trial and error.**15**

Coxt and Assumptions

There is no intent here to create structure where none is possible or to apply social technologies without flexibility, regard, or understanding the subtleties involved with each particular situation (Glock-Grueneich 2006a). Social technologies are tools that may be useful in order to take advantage of pervious good thinking, not to re-create structures when much good thinking currently exists. It is also my intent to support the use of D&D social technologies in ways that are flexible and responsive to unique circumstances through an exploration of design considerations.

Another assumption is that much of the important work that those on college and university campuses already do is in the area of civic engagement, *doing needed work in communities and in the larger world that is intertwined with learning and scholarship*. I believe that college and university communities are an enormous resource for change within our society. I hope these tools enhance the quality of human interactions and the outcomes from them that are part of this vast civic engagement effort.

The perspective inherent in the theory of dialogue and deliberation is that ordinary citizens have important thinking to offer, and each social technology outlines a process to elicit this thinking. Some authors also include methodologies to act on this thinking. A sometimes unstated assumption for a large subsection of the field of D&D is that there is a crisis in how democracy currently functions in the United States. One of the goals inherent in the theory is to increase civic engagement through collaborative dialogue as one method of participatory democracy. Ultimately, a goal of many of the social technologies is to increase citizen engagement in community, diversity, and public policy issues in order to effect social change.

Finally, in selecting social technologies for use by those on campuses, there is a preference for those in which people meet face-to-face. While online D&D technologies may also be useful, they are excluded from my consideration here in part because I have not experienced online technologies in higher education dialogue and deliberation and as such have no basis for judgment of them.

Key Design Considerations

Designing a successful dialogue or deliberation event involves much more than choosing a particular social technology and jumping in. This section will review what I believe to be some of the most important design considerations for increasing the likelihood of organizers' and participants' desired outcomes and for guiding the selection of a particular social technology to meet the needs of specific and infinitely varied situations.

There are two design considerations that can make or break dialogue and deliberation events: *alignment with the purpose for the event* and *diversity of participants in regards to this purpose* (Glock-Grueneich 2006). Some aspects of these considerations

are intertwined. In order to plan events that translate the initial, often one-sided motivating concern into a perspective that encompasses the wide variety of views related to this initial concern, a diverse, broad-based planning team is essential.<mark>16</mark> Forming a planning team that encompasses the range of views on the issue eliminates the possibility of the event's being owned, or being seen as owned, by advocates on any side of an issue. If an event is part of a course, campus club, or other preselected group, it is important to consider how to increase the perspectives available to frame the dialogue and the views present in the room. "Framing" is a term widely used to mean *identifying and articulating the focus for dialogue or deliberation.*

Including a range of views in an event enhances the quality of the dialogue, the creativity of ideas available, and the potential for learning for those involved. This diversity of perspective can be enhanced by, yet is not synonymous with, including individuals from a wide array of identities and experience: age, race, gender, education, sexual orientation, ability, religion, culture, position inside or outside the institution, and more. Which types of diversity are essential to include will depend upon the purpose and the issue addressed (Herzig 2006).

Once the issue is framed in a manner deemed acceptable to the perspectives represented on the planning team, invitations and the organization of the entire event can proceed in a manner that is consistent with this broad-based framing. An example of a narrowly framed issue that would likely exclude voices from the dialogue would be an invitation to talk about banning military recruiters from campus. An example of a more inclusive framing would be an invitation to a dialogue about how U.S. military policies affect our campus and what, if any, action is needed. In addition, the framing organizes why individuals would want to attend and can help with consistency in how people are invited as well as what participants can expect both during the process and in outcomes resulting from it. Giving participants sufficient information to understand what they will be participating in is essential. The failure to do this can result in confusion, frustration, erosion of good will, and reluctance to engage in subsequent events (Glock-Grueneich 2006).

The purpose, *the goals of the event related to the issue*, is the key factor that needs to be in alignment with what a social technology best delivers and thus forms the primary basis for selection of a technology. We can sort purposes into four categories: exploration via dialogue, exploration via deliberation, taking action, and repairing relationships.<mark>17</mark>

The purpose of the dialogue or deliberation helps inform the *requirements for facilitation* and the *facilitator's role*. Events in which exploration is primary and other outcomes may or may not occur require less facilitation skill or experience. In other words, do participants primarily expect to have an opportunity to learn from others or to talk with people different from themselves, with no expectation of what will emerge from this exploration? When particular actions are anticipated as desired outcomes, the facilitation demands increase. Questions that identify action purposes include:

- Do participants expect to emerge from the event with a decision supported by the group?

- Do they want to develop an action plan?

- Do they expect their thinking to affect official policies?

The highest demands on the facilitator come from processes in which participants desire to repair relationships damaged by a history of tension, misunderstanding, volatility, or oppression. Decisions regarding the training needs for facilitators or whether to hire facilitators should be informed by an understanding of the purpose of the particular event and of the social technology that will be used. It is important not to place facilitators in situations for which they do not have the skills required. The group can be at risk if situations arise in which they need the facilitator to set boundaries to create needed emotional safety and the facilitator is unable to do so. Other facilitation considerations are:

- How many facilitators are needed considering the number of sessions, number of groups, and group size?

- Does the social technology usually include the facilitators as participants in the dialogue or are they expected to withhold their opinions?

- Might particular facilitators be perceived as biased because of views they have previously expressed on the issue at hand or related issues?

An additional consideration for designing a D&D event is *thinking about the particular group* of participants involved. Successful events often leave participants feeling well thought about throughout all aspects of their experience. In order to accomplish this, thinking about the group needs to begin well before they are in the room. Questions that can be useful in this regard include:

- How well do participants know one another?

- What is the participants' history with one another both as individuals and as parts of groups to which they belong?

- How much conflict can be anticipated?

- What can you anticipate their needs will be concerning guidelines and confidentiality?

- How can the room be set up to encourage relaxed participation?

- How can everything from the room selection to how topics are framed to the social technology selected be best thought about to meet this group's needs and expectations?

Resources in regards to funding, time, space, and leadership and their impact on logistics are a final category for design consideration. Resources constitute a real factor in designing the vast majority of D&D events.

Funding

- How can the the event best occur within whatever resource limitations are likely

to exist?

- What would be ideal for this event if these limitations did not exist?
- What adaptations can be made to optimize resources while most closely achieving these ideals?
- Are financial resources needed, and, if so, where will they come from?

Time

- Is the length of the event or the number of sessions determined by resources?
- How much time does the conversation ideally need, and how much time can all involved give it?

Space

- Are spaces available that will hold the number of people needed in an arrangement conducive for dialogue?
- What arrangement of the room will foster the goals of the event?
- Can the space selected encourage the goal of including the range of perspectives represented?

Leadership

- Who will take responsibility for each of the leadership aspects: logistics, inviting, facilitating or recruiting facilitators, hosting, record keeping, and any follow-up?
- What are the limitations on these leaders' time?

Other Logistics

- Will the event be better served by meeting as one group or in multiple groups?
- A one-time event or successive gatherings? Face-to-face, online, or a combination?
- What group size will meet the needs of the participants? The facilitators? The event purpose?

Social Technologies for Higher Education

The following information is intended to give the flavor of each social technology, enough information to know whether it may be useful after reflecting on the design considerations. By their nature, social technologies have made decisions regarding some of the design considerations. The packaging of the particular group of decisions via a

social technology may be useful as is or may need some modification to meet the needs of a specific situation. The order of presentation of these social technologies and in all of the tables begins with models requiring less technical experience on the part of the facilitator and concludes with models that demand a high level of facilitator expertise.

World Café and Conversation Café

These two social technologies are grouped because they share several important qualities. Both most often occur in cafés or other informal settings and can be led by anyone with a desire to do so (World Café Community; New Road Map Foundation). The atmosphere can be enhanced by music, tablecloths, candles, flowers, or other creative means. Both require that someone host and advertise or otherwise invite dialogue participants, and both can occur in a single ninety-minute session. An organizer for a World Café proposes a series of questions on the framed dialogue topic and initiates rotations before each question. Participants are typically distributed among tables of four people each. Participant volunteers serve as table hosts for World Cafés by offering to stay at their table while the other three people rotate to other tables. Table hosts maintain a connection throughout the dialogue.

Conversation Cafés are more likely to involve larger groups at a single table and an organizer who initiates and facilitates the dialogue. In both café forms, all involved are encouraged to participate in the dialogue. Either of these social technologies can be organized quickly, and the minimal structure allows for a vast range of topic possibilities that can be highly responsive to events occurring in the world.

National Issues Forums and Citizen Choicework

These two social technologies are also grouped because of their similarities. Both use prepared discussion materials and distribute these beforehand to deliberation participants. NIF issue books tend to be much more extensive—as much as forty pages of background information on each issue—while Citizen Choicework discussion guides often contain a two- to four-page synopsis of each issue. Both contain three or four perspectives on the issue and arguments that explain, support, and challenge each perspective. Moderators, as facilitators are called, withhold their opinions from the deliberation. Both of these technologies can happen in a single two- to three-hour gathering. Subsequent meetings can also be planned but don't have to occur, depending on participants' needs and the event purpose. A goal of both of these technologies is to move the public conversation forward on critical public-policy issues and social problems, such as immigration, health care, gay rights, and dozens of others. Additional goals of Citizen Choicework are to:

- Help citizens understand complex problems
- Involve those who are normally excluded from policy debates
- Promote productive public and leadership dialogue
- Create momentum for change by building common ground, managing differences,

and creating new partnerships (Citizen Choicework 2006)

Issues that work best in these formats contain value differences at their core yet are not so divisive as to be too painful for participants to want to hear what others think. Deliberation is analytic and cognitive by nature and as such may not meet participants' needs when the value differences are deeply painful or involve estrangement from others who think differently (Herzig 2006). For NIFs, each participant's task, as guided by the moderator, is to explore the strengths, drawbacks, tradeoffs, and underlying values of each approach while noticing areas of common ground that develop as the forum unfolds. Some design principles important in Citizen Choicework include "inclusive participation—'beyond the usual suspects' "; "strategic follow-up that leads to more informed policies, new collaborations, and innovative initiatives"; and "a commitment to helping communities build long-term capacity for this work" (Citizen Choicework 2006).

Study Circles

The purpose of the Study Circle approach is to "expand civic engagement and make it meaningful to all sorts of people" (McCoy and Scully 2002, 117). The Study Circle Resource Center has conducted research on how to best accomplish this goal. Leighninger and McCoy (1998) distill their findings into the following principles of what citizens want:

(1) To make a direct impact on the issue

(2) To know that their individual participation makes a difference and matters

(3) To start at the beginning

(4) To work in diverse yet harmonious groups

(5) To work together with others in way that overcomes feelings of isolation and powerlessness

The Study Circles model is based on these findings. Convening Study Circles requires a significant amount of effort—three to six months—from broad-based coalitions in order to bring together multiple groups of participants with the widest possible range of backgrounds and thinking.

Study Circles involve five gatherings. The first of these explores personal connections to the issue as a way to ground the conversation and develop safety within the circle. Subsequent meetings explore a range of views about the issue, consider alternative approaches for addressing it, create action plans, and then present each group's plans in a combined meeting of all the groups (Flavin-McDonald and Barrett 1999; McCoy and Scully 2002). The final meeting allows for more broad-based connections, including connections to government and policymaking officials. Issue-based materials exist, and training is provided to assist community volunteer facilitators through this progression. In addition, Study Circles Resource Center staff is available for consultation at no charge for large-scale community projects.

Learning Circles

The community organizer Myles Horton developed what has come to be known as Learning Circles,[18] a method of collaborative self-education as a way to work with poor Southerners and Appalachians who had already taken action or were poised to take leadership within unions, on civil rights, or on other issues related to the poor (). Horton was a self-proclaimed "radical hillbilly" and felt it was critical to bring out the expert information of poor people to inform the definitions of the problems they face and their solutions.[19] Learning Circles pose a series of questions to the group that elicit storytelling based on each person's experience and insights and ends the process with the question, "What are you going to do when you go back?" (Highlander 1989, 11). Horton's method of Learning Circles is inseparable from the retreat aspect of bringing activists from several communities together who are working on the same issue. Participants still travel to the Highlander Center in east Tennessee for at least two consecutive nights and sometimes for as long as two months. The resulting ongoing relationships that develop and the continued availability of assistance from Highlander staff in participants' political work are all integral to the model. In this model, the two facilitators participate in the conversation as people also invested in the issue as peers in the conversation.

Intergroup Dialogue

Intergroup Dialogue aims to explore cultural identities and differences, build deeper understanding of oppression and privilege, and create alliances across commonalities and differences for the purpose of social change (Nadga et al. 1999). Dialogue participants are organized by identities that have been polarized, such as men and women, blacks and whites, Protestants and Catholics, or Muslims and Jews (Clark 2002). In this approach, groups meet initially with others who share their identity. After appropriate preparation, the two groups combine. Two facilitators—one from each group represented—work together with both groups, share their stories and thinking in conversations along with participants, and pose questions that increase in risk over time (Clark 2002). For example, first joint meetings may explore the histories of each participant's name. From here the facilitators guide the conversations to explore commonalities and differences, areas of conflict (such as interracial dating), and, finally, action planning and alliance building (Alimo, Kelly, and Clark 2002). Materials assist facilitators in developing this progression, and there is no inherent need to rush termination. Some existing interracial and interreligious dialogues have been going on for years and even, in a few cases, decades.

Public Conversations Project

"Although PCP specializes in fostering dialogues about polarizing public issues, its methods have been effective in situations characterized by chilly disconnection and

suspicious silence as well as in heated and noisy conflicts" (Herzig and Chasin 2006, front matter). The Public Conversations Project has roots in family therapy and began developing its methodology in the crucible of dialogue on abortion during the early 1990s.[20] Elements of PCP dialogues are:

- Careful, collaborative planning that ensures clarity about what the dialogue is and isn't, and also fosters alignment between the goals of the dialogue and participants' wishes.

- Communication agreements that discourage counter-productive ways of talking about the issues and encourage genuine inquiry.

- Meeting designs that include supportive structures for reflecting, listening, and speaking questions that invite new ways of thinking about the issues.

- Facilitation that is informed by careful preparation and is responsive to the emerging needs and interests of the participants.

(Herzig and Chasin 2006, 3)

The materials created by the Public Conversations Project give a great deal of background information about design considerations, which creates the opportunity to apply their thinking and guidance to a wide variety of issues and in a wide range of settings (such as large and small groups and single and multiple sessions). They describe themselves as offering a general approach, not a strict structure or model (Herzig 2006). Nonetheless, PCP dialogues typically open with a phase of welcome and orientation to set the tone of the dialogue, followed by two or three structured rounds in which participants respond to carefully crafted questions. The purpose of the first question is "to invite participants to connect their views with their life experience" (Herzig and Chasin 2006, 112). "This begins a process of melting stereotypes and paves the way for later questions about 'what the heart of the matter' is for each participant and for sharing 'gray areas' as well as certainties related to the issue. After such a structured beginning, participants are invited to ask each other questions 'arising for genuine curiosity' and then to engage in a less structured conversation" (Herzig 2006).

Victim-Offender Mediation

Victim-Offender Mediation[21] developed as part of the field of restorative justice, an alternative to the traditional justice system. In restorative justice the crime is seen in reference to the violation of the relationships involved and thus the needs of the people involved can be more directly addressed (Brugger and Specht 2004). Facilitators meet serially with both those who have harmed another and those who have been harmed in preparation for the final face-to-face meeting. In order for VOM to be successful, all those involved must participate wholly voluntarily, and the person committing the harm must be willing and able to take responsibility for the harm done and have a desire to make things right.

The preparation work involves talking through possible scenarios that may occur during the face-to-face meeting and providing emotional support for the difficult dialogue ahead so that no surprises occur for anyone involved when it comes time for the final meeting. One example is working with the offender to consider what it will be like if the person they've harmed is not able to forgive them. During the highly structured face-to-face meeting, the victim has the opportunity to explain the impact of the offender's actions, ask questions, and state what he or she needs to make things right. The offender has the opportunity to hear the impact of his or her actions, apologize, and commit to taking agreed-upon actions to repair the harm done. It is important that facilitators be able to honor all those involved in these painful incidents by validating their perspectives, needs, and experience. Both training and supervision for this social technology are advised because of the awareness and information needed to walk with others through such delicate events in order to avoid re-victimizing people who have been harmed and shaming those who have erred.

Summary Tables

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 give an overview of purposes and highlight the basic characteristics of each of these social technologies as well as offering suggestions for where to find additional resources for each. The tables and resources were originally designed and compiled by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (Heierbacher et al. 2006 and 2006b) and are presented here in modified form, based on experience in using them.[22]

Insert Table 5.1 here

Insert Table 5.2 here

Reasons for Selection and Adaptations for Higher Education

These social technologies may be most useful for time-limited campus community dialogues and deliberations, both on and off campus. The discussion includes reasons for selecting each technology, adaptations that others have made for use in higher education, and particular considerations or potential pitfalls. Table 5.3 summarizes current thoughts on this and appears at the end of this section.

World Café and Conversation Café

These two social technologies are relatively low risk, can bring an element of fun to dialogue, require minimal preparation, and are highly adaptable in terms of the issues they can address. Participants need to understand that no action may occur as a result of these dialogues. Simultaneously, organizers need to be prepared to support the

momentum of participants if they initiate action. If desired, any room can be set up café style, and organizers can have fun doing this. Many D&D events require a level of seriousness in order to adequately address what is at stake; these social technologies allow the possibility of more lightness and as such may be more inviting for students or others for whom dialogue is new or unfamiliar. Because of moving from table to table, World Café is especially well suited for meeting a number of people and not well suited for topics in which participants need more time to get to know one another in order to speak authentically.

National Issues Forums and Citizen Choicework

The highly structured formats of these two social technologies—which address three or four predetermined approaches to an issue—allow for new facilitators to lead these deliberations. By presenting these approaches to participants for their reaction, they also create a low-risk avenue for those new to deliberation. Risk is reduced through preestablished, coherent, reasonable, and well-articulated perspectives, eliminating the need for participants to articulate their own perspectives or defend them. Developers of both technologies urge participants to make choices about how they think the issue should be addressed. Outcomes, such as sending the groups' thinking to NIF or to public officials should be determined beforehand so that participants know what, if anything, will be the results of their efforts. Simultaneously, organizers need to be prepared to support the momentum of participants if they initiate action.

Many faculty members have used these technologies in their classrooms either to address development of dialogue and deliberation skills or as a participatory means to address an issue related to course content. Courses have also been structured around the creation of new discussion guides. In addition, these technologies have been widely used to hold open-campus forums on issues of critical importance in the United States. These technologies are less applicable when the motivating concern of an event does not line up with any topic in the preestablished discussion guides. The process to create new guides is involved enough that it is difficult to use these technologies for new and immediate deliberation needs. These technologies can be used in community or mixed campus/community groups as well. Care needs to be taken regarding the length and accessibility of any written materials when community members are involved so as to not limit the diversity of perspectives based on reading ability.

Study Circles

Study Circles can be particularly useful for campus/community collaborations, the involvement of new participants in engagement efforts, and for new and creative solutions to campus or community issues. The highly structured nature of this technology makes it accessible for new facilitators from a wide variety of backgrounds, while the ability to run several small groups simultaneously allows for the involvement of many participants and facilitators. Participants are recruited with the understanding that collaborative action will result. The model itself guides facilitators to achieve this

outcome. When Study Circles are used in community contexts, written materials should be brief and highly accessible so as not to restrict the diversity of those involved.

Learning Circles

Coming from a foundation of popular education, Learning Circles were originally intended for nonreaders in order to promote their inherent wisdom. Groups like Educators for Community Engagement have considerable experience in adapting this model for curriculum use in higher education. They have published few written materials but do provide facilitator training. The retreat format is often dropped in adaptations for higher education. Because the work that happens does not involve crosstalk, *responding to other participants*, participants' only opportunity to follow up with one another about what they said in each round comes during meals and breaks in the retreat format, which is often multisession. In adapting Learning Circles to a single-session format, opportunities for follow-up, exploration, and relationship development can easily be lost, which may cause frustration for some dialogue participants. Learning Circles can be particularly well suited to gathering campus, community, or multicampus activists and organizers working on the same issue. This use lines up well with the original intent of gathering people already in motion on the same issue so that each has the support needed to take the next step.

Intergroup Dialogue

Intergroup Dialogue was developed within the culture and goals of higher education and is particularly well suited for campus use, whether curricular, cocurricular, or extracurricular. Dialogues can be lead by faculty, staff, or students, but considerable training or life experience may be needed for facilitators. Learning across polarized identity groups through conversations of increasing risk of misunderstanding and conflict and attending to any emotional triggers that arise during the dialogue should be the key intended outcomes of Intergroup Dialogues.

Public Conversations Project

The materials available from the PCP are excellent general resources regardless of which social technology is selected. Many of the insights and methods discussed can be adapted to other technologies. When a PCP dialogue is convened for which considerable potential for conflict and volatility exist, as much support and encouragement as possible needs to be offered to dialogue participants in order to allow for new conversations. Altering the relational impact of existing conflict is a primary consideration of PCP dialogues.

Victim-Offender Mediation

When applied thoughtfully and selectively to incidents of discrimination, vandalism, date

rape, and other kinds of victimage, Victim-Offender Mediation had the potential to give those harmed a clear place to turn and a means to address these incidents, and it can create a shift in campus culture toward fostering community members' accountability to one another. Confidentiality is critical for the success of this social technology. VOM provides an opportunity for learning in community members' lives outside the classroom, encouraging holistic institutional learning goals. Because of the highly sensitive nature of these dialogues, extensive training for facilitators and oversight of a coordinated campus VOM program is needed.

[Editor's Note: This is an area in which deliberation and dialogue directly overlap with clinical and therapeutic models of group practice and family therapy. It is clear that both social work faculty and advanced students have contributions to offer to their campuses in this area, and our hope is that in the future, social work practitioners in these areas will begin to explore more fully the interface with Victim-Offender Mediation methodology in the same manner that the Newfield and Newfield chapter in this volume explores the interface between family therapy and sustained dialogue.]

Insert Table 5.3 here

Personal Qualities of Dialogue and Deliberation Leaders

The primary focus of this chapter has been on event design and matching event purpose with an appropriate social technology. For those who find they have a passion for dialogue and deliberation work, there is another integral aspect of the field: developing personal qualities that support dialogue and deliberation work. Patricia Wilson (2004, 3) says:

> An effective process leader knows the social technologies for civic engagement and when best to use them. But more importantly, she or he has done the deep inner work necessary to be 'strong like a mountain and spacious like the air'—to be centered in the face of conflict and emotion, to connect with the other's humanity without judgment or defensiveness, and to be aware of the invisible energy field of the whole.

As the dialogues we lead require increasing skill from us and increasing risk by participants, these personal qualities aid in creating the needed safety. Safety must not be equated with participants' or conveners' comfort. Overall, a high level of safety in a deliberation or dialogue is needed in order to enable potentially uncomfortable conversations where real risks exist. Some particularly useful qualities are our desire and ability to:

- Understand the reasonableness inherent in each individual's perspective
- Be present and responsive to the individuals and the group in front of you amid changing dynamics

- Avoid being the center of attention

- Do your homework to understand the life experiences of others different from ourselves

- Be a full, imperfect, real human being in leadership

- Know and understand our own triggers and how to reduce their impact on those with whom we work

- Admit what we don't know to ourselves and to those with whom we work

- Ask for help

For those in the role of instructor, additional challenges can occur in leading dialogue and deliberation events. These two hats can be difficult to transition between because of the different goals of each, particularly the role of judging competency as an instructor and encouraging individual expression and thinking and possibly personal risk as a dialogue and deliberation leader. Because of this, particular care will be needed in determining whether instructors offer their opinions as they lead.

Many other qualities of dialogue and deliberation leaders exist in addition to those listed above. How to place your feet upon the path of intentionally developing these qualities can be found in others' writing, particularly the writings of those who've developed D&D innovations. Development of these inner qualities and habits is a critical complement to our skills as facilitators and is crucial to increasing our capacity to respond to the unplanned human interactions we encounter every day. Our individual development of these qualities is essential to being "the change you wish to see in the world," as Gandhi suggested.

Conclusion

This chapter is primarily intended to be a useful resource for individuals within higher education who are planning dialogue and deliberation events for their campus or the wider community. It is offered as a beginning map to point readers in directions that will be useful for both design and implementation of deliberation and dialogue events. A great deal of further information on the entire field of dialogue and deliberation can be found on the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation's website (www.thataway.org) and other sources.

6

Deliberation, Dialogue, and Deliberative Democracy in Social Work Education and Practice

Roger A. Lohmann and Nancy Lohmann

The interrelated themes of public talk—deliberation, dialogue, citizen participation, and organizational democracy—figure importantly in contemporary social theory and political philosophy (Barber 1988; Elstub 2008; Cohen and Arato 1992; Gutmann and Thompson 2002; Habermas 1984) and a number of other disciplines, including public administration (Morse 2006; Mooney and Eikenberry 2006; Stivers 2009; and the Williams and Ludeman/Gelles chapters in this volume). What may be less clear is the original emergence of many of these ideas in earlier forms as part of the formulation of social work as a field early in the twentieth century. Closely related ideas of public talk were of central importance in the settlement house, neighborhood, and community-centers movements and in the establishment of social group work, community-organization, and social-administration perspectives in social work education and practice.

For several decades early in the twentieth century, the handling of these ideas in social work was what is described throughout this volume as pracademic, as practitioners such as Jane Addams and Mary Parker Follett (as well as hostile opponents such as Walter Lippman and more traditional elements of the "ivory tower" academy) engaged academic philosophers such as John Dewey and George Herbert Mead on these questions. The result was a rich and powerful strand of thought and action that continues to nourish and enrich social work today.

Each year, numerous proposals are put forth in social work journals, at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, and in other forums for the development of new forms of social work education and practice in new arenas. For some in social work, proposals for active citizenship through greater integration of public deliberation and sustained dialogue into social work may appear to be just another case of such proposals. Such a conclusion, however, would be in error. For one thing, any such proposals that are to go anywhere will inevitably be filtered through processes of deliberation not unlike those considered here. In social work such proposals also fit easily into a long tradition of similar efforts. A more important difference, however, is that proposals regarding deliberation and dialogue are actually a return to a rich chapter in the social work tradition.

Far from representing any departure from a nondeliberative social work past, greater attention to public deliberation and sustained dialogue in social work education and practice represents an embrace and continuation of a well-documented past: an affirmation of important parts of the history of the field and expression of some of its most basic principles. One telling bit of evidence is the way in which the social work formulation of "the individual in her social environment" not only brings together

psychological and sociological perspectives but also explicitly incorporates an important civic or civil-society dimension. That dimension, together with social work values on human growth and development, explicitly connotes the idea of a citizen-individual in a civic environment of rights and responsibilities that directly fits the conception of a self-regulating (or "autonomous") individual in a self-regulating (or "democratic") community. This is the very essence of the "civic republican" formula that some in political philosophy find to be an important recent innovation. Yet this configuration is so basic and so deeply embedded in the core of the social work worldview that there is no need to label or make constant reference to it. Fundamental notions of deliberation and dialogue are so deeply woven into the fabric of social work education that it would take a major reconstruction of the field to remove them.

Modern social work theory and practice are built in fundamental ways on a base of several early models of deliberation and dialogue, together with several distinct models of group process and at least two models of deliberative democracy that arose during the Progressive Era (1889–1918).[23] Ever since that time, diverse individuals and groups within social work have continued to build on this deliberative base in various ways. Some of these contributors were more successful than others; several have suffered from serious neglect; and some are very difficult to properly assess and integrate fully into the contemporary profession of social work.

In some respects, social work interest in the full range of civil rights movements for racial and ethnic minorities; women; the mentally ill; handicapped and disabled persons; gay, bisexual, and transgendered people; and others have simultaneously been efforts to give civic voice to those who had been silent. Most such efforts have also had a strong deliberative core. In social work, the issue was never just what our elected leaders can do differently to better serve us. It was always a question of what can we, as active, engaged citizens and community members, do to make our world a better place. This may involve advocacy, of course, to influence elected and appointed officials. But, as the long history of interest in workplace democracy in social work attests, it is frequently also a question of more active forms of civic engagement, including deliberation and dialogue.

For example, although the "maximum feasible participation of the poor" and welfare-rights initiatives of the 1960s (both of which were partly deliberative in nature) have been widely and loudly condemned as failures by neoconservatives,[24] many of the associated ideas of participation, involvement, and the empowerment of clients, customers, and citizens have continued to exercise strong motivation for many people in social work and for those in other fields who have recently become interested in citizen participation and deliberative democracy issues (including all of the contributors to this volume not affiliated with social work).

Various commitments to deliberation and dialogue have not always been an unmixed blessing for social work. The continuing deliberative base sometimes lends an air of instability and incoherence to social work that not only has obscured its purposes and projects but also demonstrates some of the very theoretical problems that remain unresolved in deliberative democracy theory.[25] For example, the continuing flow of proposals for new forms of social work practice and new client groups far outstrips the

ability and resources of social work to respond fully to such an abundance arising from so many directions. In this context, ideas are seldom rejected; most just generate insufficient interest. This brings to mind criticisms of the alleged inability of deliberative democracy to reach definitive decisions.[26]

Social work has never been an applied field merely in the sense of a consumer of deliberative ideas developed elsewhere, however, as practice models positioning it as a consumer of more basic social science and theory would imply. In fact, several of the most fundamental ideas associated with deliberative democracy theory arose directly out of social work practice experience and continue to function in different forms within contemporary social work theory and practice. In contemporary social group work and community practice, one can easily find self-conscious continuity with some of the earliest theoretical traditions.[27] But these traditions are also deeply woven, in ways almost too numerous to identify, into the basic culture of the contemporary profession and practice of social work.

Basic Approach

The remainder of this chapter will point to the role of deliberative perspectives in early-twentieth-century social work and highlight the ideas of a few key people from whom much of the deliberative posture in social work is derived. It will also show that these early initiatives have continued to define and inspire many in contemporary social work. Central to the emergence of these ideas were intellectual leaders of the intertwined community centers, social group work, and settlement house movements who, even as they inspired others outside social work,[28] also contributed to the rise of a distinct pracademic environment that has continued to foster and nurture crucial ideas on dialogue and deliberative democracy to the present day.

Beginning in the first decades of the twentieth century, important ideas about the nature of social groups and group process, the importance of communication as something more than simple message transmission, and a fundamental group-democratic orientation arose and were blended with the pragmatic idealism of such seminal figures as Jane Addams and Mary Parker Follett as well as dozens of their supporters, followers, and contemporaries.[29] While it would be easy to reconstruct this history as the emergence of practice from the theoretical work of philosophers—notably John Dewey but also Josiah Royce and a bevy of idealists such as T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet associated with the origins of the welfare state—reconstructing this history as a one-way transfer from theory into practice seriously distorts the it and downplays the independent creative contributions of Addams, Follett, and other pracademics, who thought long and hard and wrote much about their own and others' practices. It should be clear that the democratic nature of group process has been fully and fundamentally realized over a longer period of time in social work than in any other discipline, profession, or field of practice.

Unfortunately, the response to the social work record in this regard in the wider academic and intellectual community remains mixed. One can search high and low in political philosophy and social theory for anything more than hesitant, half-hearted, and grudging acknowledgment that anyone even remotely associated with social work ever gave a moment's thought to these questions. Characteristically, such recognitions when they do occur are often encapsulated into a single sentence or phrase. For example, it is frequently noted in passing that Mary Parker Follett's *The New State*, a major work of deliberative political theory, was grounded in her experience—nine years of experience—in the community-centers movement.

At the same time, some of the implications of dialogical perspectives continue to prove challenging for social work education and practice, and not everyone in the profession is altogether comfortable with embracing this legacy.[30] One question that proves especially vexing for contemporary social work education is whether there can be a single preferred "method," technology, or proper protocol that defines the right way or best practice for a free and enlightened group of people to engage in dialogue or deliberation.[31] Is the choice of how to conduct a discussion entirely up to the members in a particular group setting? Or can someone outside the situation (whether a methodologist, philosopher, theorist, or professional "best practices" panel) prescribe the correct way for citizens to engage one another in deliberation or specify the criteria deliberators ought to use to evaluate their own performance? Certainly, room must be allowed to learn from past experience. However, the line between benefiting from past experience and proscribing future conduct proves to be a difficult one to draw.

A question that perplexed Jane Addams, among others, and remains unresolved today is the extent to which any robustly deliberative democracy worthy of the name can be said to be the unique province or professional base of any group or profession.[32] This is true not only for ideas but for people as well: major questions arise about the extent to which exclusive labels such as "social worker," "sociologist," "adult educator," or "philosopher" can be successfully pinned on several of the historic figures in this area, including Jane Addams, Mary Parker Follett, John Dewey, Eduard Lindeman, or the still largely unknown L. J. Hanifan, whom we introduce and discuss in this chapter.

Pracademic Origins

We can easily identify several original pracademic formulations of the ideas of deliberative democracy in social work history. The question of getting beyond traditional representative democracy was not first posed and answered by social or political theorists or academics as so much current theoretical work on the topic appears to suggest.[33] It arose instead in the early-twentieth-century context of Progressive Era social work practice and education, from key figures seeking to put their own ideals into practice and to reflect upon, understand, evaluate, and explain their resulting practice experiences.[34] Important pracademic work on deliberation and dialogue by Jane Addams and numerous

other less well known figures, including Mary Parker Follett, Robert Woods, and L. J. Hanifan, proceeded from a consistent desire to identify and practice new forms of democratic behavior and to build new democratic institutions. This work occurred simultaneously with and influenced the philosophical writings of John Dewey in particular (Morris 1993; Westbrook 1991). This pattern is quite different from the theory-into practice flow of later practitioners and more abstract and general political or social theory on the subject.

For those attempting to work out theoretical answers to the most fundamental questions of deliberative democracy, the highly original work done within Progressive Era social work should constitute an important resource. Instead, the context in which the insights of Jane Addams arose, for example, have been almost entirely ignored by both practitioners (including, in some cases, social worker educators and researchers seemingly unfamiliar with their own traditions) and, until recently, theorists.[35] The reasons for this are unknown. They may be nothing more substantial than indifference, sheer lack of familiarity, or that the sometimes florid and idealistic language in which Addams and Follett, not to mention the British idealists and others of the period, expressed themselves runs counter to the flat realism of today and often grates on the modern ear. This is probably connected, for example, to long-standing claims that John Dewey is "difficult" to read and Jane Addams is naïve and romantic.

Nowhere is this neglect more disconcerting than in Mary Parker Follett's highly original theory that links group, neighborhood, and the political state; those few who acknowledge her work agree that this theory grew directly out of her social work practice experience in the community center of the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston from 1900 through 1908 and is linked to her later, equally original work on organizational democracy. Instead of using Follett and her community-center experience to get a leg up on their own interests, contemporary theorists of deliberative democracy making many of the same claims appear to believe (or wish their readers to believe) that theirs is entirely original work. For example, nearly eighty years after Follett first laid out much the same point in *The New State*, recent work by a political theorist (Elstrub 2008) highlights secondary associations (e.g., groups) as a suitable infrastructure for deliberative democracy—without a single mention of Follett or *The New State*. If Elstrub is correct in drawing this connection (and we believe she is), then so was Follett, and that deserves mention.

Even Jürgen Habermas, whose work is otherwise deep, wise, and thorough, cannot be entirely excused from the tendency to overlook this earlier work, nor can contemporary social work. A great deal of Follett's highly original point of view has been incorporated into the core of contemporary social work and social administration theory. but almost completely without attribution.[36]

Sadly, neglect of the contributions of Progressive Era social work to deliberative democracy theory has been so complete and thorough that it might require an entire volume just to document the omissions. At the same time, the contemporaneous orientation and lack of historical insight among practitioners of deliberation and dialogue are no different from what is found in practice in other arenas. For example, the "core

principles" of public deliberation identified by a group of practitioners in 2008 endorse principles that any assembly of group and community social workers would have been completely comfortable with seventy-five years ago. (See the appendix in this volume for the text of this code.)

The next section briefly recounts the contributions of Jane Addams and Mary Parker Follett as deliberative theorists. Finally, we will note in passing the roles played by John Dewey and a forgotten progressive education reformer named L. J. Hanifan, who has been recognized only within the past decade as the original American source of the concept of social capital.[37]

Conventional Wisdom

The conventional wisdom on Addams, Dewey, Follett, and even Hanifan is instructive: Addams is currently an iconic figure in American culture as well as in social work, although many inside social work and beyond seem uncertain as to why she is important and it is not unheard of for students to assign her joint responsibility with Mary Richmond for the development of social casework. Her role as a pracademic is internationally recognized. She is one of only a handful of modern public intellectuals to invent a distinctive political/civic institution (the settlement house). Dewey, over much of his sixty-year public career was *the* quintessential American philosopher, the twentieth-century equivalent of Emerson, who nevertheless fell into obscurity shortly after his death and remained there for nearly half a century. Social work was one of numerous fields for which Dewey played a major defining role before he largely disappeared from public view. He is more or less singlehandedly responsible for the original problem-solving perspective, for example. His work only began to be reconsidered as of major importance forty years after his death, after it drew the attention of such European intellectuals as Habermas. Follett and Hanifan, like most of the social work figures cited previously, have been consigned more or less permanently to the recycling bin of history. Hanifan is currently making a cameo appearance in connection with his pioneering work on social capital, while Follett appears to have gone through several cycles of being recalled and forgotten again.[38] When she is remembered today, it is most often as a pioneer of management theory. Her early career is often presented as a set of academic and theoretical contributions, beginning with a study of the U.S. House of Representatives (1896) and her theory of what she termed the "New State" (1918), followed by her "mature" pracademic work in management and business organization (1941).

In connection with his research on the role of social capital in civil society, Robert Putnam discovered the completely neglected Hanifan and his early formulation of the theoretically important concept of social capital. (Putnam 2000, 19; Lohmann 2008) What Putnam did not note is the degree to which Hanifan's contribution was also a pracademic one within the same tradition as Addams, Follett, and Dewey. He was a functioning state education official (an "education bureaucrat") supervising rural schools in West Virginia and seemingly energized by the same set of progressive ideas about

neighborhoods, groups, community action, education, and democracy that energized the other three thinkers. This connection alone should be enough to forge a strong theoretical link between social capital as trusting relationships and networks, the civil society tradition, and deliberative democracy theory.

In addition, Hanifan appears also to have been the first to note in print that schools are the community centers in rural communities—one of the most powerful and generally accepted principles of contemporary rural social work (Hanifan 1916; Lohmann and Lohmann 2006). Despite the continuing vigor of the ideas he first presented, Hanifan remains unfamiliar to most people in social work, who may not be aware of Putnam's rediscovery.[39]

Jane Addams

Political philosophers, social scientists, historians, and other non–social workers have in recent decades rediscovered Jane Addams in many guises. In addition to the many claims made on her by social work, she has been said to be a Chicago School sociologist (Deegan 1984, 1988), feminist theorist (Fischer, Nackenoff, and Chmielewski 2009), public administration theorist (Stivers 2009), pragmatist philosopher (Menand 1997), public intellectual (Lasch 1986), social philosopher (Lasch 1965), and peace theorist (Elshtain 2002) to name just a few. In Fisher, Nackenoff, and Chmielewski (2009) Addams is "an extraordinary activist and thinker in many ways ahead of her time" (1). Reasonable (albeit anachronistic) cases can be made for each of these claims, and in Addams's case they are certainly not (as some of their advocates appear to suggest) mutually exclusive.

Unfortunately, too much of the Addams renaissance distorts the pracademic Addams and distances her from social work even as it succumbs to the priority of theory. Was Jane Addams all of the things these authors suggest? Yes, almost certainly. But did she also have a deep and abiding commitment to the social work practice community of her day? That, too, should be undeniable. And as part of the overall package Addams had a strong record of commitment to deliberation and dialogue and her own unique blend of deliberative democracy theory that for several decades after her death in 1935 was dismissed by philosophers and others outside social work as naïve and idealistic, but in which new generations have found interest.

The very project of the young, educated, bourgeois "urban settlers" Addams, Ellen Gates Starr, and the others who followed them in establishing residence in inner-city neighborhoods of poor immigrants was fundamentally dialogical: Hull House residents sought to speak, listen, learn, and teach. Certainly, they did other things as well (although a great deal less "relief," casework, and family visiting than many contemporary social work students are comfortable with).

According to their own reports, one of the first things that Addams and Ellen Gates Starr did upon moving into the Hull House in 1889 was to hold a salon (or "open house") for the purpose of meeting and talking with residents of the neighborhood. One would be hard pressed to find a comparable example of a theoretically informed

dialogical democracy initiative anywhere at the time. From the very start, Hull House was tied to a basic model of deliberative democracy. This is evident in the three "ethical principles" that Addams and Starr endorsed at the beginning: "*to teach by example, to practice cooperation, and to practice social democracy, that is, egalitarian, or democratic, social relations across class lines*" (Knight 2005, 182). Hull House was not an experiment in policy advocacy or lobbying Congress or the Illinois legislature, nor did its residents aspire to organize charity, like the Charity Organization movement, or "practice cooperation" like the Roycrofters by forming a production cooperative. We have the testimony of the founders that Hull House was, from the start, an effort at cross-class dialogue as part of a larger experiment in cooperation as conflict reduction and equality and social democracy in social relations.

This Hull House model of deliberation and dialogue continued to evolve throughout Addams's long career. The Hull House model, like Deweyan ideas on social democracy and Follett's model articulated in *The New State*, also influenced the development of social work education and practice with respect to groups and the desirability of face-to-face group interaction of people with differences, and in the basic commitment to group and organizational democracy.

John Dewey

Cause and effect are almost impossible to tease apart in the case of Addams and her longtime friend and colleague John Dewey. Both through Addams and on his own, Dewey was also a major contributor to the early (and contemporary) social work model of deliberation in addition to his contribution of the social work problem-solving model. Until well into the 1970s, social work texts routinely cited a number of Dewey's articles, notably "How We Think" (1910). Dewey began his long career in the nineteenth century as a Hegelian idealist but early in the twentieth century began to emerge as one of the founders of a distinct American pragmatism. Festenstein (2009), in the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy suggests a number of characteristics that survived this major transition in Dewey's thought: "holism about the individual; anti-elitism; democratic participation as an aspect of individual freedom; and *the unconventional view of democracy as a form of relationship inherent not merely in political institutions but in a wide range of social spheres*" (emphasis added).

It should be immediately apparent that these are deeply embedded in social work and laid the groundwork for the social work model of deliberative democracy. Festenstein might have added to this list the importance of evidence-based social experimentation, personal growth grounded in education, and a strong commitment to the kind of communication-based social relations that Habermas and other more recent political theorists also redounded from Dewey. These same beliefs are also attributable to Addams, Follett, Hanifan, and much early social work. Although Dewey is still difficult to read and interpret half a century after his death, there can be little doubt that his influence upon the evolution of social work education and practice was strong, and that a distinctly Deweyan model of deliberative and democratic social relations, derived in part from his relations with Addams and Hull House, was an important part of that influence.

Mary Parker Follett

The evidence in support of Mary Parker Follett (1868–1933) as an early pracademic of deliberation and dialogue is equally decisive, even though she is even less known and celebrated than her contemporaries Addams and Dewey. Follett's career is often divided into two phases, pre- and post-management. Her unique contributions to deliberative democracy become more clear and convincing when it is divided, as Mattson (1998) does, into three periods, each marked by one of her three principal publications. Her career began with a conventional period of academic study of history with—like Dewey, the theorists of the British welfare state, and her mentor, Josiah Royce—a strong emphasis on Hegelian, idealist philosophy. In 1896 Follett authored a solid and well-received institutional analysis of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Following her inability to secure an academic appointment, the second period in Follett's career began with nine years of community social work practice (1900–1908) and culminated in her second and most remarkable book, *The New State: Group Organization, the Solution of Popular Government*, published in 1918. In the third and final phase of her career, Follett concentrated on applying insights gained from her social work phase to democratizing business organizations, as evidenced in her collection of essays published posthumously in *Dynamics of Administration* (1941). **40**

Since her death two years before Addams, Follett has remained a major figure in administrative and management theory, but both the pivotal importance of her social work experience and her status as a political philosopher of deliberative democracy periodically fall into anonymity. To understand her enduring contributions, we need to look more closely at Follett's contributions to deliberative democratic thought.

Follett's 1896 House study (and her even less known biography of Henry Clay) "conformed to a developing consensus in professional political science" to accept the growing power of the national government and the declining relevance of older forms of popular self-government like New England town meetings (Mattson 1998, xxxiii). In short, like other Progressives (notably Herbert Croly and Walter Lippman), the early Follett argued that the civil society of local communities observed by de Tocqueville was obsolete, necessarily pushed aside by a representative democracy of elected officials and administrative experts deemed more suitable for an industrial society in which citizenship consisted principally of voting in elections and watching. In this she should be seen as a precursor of important parts of the urbanization-industrialization thesis later made famous by Wilensky and LeBeaux (1965) and the Dahl (1963) pluralist policy-process model that still form the basis of prevailing social work perspectives on policy and advocacy.

In her second phase, this representational view was not only modified but completely upended in ways that still have implications for social work education and practice. Those most familiar with Follett's career generally agree there is only one factor to explain her radical shift away from representative democracy to the view expressed in *The New State*, and that is her involvement in community social work. "By the 1910s," Kevin Mattson, editor of the 1998 edition of *The New State* says, "Follett had radically changed her political ideas. . . . The same woman who had once written that 'the democracy most to be desired' was the 'representative assembly,' now argued that 'representation is not the main fact of political life; the main concern of politics is *modes*

of association' " (Mattson 1998, xxxix). She also wrote: "you cannot establish democratic control by legislation . . . ; there is only one way to get democratic control—by people learning how to evolve collective ideals" (xxxix).

Follett's nine years of social work practice (1900–1908) in the Boston community-center movement are generally acknowledged as the sole motivation for this profound shift in her theoretical orientation. Mattson tells us that

> Mary Parker Follett followed in Jane Addams' footsteps, always working within the parameters set by a society that allowed only a circumspect involvement of women in public affairs. Ironically, Follett's lack of academic opportunities provided her with new forms of experience *that radically altered her intellectual ideas about democracy*. Experience taught Follett a great deal more about politics than a career in academia ever could.

> (Mattson 1998. xxxv–xxxvi, emphasis added)

It is important to note that Follett was not an urban settler in the Addams mode. Instead, she worked in Boston in the community-schools movement founded by Robert A. Woods in Rochester, N.Y. (Woods [1929] 1971), which sought to redefine schools as community centers open to the social and civic participation of neighborhood residents. This was the same movement that influenced our fourth (and least known) figure. L. J. Hanifan was engaged in similar community-school efforts as superintendent of rural instruction in West Virginia (1912–1920).[41] Before looking further at Hanifan, however, we need to look closely at Follett's *New State.*

The New State

Benjamin Barber, political philosopher of deliberative democracy and author of *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (1984) which is itself a major theoretical contribution to deliberative democracy theory, calls Follett's *The New State*

> an extraordinary paean to a stronger more participatory form of American democracy that was *drawn in equal parts from Follett's academic acumen as a student of democratic theory, Royce and Hegel as well as Laski and Cole, and from her own personal experience in local democracy and community organization*.

> (Barber 1984, xv)

In other words, like Addams and Hanifan, Follett also has solid pracademic credentials, although the social work connection is not mentioned explicitly. Barber goes on to offer this assessment of the book:

> In *The New State*, she writes what must be regarded as an American classic of participatory democracy. She keeps arms length from nationalist

accounts without falling into parochialism, and she distinguishes deliberative, education-grounded forms of direct democracy from mob-rule caricatures first drawn and then assailed by Lippman and other liberal critics of too much participation.

(Barber 1984, xv)

As Mattson observes, "For Follett, *as with other social centers activists*, the democratic citizen was committed to public dialogue" (1998, 313). As part of her transformation, Follett replaced her earlier nationalist emphasis with a local/community orientation still recognizable by social workers: "In a neighborhood group," Follett insisted, "you have the stimulus and the bracing effect of many different experiences and ideals." (Follett 1918, 196)

Yet rather than signaling the beginning of a major shift in thinking about American democracy, both the community-centers movement and Follett's (as well as Hanifan's) contributions came at the very end of the Progressive Era and soon were ignored, unread, and largely forgotten. Thus, her career took yet another turn. "After the decline of the social centers movement after World War I—a decline due largely to the mistakes made by activists and thinkers in the movement itself—Follett became interested in modern business management" (Mattson 1998, lviii).

The essence of Follett's perspective on deliberation was a clustered hierarchy of associations, beginning with neighborhood-based face-to-face groups practicing deliberation and democratic social relationships. Her nested-institutions view (groups within organizations within neighborhoods within communities within society) is still evident in the social work education models of today. Yet even as Follett went on to radically transform theories of business administration and organizational life, her contributions to a strong and vital social work–based original perspective on deliberative democracy fell from view.

L. J. (Lyda Judson) Hanifan

We turn now to the final example of a pracademic contemporary of Addams, Dewey, and Follett who also played a role in the pracademic conceptualization of deliberative democracy that was lost to history for decades, and whose major contribution to deliberative democracy and social work may yet lie in the future. L. J. Hanifan (1879–1931), from his position of superintendent of rural instruction for the West Virginia Department of Education, authored a number of books and articles that enable us to place him squarely in the same community-centers movement as Follett (Hanifan 1916, 1920) They also establish him, as Putnam noted, as *the* original American pracademic to formulate the concept of social capital, a concept tied by Robinson and others in this volume to deliberative theory and practice.[42] From the vantage point of social work, he may also be the first in print to give voice to a principle still fundamental to rural social work practice: that local schools are the vital centers of rural communities.

More than seventy years after his death, Hanifan's writings on social capital and community centers were rediscovered by Robert Putnam, who discussed them in *Bowling*

Alone (2000, 19). The known facts of Hanifan's life and career as a West Virginia progressive are still sketchy and need not be repeated here.[43] Hanifan's writings are clearly those of a pracademic (he was one of eight original members of the West Virginia Department of Education and involved in policy efforts setting high school curriculum requirements for the state). He was also clearly writing in the context of the same community-centers movement as Follett. Between 1912 and 1920, Hanifan authored ten known articles, chapters, and reports that not only are the first publications identifying the concept of social capital but also link him with the community-schools movement and position him as a potential source in rural social work. In all, five of Hanifan's ten known publications, three journal articles and two books, deal with neighborhood (in his case, rural rather than urban) and the concept of schools as community centers.

Hanifan's definition of "social capital" (1916) reflects not only an orientation similar to Addams, Dewey, and Follett but also an affinity for, if not direct organizational ties to, a social work orientation:

> The tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit. . . . The individual is helpless socially, if left to himself. If he comes into contact with his neighbor, and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community. The community as a whole will benefit by the cooperation of all its parts, while the individual will find in his associations the advantages of the help, the sympathy, and the fellowship of his neighbors.
>
> (Quoted from Putnam 2000, 19)

Social work is only beginning to take notice of the idea of social capital, and to date there has been no discussion linking social capital to the deliberative interests of the field. But making that connection is a very small intellectual leap.

Contemporary Social Work as a Deliberative Environment

The ideas of Dewey, Addams, Follett, Hanifan, and others of the settlement house and community-centers movements have been so deeply engrained in social work that the entire profession is organized as a democratically constituted, deliberative body, where decisions are seldom made by voting but on the basis of emergent consensus following organized group discussion. There are many groups, organizations, and focused publics[44] involved in the social construction of contemporary social work as an activity, programmatic enterprise, and institution, and each is concerned in its own way with issues of definition, identity, and boundaries of professional education and practice. The

very fact of this plurality means that important elements of dialogue and deliberation are built into the theory and practice of modern social work, as they are of many disciplines and professions.

Social work in the early twenty-first century both as a profession and as an academic discipline has established itself more securely than ever before. It is at least partly in the nature of the civic republican conception of professions and disciplines that the various organizations and entities that define modern social work can be seen as autonomous, self-governing collectivities of autonomous, self-governing people.[45] Indeed, from a deliberative-theory perspective, social work professionals can be seen as autonomous pople working within a self-governing profession, and clients can be seen as people wishing to achieve greater personal autonomy. This is a key element of the (service- or supply-) worker side of the social work emphasis on human development and the social environment. In order for social workers to make sense of what they are doing, as well as evaluate when they have done it successfully, there must be some measure of widespread agreement on the nature, scope, and dimensions of the activity of social work. While for many "authorities" this is seen as a preliminary—and one-time—consideration, the reality is that deliberative and dialogical processes focused on two disarmingly simple questions—What is social work? Who is a social worker?—have been matters of almost continuous dialogue and deliberation within the field for at least the last century.

The institution of social work in all of its diverse manifestations has grown to include a bewildering variety of licensed and certified professionals, clients, volunteers, and paraprofessionals, at least some of whom are organized into various self-governing membership organizations and mutual aid and self-help groups. The contemporary social work profession is a highly complex entity. It includes not only the 167,000 or so members who belong to the National Association of Social Workers but also a large number of non-NASW members licensed for the practice of social work by their states, and all of the graduates of the nearly 200 MSW and more than 500 BSW programs in colleges and universities accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Moreover, social work practice and education in the United States have become the working models for the organization of social work in many other parts of the world through such organizations as the International Association of Social Work, the International Association of Schools of Social Work, and assorted national and regional professional and academic associations in different countries.

Because there are so many groups, organizations, and focused publics involved in the social construction of professional social work as an enterprise and institution and each is in some way concerned with managing the definition, identity, and boundaries of professional education and practice, important elements of dialogue and deliberation are built into the very warp and woof of modern social work.

The delegate assembly of NASW, the accreditation commission of CSWE, and the diverse state licensing bodies are routinely involved in fundamental concerns of defining and elaborating what is regarded as legitimate practice and preparation for practice. Dialogue and deliberation are also fundamental to the constitution of social work education and practice. A thoroughgoing value commitment—indeed, one of the core social work values in the view of social work educators and the official code of

ethics established by NASW—is the idea of self-determination, for the profession as well as for clients.**46**

However, social work practice and all of the assorted international, national, state, and local associations that support it are highly complex and contingent matters, and the coherent, ongoing operations of the profession are dependent in part on continuous, on-going discussions.

In all of these senses, dialogue and deliberation in their general meanings are built into the very organizational efforts that go into creating, identifying, and sustaining the institutions of modern social work. It is important to note, however, that the adjectives "public" and "sustained" in the subtitle of this book are important: not all of the deliberations that construct social work are public and not all of the dialogue is sustained. Some are the proprietary talks of specific organizations and interests, and some are sporadic and short-term.

However, careful reading of the other chapters in this book will make clear to most readers that the specific models of public deliberation and sustained dialogue have many applications in social work. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the long and continuing history of discussion of that momentous question: *What, exactly, is social work?* Practitioners, academics, employers, students, the NASW Delegate Assembly, and many others have periodically revisited this question through deliberations over most of the past century. This is also true in the case of creating and sustaining public understanding of the rationales for the profession and for professional practice and for resolving some of the many existential dilemmas that arise in application of the values of the social work profession to daily life on an ongoing basis.

Conclusion: Implications for Curriculum

Given the role of social work curricula in specifying the nature and parameters of social work practice, one might ask how deliberation and dialogue have been addressed in the curriculum of accredited social work education programs. In order to fully appreciate that relationship, it may be appropriate to briefly describe how the curriculum influences social work practice.

One of the changes over the last few decades in the field of social work is the increasing requirement that people identifying themselves as social workers be licensed as such. While the requirements for licensing differ from state to state, one common thread is that to be eligible for licensure, a candidate must have graduated from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Thus, the expectations for accredited programs influence who is recognized as a social worker and the kind of practice he or she may be prepared to do. Thus, in the present and future, engagement with deliberation and dialogue by social workers is, to a significant degree, influenced by some measure of recognition of these processes in accredited curricula. The curricular requirements for all accredited programs are found in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education. The most recent standards, adopted in 2008 are available online at http://www.cswe.edu.

While neither the current nor the preceding standards explicitly use the words "deliberative" or "dialogue," it is clear from some of the standards that there is a continuing legacy of Jane Addams and Mary Parker Follett and that some measure of deliberation and dialogue is expected in social work education. One such example may be found in Educational Policy 2.1.10. In that section, one finds such statements as, "Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels." The terms "dynamic" and "interactive" certainly refer to processes that are a part of deliberation and dialogue. It is also clear from social work's involvement with broader cultural values, social problems, and social policy that these multiple dynamic and interactive processes also apply to group and community deliberation and dialogue processes. For example, the engagement of the campus sustained dialogue movement with issues of racism, as described by Saunders and Parker, Tukey and Nemeroff. and Van Til in this volume, is an obvious extension of social work concerns.

Subsections of Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards also describe a specific deliberative process. Section 2.1.10 (a) on Engagement includes, "Develop a mutually agreed on focus of work and desired outcomes." Section 2.1.10 (b) indicates the need to "develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives." Neither of these would be possible without engagement in processes of deliberation and dialogue.

The continuing importance of deliberation and dialogue for social work education may also be found in Educational Policy 3.0, which refers to "the culture of human interchange; the spirit of inquiry; this support for difference and diversity" among other qualities that inform a student's learning and development. Thus, while the terms "deliberation" and "dialogue" do not appear in CSWE accreditation standards, it is clear that such activities are compatible with and even expected by the standards.

The dialogue that is expected is demonstrated in several ways as a student progresses through the social work curriculum. First, it likely demonstrated in the classes taken by a student via the interaction among faculty members and students. Such classes typically place an emphasis on students providing feedback on the concepts introduced. In fact, to facilitate such feedback, it is not uncommon for students and the faculty member to sit in a large circle as a means of enhancing dialogue. The use of this kind of seating arrangement also demonstrates equality among the participants in the discussion.

Social work education often makes use of group assignments in classroom work. This is not a matter of accident or coincidence but a direct result of the continuing recognition in social work education of the importance of group process, a recognition that is directly traceable back to Jane Addams, Mary Parker Follett, and others. As Follett observed in *The New State*, group process inevitably requires deliberation and dialogue among the participants. While students sometimes object that work is not evenly distributed among group members when such groups are used, their continued use indicates the importance placed on dialogue and developing the skills needed to engage in it.

The most recent CSWE accreditation standards also incorporate the concept of a signature pedagogy for social work: field instruction. The use of field instruction, grounded as it is in the historic insights of Dewey, Addams, and Follett, also emphasizes

the importance of deliberation and dialogue among students and field instructors and classroom faculty. In recognition of this, many undergraduate and graduate social work programs have adopted the model of the *field seminar*, in which aspects of the students' experience are engaged, assessed, and evaluated in an educational intervention. The process begins when the student and his or her field instructor develop learning objectives for the field experience. Through that process, they discuss both the curricular expectations and the strengths and learning needs of the student. Thus, field expectations for a particular student reflect deliberation and dialogue about that student's strengths and limitations.

The dialogue also continues outside the seminar when the student and field instructor meet periodically to discuss the student's progress. Those meetings may result in consensus that a given field objective has been met. They may also, however, result in extended discussions about the progress a student has achieved in a given area. Similar discussions would occur between the student and field instructor about the student's clients and their programs. Such discussions inevitably involve deliberation and dialogue.

Field experiences also involve a more formal, written assessment of student progress. While the particular methods used may vary from social work program to social work program, it is not uncommon for both the student and the field instructor to rate the student's performance in specified areas and then discuss where their individual ratings agree and disagree. As these few examples indicate, the signature pedagogy of social work, in both the classroom and the field, involves significant deliberation and dialogue.