Introduction: Beyond Borders, Labels, and Divides

Ashmi Desai and Hoa N. Nguyen

The Beginnings of This Book

Long before the pandemic, Hoa and I (Ashmi) sat across from each other in a Public Conversations Project (now Essential Partners) dialogue training in Boston. In the 2018 workshop titled "Dialogue Across Divides," along with a group of dialogue practitioners, we proposed community agreements for facilitating a dialogue between people in conflict. Common to most dialogue models, a conversational agreement/guideline, "Speak Only for Yourself and From Your Own Perspective," prompted an inquiry from us. We wondered how to make I-statements or speak for ourselves when that doesn't align with our cultural identity. Such cultural

A. Desai (✉)
Department of Communication Studies, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA, USA
e-mail: ashmi.desai@sfsu.edu

H. N. Nguyen
Department of Human Services, Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA, USA
e-mail: hnnguyen@valdosta.edu

assumptions of self and perspective as individualized and independent of others seemed confusing.

We recall registering a hesitation about this agreement to the session facilitator by saying, "We know this agreement well and have proposed it to many groups while facilitating dialogue, but today as we sit on the other side as dialogue participants, we cannot bring ourselves to agree to it. This is because when we speak, we speak connected with our family, community, ancestors, and culturally-rooted beliefs. It is not possible to imagine ourselves as an isolated separate unit on many topics."

While the guideline's premise is to prevent speaking for others or generalizing one participant's belief to an entire group, we were interested in its application in communally-oriented cultures where self and perspective may be defined in relational, collectivistic ways. One of Hofstede's (2011) six dimensions of culture describes how the continuum of individualism-collectivism in different cultures impacts ideas of self, other, and relation. Our feeling was acknowledged in the session; however, the agreement/guideline remained as is. This thought stayed with us and over a five-hour conversation post the session, we considered how our full cultural selves can be represented in dialogue, and how the stories and voices of our ancestors negate the individuality embedded in the notion of an "I-statement."

Given this dissonance, we began to contemplate decentering Western approaches to dialogue and proposing culturally-rooted dialogic practices from a globally-informed lens. These ideas took the shape of a journal article about classroom dialogue (since both of us were educators). As we wrote the barebones of a journal article, we were pleasantly surprised to be offered a book contract by a publishing house acquisitions editor with whom we shared the idea in an exploratory meeting. After that, the conference of National Coalition of Dialogue and Deliberation sparked the book's beginnings and it found a home in Palgrave Macmillan soon after. It has been a fortuitous and satisfying journey finding our excellent contributors and sharing this volume with the rest of the world.

Context, Overview, and Significance

This book began in 2018, long before the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe, but was inevitably impacted by the massive shifts that have taken place since. In the midst of political and economic uncertainties, the COVID-19 pandemic became one of the largest global calamities,

causing destruction to tens of millions of people across the world. A yearning for dialogue and human connection deepened, as communities reached across the space of fear and unknowns for one another, in response to an era of isolation and physical distancing. Society came to a standstill with the banning of air travel in various countries, lockdowns and quarantines, remote work and social distancing policies in public settings, and photos capturing mountain lions wandering in the city and penguins on empty streets.

A significant disruption was taking place during this time. An unpredicted and urgent move to remote learning from in-person instruction across schools around the globe. Off and on for months, teachers, students, and academic staff woke up to phone and computer screens for interaction, teaching, and learning; something that changed the education landscape considerably. The world was on pause for a moment with the words "stay at home" echoing across the globe. We were forced to slow down and reckon with the state of our lives, our relationships, and ultimately ourselves (Lightman, 2020). We were propelled into a liminal space—a place of transition between what was and what will come. From the Latin root "limen" meaning "threshold," liminal space brings forth a sense of uncomfortableness and disorientation, as we wrestle with the ambiguous, in-between space of "pre-covid" and "post-covid."

It became imperative then to think of dialogue and pedagogy as pre-COVID and after. What challenges, lessons, and transformations may this moment bring? Can dialogic conversations happen during a global moment of power cuts, internet disconnections, social distancing, and an unprecedented level of human suffering and upheaval?

As Lightman (2020) notes, "With more quiet time, privacy, and stillness, we have an opportunity to think about who we are, as individuals and as a society." Within this liminal space came a powerful opportunity for creativity, innovation, and imagination. In facing our vulnerabilities and challenges during the pandemic, we could generate new ways of being together, incorporate new technologies in our lives, and transform our definitions of connection and community on a global scale. This book was completed during this transitionary period of both pause and panic, a context that enabled us to more fully contemplate our interconnections to one another.

A couple of chapters in this volume engage directly with and share early thoughts on the COVID context and remote learning conundrums. The rest weave crucial and relevant themes of power, cultural meanings,

(dis)connection, representation, suppression, erasure, activism, (anti)racism, community, healing, reconnecting, vulnerability, multiplicity, discord, among others that manifest in our lives.

WHY GLOBAL DIALOGUE PERSPECTIVES IN THE CLASSROOM?

The objective of this book is to illuminate global approaches to dialogic practice and facilitation for inclusive, authentic, and intersectional classroom conversations. Scholarship on dialogue has minimally focused on aspects of culture and power. Due to the lack of diverse representation within the field of dialogue, we hope to challenge individualistic, Eurocentric, and singular, monolithic notions of what dialogue is and should look like. While it is critical to refrain from essentializing or romanticizing non-Western cultural aspects, such as harmony or collectivism, we hope to open up spaces for cultural-rooted dialogic approaches that embody the communal and common spirit.

Defining Global

The term "global" holds multiple meanings. Global may refer to geographical spaces, varied representation of different cultural corners/perspectives of the world, or worldwide exchanges and connections between people and communities. In regard to physical geographical spaces, dialogues across the chapters unfold in several different locations—a sculpture building space in a university classroom, a Bible circle in a home/church, a South African book festival, a Kenyan trauma awareness and resilience program, dialogue groups in the Middle East and South Asia regions, and the psychology and therapy field in Hong Kong. These field spaces as context show how dialogue emerges and sustains.

In regard to representation of cultural perspectives worldwide, authors in this book draw from indigenous values and decolonizing practices, Chinese philosophical perspectives on complexifying the concept of harmony, Black queer counter narratives within a history of Apartheid and colonialism, Chicanx identities and community-building, relational practices that oppose Western notions of individualism, and systemic, ecological understandings of how relationships are organized. This book is a starting platform to explore the essence of dialogue embedded in different corners/cultures of the world.

"Global" transcends power, class, race, ethnicity, and culture issues unique to individual nation-states. It relates to media practices (e.g. infotainment, reality TV), human issues, and collective concerns (e.g. human rights, poverty, global climate change, pandemics, financial crises) that cut across nation-states. It stresses the commonality of issues which require collective action "all over the world," as well as in one's home country. Nothing has brought this home more than the coronavirus pandemic permeating every aspect of human life, revealing the globalized connections that undeniably exist around us. For instance, these global connections are accentuated in the shared experience of the pandemic, collective grief and loss, shifting to virtual means of contact, and centering social justice movements across the world, such as the Black Lives Matter protests, workforce, rent, and hunger strikes, and revolts against government and political corruption. More than ever, "global" also refers to a worldwide awareness of the commonality of issues requiring coalitions, collective action, and spaces for dialogue.

Cultivating Inclusive, Intersectional, and Authentic Conversations

The three concepts—intersectionality, authenticity, and inclusion—are guiding principles in dialogue and education. In this book, we hope to describe how they connect to global dialogic approaches and re-envision their interconnections in the final synthesis chapter.

Inclusion

We want to look at inclusion beyond "diversity" and "difference" as categories. Individualistic definitions of inclusion tend to focus on inviting isolated identities to the table (e.g. meeting the racial quota, or bringing in a male/female perspective), rather than problematizing the process in which we enact inclusion and exclusion. As we explore who or what is being excluded in classroom conversations, it involves first looking at dialogue culturally. Then, we begin to weigh in mythologies, values, community notions, and non-human perspectives. The process of creating our stories and sense-making of identity, which show up in storytelling and dialogue, but are not explicitly recognized (Ryan, 2006). By creating space for complex narratives, we shift to an inclusion process that weaves in people and their communities, rather than categories of difference.

Intersectionality

Here, we focus less on Kimberle Crenshaw's (1991) multiple forms of oppression, but look instead at the cultural rendering of myths, stories, and morality, for a more complex undertaking. As Audre Lorde notes, there is no hierarchy to oppression, and thus it is important to avoid taking an additive or subtractive lens to intersectionality and quantifying experiences of privilege and oppression. The interactions between our experiences of privilege and oppression are interwoven in complicated ways. When describing revolutionary change, Lorde states the "the piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us, and which knows only the oppressors' tactics, the oppressors' relationships" (2012, p. 115). Freire (1996) has also discussed this duality, referring to the internalized image and practices of the oppressor in the oppressed. We hope to break the social justice binaries of oppressor and oppressed which surface constantly in dialogue work.

Authenticity

Authentic is the buzzword of today; however, we focus on the Freirian notion of authenticity, which has to do with liberation from oppression, and Goffman's idea of moving away from a monolithic self to our authentic selves showing up in different contexts. Western notions of the individual self may suggest authenticity refers to coming to one's own truth about themselves and expressing that truth outwardly. If the self is understood as relational and changing, our conceptualization of authenticity also shifts to a relational authenticity where one has voice in a relationship and can embolden different authentic selves depending on the situation and context. Further, authenticity from a Freirian stance comes from (re) humanizing ourselves and others. In this sense, authenticity is not merely an isolated form of individual expression, but also a transformative, relational process of examining self and raising critical consciousness (Freire, 1996).

Step Forward, Step Back: Complicating Inclusion, Intersectionality, and Authenticity

One example that helps explore the complexity of the application of the concepts of inclusion, intersectionality, and authenticity within the current US context is the privilege walk activity. Below, we share a student's version of how privilege walk unfolded in a university class on leadership in the US:

Everyone takes a step back. The entire classroom of 30 with the teacher is standing on grass, a short walk from the regular class building space. The teacher reads out again, "If you grew up in an economically-disadvantaged or single-parent home, please take a step back." Some students look around uncomfortably, some are unclear about the prompt. Eventually, one student steps back. This goes on, "If you or your family never had to move due to financial inabilities, step forward." By now, some students are standing against the wall for support, some have sat down, and others are trying to figure out where this is leading. The teacher asks everyone to look around and note their positions from where they started. The teacher then asks, "What surprised you? What did you feel this didn't capture?" Two students standing next to each other say, "We are not surprised at all. We feel like we are constantly defined by race." Another peer comments, "I feel like people just look at me like a dumb person. My disability is never taken seriously and I'm not sure if this was the right place to talk about it." Another student says, "I have feelings of guilt and shame for taking so many steps forward, and it's made me very uncomfortable participating in this class." Yet another student adds, "I don't think gender and racial discrimination are equal," and "I feel like a fraud when stepping back or claiming an experience of oppression in that identity."

This vignette describes a student's reflection after completing the privilege walk classroom exercise. Privilege walk stems from Peggy McIntosh's (2003) concept of White privilege and is often used to identify student areas of privilege and facilitate a discussion on social identities and power. Ideally, after the privilege walk activity, students reflect on their identities, their privileges or lack of them, how the system may set them up to gain or lose in school and society, and how does one make sense of this while looking to others. All this helps work on aspects of intersectionality, authenticity, and inclusion.

Privilege walks can create an impactful moment of confronting our privilege. However, at times, students indicate discomfort coupled with guilt, shame, and perceived limited representation of themselves, which can shut down a conversation on identities and intersectionality. It may also perpetuate a divide between "us" and "them" and individualize experiences of privilege and marginalization, rather than connecting them to the larger, complex systems of inequity and power. Since the activity involves a stepwise process of moving forward or backward in relation to privilege, the understanding of privilege becomes additive and not multiplicative, as required for an understanding of intersectionality. In this way, privilege walks can contribute to increased awareness, but they can also be

devoid of fuller cultural stories and create unsafe environments where people feel excluded and forced to be authentic, rendering dialogue as not possible. This dilemma is shared by many classroom facilitators who have discontinued using the activity (Arao & Clemens, 2013). As educators, we are curious of how dialogue and social justice overlap and differ and ways in which individualistic, separatist views of diversity seeps into our teaching practices.

Overview of Key Dialogue Thinkers

Key dialogue theories are rooted in a study of self, other, and groups from an interdisciplinary lens in the communication field. Anderson et al. (2004) mentions the five key theorists central to dialogue, including Martin Buber, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jurgen Habermas, Mikhail Bakhtin, David Bohm, and Paolo Freire. A summary of all key theorists and their contributions follows (Table 1.1) after this paragraph.

Moving away from Socratic goals of communication, including the discovery of "truth" through logic and questioning, these thinkers explain dialogue as a process of listening, understanding, and exploration of self and other. Austrian-born Israeli Jewish philosopher Martin Buber approaches dialogue from a philosophical anthropology perspective where self is considered as a relational phenomenon.

Table 1.1   Key theorists and their contributions to dialogue

Theorists (no particular order)	Key contributions related to dialogue
Socrates	Discovery of "truth" through logic and questioning
Martin Buber	"I-Thou" one primary word, self as a relational phenomenon
Hans-Georg Gadamer	Humans read meaning, can lead to transformation into communion
Jurgen Habermas	Ideal speech situation for participatory democracy and citizenship
Mikhail Bakhtin	Polyvocality, goal is to establish responsive understanding
David Bohm	Interconnected participatory thinking, stream of meaning flowing between us and through us
Daniel Yankelovich	Tool for examining assumptions, decision making and democratic strength
Paolo Freire	Serves to transform education, humanize oppressor and oppressed through love, humility and faith

German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's approach highlighted understanding as a dialogic and reciprocal experience. Instead of a success of self-expression, Gadamer describes dialogue as "a transformation into communion in which we do not remain what we were" (p. 146). Jürgen Habermas's concept of an "ideal speech situation" presents possibilities where individuals can deliberate, debate, agree, and act when communication between individuals is governed by basic, implied rules. Russian literary and social critic Mikhail Bakhtin sees it as characterized by polyvocality—many voices, many choices, not a binary, which aims for synthesis/consensus, that is, multiple outcomes are possible.

American quantum physicist David Bohm meanwhile explored dialogue practice as interconnected participatory thinking. A process for people to come together to "think together" and move away from fragmentation, division, and toward balance. American public opinion specialist Daniel Yankelovich approaches dialogue as a tool for democratic strength to involve people in decision making processes. Brazilian educator Paolo Freire perceived dialogue as an existential necessity marked by love, humility, and faith (p. 34). Primarily for Freire, dialogue is focused on praxis and serves to transform education and empower the oppressed.

Dialogue didn't start with Buber or Bohm or any of the above theorists, but with many indigenous communities whose cultural notions don't get represented within dialogue textbooks. This book aims to build on the existing trajectory of dialogue ideas, through an exploration of the term "dialogue" in relation to other forms of communication with specific goals tied to the classroom. At the same time, it provides space to "othered" perspectives through a counter-cultural lens. Dialogue breaks the common sense notions of what is scientific and scholarly, and investigates deep-rooted notions about self and others in service of transformative classroom learning. We, as co-editors, hope to center practices that are decolonizing, by moving away from mainstream Western frameworks and leaning towards the lived and experienced approaches to dialogues from other cultural perspectives.

Social Location of Co-editors

Unequal power relations and in-betweenness are processes I (Ashmi) first contemplated within the classroom, while growing up in a Hindu lower-middle-class and -caste Indian family, and later as an international doctoral student, woman of color, and immigrant in the United States. I often

wondered: Why do some kids only talk with a few others, and sit separately? Why do teachers address and behave differently with different students? I started to notice how a lack of dialogue perpetuated the differences and suppressed rich opportunities for connection.

Transitioning to the United States, I realized much of these patterns of difference and division remained the same. With no assigned mentor, intellectual orienting, and reeling from culture shock, it was challenging to perform to a high doctoral standard in my first semester. This was an early introduction to deficit thinking and imposter syndrome in academia. After a long phase of trying to fit in as a scholar-teacher, adopting Western styling, and injecting teaching philosophy with ideas and plans from successful educators, I realized I could never be White or Eurocentric. "Imposter syndrome" was not an individualistic struggle I had to overcome, but rather an experience contextualized within an academic system that rewarded sameness and thus, in relation, Whiteness. My space was in-between cultures, identities, and contexts.

A question I have asked myself since: How can a marginalized student progress in my classroom without high-caste/race credentials, without education/language/skills gained through wealth or affluence and while being validated for their cultural capital? In my position at San Francisco State University, these thoughts have catalyzed this book and led to crafting a philosophy rooted in teachers and students as co-learners. It informs my pursuit of dialogic pedagogy, which has immense potential in co-creating inclusive, intersectional, and authentic environments within education. Considerations of decentering dialogue from Western assumptions and being truly culturally inclusive fascinate me as I continue my journey as a woman of color educator and international immigrant examining ideas of home, belonging, community, and culture in my scholarship.

Though born in Vietnam, I (Hoa) lived most of my life in the United States, where I was curious about the in-between spaces of being not quite Vietnamese and not quite American. The tag-on label of Vietnamese-American did not suffice. Much of my family's cultural values were the foundations upon which my understanding of self and relationships was conceived. In addition, as queer woman of color in a mixed orientation marriage, being in a space of liminal identities and queer erasure across intercultural contexts informed much of my work as a systemic therapist and educator. An example of this was my coming to understand how Eurocentric medical discourses in the nineteenth century influenced the pathologization of LGBTQ identities in colonization and post-reform

Vietnam, as well as the current erasure and generalizations of Vietnamese experiences and narratives in the United States.

Within my queer immigrant experience, I also held the status of being a US citizen, highly educated, and able-bodied person among other privileges. In my dissertation on "Coming In and Coming Out: Navigating the Spaces Between Cultural and Sexual Identity," which centered voices of LGBQ international students, I was challenged to explore the intersections of privilege, oppression, and power in the stories we tell, the stories told about us, and the stories that are untold and yet-to-be-told. In teaching courses on diversity and social justice in family therapy, I draw from these intersections in my experience and believe dialogue can unveil new stories and alternative narratives. Through personal and professional dialogic moments in my training as a family therapist, I started to (re)discover the merit of relational ways of thinking and being, culturally informed understandings of self and community, and dialogue as a catalyst for possibilities and transformations.

Mission Possible: Setting the Stage for Meaningful Dialogic Moments

The term "dialogue" is rooted in the Greek word *dialogos—dia* means "through" and *logos* means "word" or "meaning of the word" (Huang-Nissen, 1999). Dialogue has been likened to many things in this book: a mixed soup, chemical reaction, mosaic, quilt. There is no one way to think about a dialogic moment in time, neither do two dialogues ever look the same. And yet, what makes a dialogue possible can be very difficult to pinpoint. The possibility of dialogue is an enchanting, fascinating one, and given all the barriers, constraints, and challenges, some underlying elements may indicate how people find meaning and understanding individually and collectively.

Dialogue extends a space for multiple possibilities to convene in the flow of conversation and refrains from establishing one solution. Participants are not forced to accept others' beliefs, nor are they persuading others to adopt their worldview. Instead, dialogue challenges participants to truly listen, hear, and understand those who seemingly hold different or even polarized positions from them. This sets dialogue apart from other paradigms of communication in education such as debate and discussion (Nagda, 2019). In debate, two or more oppositional sides

defend their thinking and critique other different viewpoints with the goal of winning. In discussion, participants individually share their ideas with the goal of establishing clarity, conviction, and understanding on a topic at hand. In contrast to both of these methods, dialogue emphasizes collaboration rather than competition, complexities rather than clarity and is more interested in ambivalences (Nagda, 2019).

Hence, dialogue calls for critical reflection, questioning of our own viewpoints, and deepening our understanding and connections with people across differing perspectives, ideas, and life experiences. This reaching across divides, borders, and labels enables us to humanize one another. As such, dialogue is an ongoing, relational process, rather than a one-time intervention. The role of the facilitator is also critical in holding space for curious engagement and perspective taking. The facilitator structures the dialogue in ways that help participants listen to each other, sit with the uncomfortableness of engaging with and humanizing their "other," and practice humility and openness to making mistakes in the conversation.

The dialogic approach is thriving across fields of study and advancing as a transdisciplinary practice. Contributions to dialogue originate from various disciplines such as education, communication studies, dialogue and deliberation, conflict resolution, linguistics, media sciences, philosophy, psychology, family therapy, social work, sociology, anthropology, culture sciences, religious studies, economics, leadership, advocacy and social justice, and so on. An increasing number of scholars continue to develop and apply the theoretical underpinnings and practices of dialogue in their respective studies. In this book alone, contributors derive their dialogic knowledge and experience from the fields of intercultural and interreligious conflict resolution, ethnic and cultural studies, media sciences, art and art history, language and linguistics, literature, international studies and education policy, counseling and clinical psychology, couple and family therapy, social work, political science, and rhetoric studies.

Dialogues begin with the process of setting the format and guidelines in which participants will abide by. Within Eurocentric contexts, a general set of guidelines or conversational agreements are often used to create a platform for dialogue, such as using I-statements, speak one at a time, avoid interrupting others, honoring confidentiality, and listening to understand. These guidelines often serve as a space for which the boundaries and conversational rules are negotiated, discussed, and maintained. They are also situated within Western views of the dialogical process. Despite the best intentions, guidelines and models of dialogues have inherent

individualistic values and priorities, which can be limiting, exclusionary, and counterproductive to the dialogic goals. Instead these guidelines should shift the focus from individual morality and actions to relational accountability and shared responsibility in the spirit of the conversation (calling forth versus calling out). This further creates space for participants to share different experiences while connecting the theoretical underpinnings and learnings to real-world application. In addition, having a sense of the dialogue structure is helpful if participants are treating the conversation with care, rather than carefully. This shifts the participant's position in the dialogue to cultivate a culture of care and empathy, in contrast to a culture of rule-following and authority-obeying.

The purpose of this volume is to bring together fresh perspectives and unheard voices in the field of dialogue to enrich the classroom pedagogical practice. In doing so, the book showcases histories and ways of being from scholars from practitioners within and outside the US. Because the ideas are rooted in different geographies, languages, texts and meaning, the editors have honored the difference that comes through in reflective expression and at times, even in the articulation. Through the chapters, we have avoided a rigid uniformity in the unfolding of the chapters. Each chapter follows its own thematic flow while connecting with the larger themes of classroom pedagogy, social location and cultural rooting. In these narratives, authors have leaned into their own lexical choices to tell their stories better. Ultimately, the dialogues reflect the different micro verses within the same globe, and invite our thoughts on the similarity and differences embedded within our dialogical discourses.

WHEN NOT TO DIALOGUE

To truly appreciate dialogue, it is equally important to understand what dialogue cannot and is not intended to achieve. No tool is appropriate in all circumstances. There are instances in which dialogue is not only challenging, but also non-conducive given the context at hand. While dialogue is a transformative and versatile tool for community understanding and change, certain conditions are necessary for creating and facilitating a dialogical process.

Facilitators and participants entering a dialogue need to recognize the goals, parameters, and limits of dialogue. Dialogue is not intended to seek evidence, answers, or conclusions. Within a dialogue, the goal is not to establish truth, find flaws and counter arguments, or solidify positions.

Rather, the goals of dialogue center on creating shared meanings and highlighting areas of ambivalence. Depending on the purpose of the conversation, dialogue may not be the most suitable approach and other tools can be utilized in lieu of or in conjunction with dialogue, such as education, advocacy, strategic leadership, and restorative justice.

The openness and readiness of participants is another condition for dialogical exchange. It is critical that those entering a dialogue understand the rationale and agree to make efforts toward a collaborative conversation. While there may be snags or challenges, participants are beginning the conversation with a mutual understanding to uphold the intentions of the dialogue. This allows participants to be curious about differences and reflect on areas of disagreement, using them as opportunities for learning, questioning, and complicating the topic. In addition, willingness to engage in the inner work and reflection when encountering our own discomfort and reactivity is a component of participant readiness. If participants are not yet ready to hold space for different beliefs and reflect on their own, their limited readiness may become an obstacle to the conversation.

Dialogue also needs to exist in the context of a communal process that is collaborative and relational. In dialogue, participants are challenged to suspend their personal, individual interests to care for the relationship between them and others, sharing responsibility for the dialogical process. Through a communal process, the group honors individual differences, while simultaneously responding to each person's position with respect and authentic interest.

Similarly, the facilitators' openness and attunement to the goals of dialogue is a necessary condition. Facilitators may face challenges unique to facilitating a dialogue, such as holding space for multiple viewpoints, ambivalence, and dualities. Setting the stage for dialogue is also important for facilitators to help ease participants into the process. In particular, facilitators may need experience and training to assist participants in sharing airtime space and convey empathy and openness, without trying to force the conversation toward a specific destination.

A context in which the threat of safety exists may impede space for open, authentic dialogue. An example is if the participant fears losing their job or facing a possible legal consequence if they were to speak up about their beliefs. Dialogue involves some risk of engaging in an uncomfortable, vulnerable position, uncertainty of disclosing one's thoughts and feelings, or fear of others' judgment. However, when the risk has

significant, enduring repercussions to the individuals' physical, social, and economic wellbeing outside of the dialogical space, participants' capacity to dialogue is inevitably impacted by these potential consequences.

Given that dialogue creates a platform for equal participation, a context of dominance and control counters the purpose of dialogue. In dialogue, power is shared, and no position is greater or superior to another. Dominance can occur only when we separate ourselves from others, by justifying how one group or individual can dominate over another. What if a privileged perspective drives the conversation? What happens when group members talk over or interrupt one another? Or the group reject the experience of a person who holds a marginalized identity because it does not fit with the larger narrative of that marginalized group? How can the facilitator arbitrate the shared power without exerting dominance in their position? Balancing dynamics of dominance and separation in dialogue can be complex.

Overview of Chapters

Part I: The Value and Limits of Western Perspectives on Dialogue

Introduction: Beyond Borders, Labels, and Divides
In our first chapter, we share how the idea of this book took birth and why its grounding in decentering Eurocentric philosophies for transformative conversations is relevant during the pandemic and after. The chapter also includes foundational thinking on dialogue that informs the theory and practice today, and extends those ideas to include meditations in three areas: inclusion, intersectionality, and authenticity. Finally, there is an overview of the 11 chapters and a synthesis that follows, which demonstrate with case studies or vignettes how to navigate complex conversations in the classroom.

Decolonizing the Classroom: Settler Colonialism, Knowledge Production, and Antiracism
Avalos, in this chapter, explains decolonized pedagogy as challenging racist ideologies and making power and Indigenous resistance and histories visible in academia and classrooms. A key starting point of applying this approach for students is to acknowledge and honor marginalized perspectives and epistemologies and practice self-reflection, question assumptions

while examining relationships of privilege and power. Through extensive referencing of indigenous and Native American scholarship, Avalos presents ways for students to develop their critical voices, become possible allies and better citizens.

Part II: Navigating Paradoxes and Multiplicity

Interfaith Dialogue: Managing Paradoxes

Based on extensive dialogues conducted between group members of different faiths in the Middle East, in this chapter, Abu-Nimer shares six key elements instrumental for creating effective dialogic encounters during long-term social conflict or crisis situations. Also instructive in this account is the unpacking of the paradoxes embedded in intercultural and asymmetrical power-driven conversations. Translating these critical insights into classroom learning holds immense potential for engaging diverse students by building connections between academic knowledge and complex contradictory ethnic histories and understandings.

Harmony: Essence and Applications to Dialogue

Chan chronicles the history, origins, and mythology around the Chinese cultural concept of harmony in this chapter and discusses the dangers of dialogic application when the conceptual meaning is distorted or "watered down." Through stories, examples, and case vignettes, Chan explains how true harmony is about holding individuality in tension with the collective and finding complementary understandings across differences. Harmony in dialogue can promote thoughtful considerations of freedom, peace, and heterogeneity across borders and contexts.

Not Transition, But Translation: A Dialogic Approach to "Differences" in a Korean Diasporic Evangelical Church

This chapter emerges from Kim's reflections on the experiences of creating authentic community relationships between believers and non-believers in a Korean Evangelical Protestant Bible Circle. According to Kim, subverting pre-existing power relations is essential for establishing lasting dialogic relations and cultivating a sense of belonging. Driven by an awareness of positionality and privilege, the chapter traces possibilities of cultivating communal belonging and bonding in the classroom through self-deprecatory jokes, unusual linguistic forms of address and sharing of food.

Part III: Between Rupture and Transformation

Los Seis de Boulder Sculpture Project: A Reflection on Dialogue and Community Building Through Art-Making
Can community sculpture making and dialogue address the erasure of Chicanx histories, trauma, and discrimination within a university setting? Baetz and Preciado answer this question while conducting dialogues across differences for the Los Seis de Boulder sculpture project in a ceramics studio. Through mosaic-puzzling and immersive conversations, the authors construct conversational bridges across time for remembering, healing, and reshaping traumatic narratives.

Writing Black Queers into Existence: A South African Model for Dialogue Among Oppressed Groups
This chapter documents a dialogic attempt to provide representation to Black Queer writers in South Africa, a community, which has been marginalized, shamed, and rendered invisible. Recognizing the structural barriers around participation of these groups, Mokgopa describes careful planning across stages of pre-dialogue, dialogue, and post-dialogue. Such a dialogue design made vulnerable contributions and transformative moments possible through conversations and creative arts.

Intergroup Dialogue for Social Healing: Creating Spaces of Collective Hope and Transformation
Proposing intergroup dialogue for social healing, this chapter draws on experiences from a community-based, trauma-informed peacebuilding program in Kenya for application to a classroom dialogue setting. Nagda and López present and elucidate what healing-centered engagement may look like in a post-conflict situation. Facilitated by storytelling and speaking individual truths in the collective, the approach lays down genuine and intersectional ways for building new relationships and restoring social fabric.

Experiential Ecological and Art-Based Practices for Reconnecting with Mother Earth and with Each Other
Dialogue coupled with eco-education can have far-reaching implications for understanding and combating environmental challenges. Rappeport and Lin draw on cultural and spiritual ideas to engage students in art-based practices, including creating art with music, self-portraits, storytelling, solo and collective artistic pieces, labyrinth walks, along with

conversations on religious and ethical beliefs on nature. These are experiential dialogue connecting the mind, body, and spirit for renewed connection and empathy between participants, others, and the ecosystem.

Part IV: Ongoing Dialogical Practice in Classrooms

Dialogic Learning in the Time of a Global Pandemic and Beyond
A group of diverse educators share their experiences of adapting dialogic teaching and learning to the digital shift caused by COVID-19 pandemic. Amid many challenges, the teachers were able to leverage online community building tools, incorporate digital storytelling practices and first-person narratives, and explore multiple identities of students and teachers within their home environments. The essays highlight the opportunity for social connection, critical consciousness, and innovation within the disruption in learning environments.

Relationality as a Way of Being: A Pedagogy of Classroom Conversations
Envisioning a relationship-oriented pedagogy, this chapter explains how such an approach can transform student-teacher and student-student relations based on sharing of power and allowing vulnerability and discomfort to guide conversations. Demonstrated through an example of a difficult class conversation around sexuality and religious beliefs, relational pedagogy can open dialogic space to explore hurt and collective responsibility.

Dialogue and Systems Theory: Teaching Public Conversations in Family Therapy
Within the context of a family therapy classroom, this chapter showcases how a systemic orientation combined with embodied learning can impart important lessons to re-humanize others and bridge differences. For students and practicing therapists, such dialogic teaching translates to an ethics of care, curiosity, and respect for different and othered identities and perspectives.

Honoring Culture, Holding Complexity: Synthesis and Emerging Possibilities in Dialogue
This chapter synthesizes the key points of all invited chapters and connects them to emerging ideas of power disruption, in-betweenness, and

relationality in a classroom setting. It also discusses how to conceptualize application of these approaches for anyone seeking to apply dialogue in their daily life. Some consideration will be given to rethinking a global context for dialogue followed by a note on barriers and challenges that can arise.

References

Anderson, R., Baxter, L. A., & Cissna, K. N. (2004). Texts and contexts of dialogue. In R. Anderson, L. A. Baxter & K. N. Cissna (Eds.), *Dialogue: Theorizing difference in communication studies*, (pp. 1–17). Sage Publications.

Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. Landreman (Ed.), *The art of effective facilitation: Reflections from social justice educators* (pp. 135–150). Stylus Publishing.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241–1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed (revised)*. Continuum.

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 2*(1). https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014

Huang-Nissen, S. (1999). *Dialogue groups: A practical guide to facilitate diversity conversation*. Medicine Bear Pub.

Lightman, A. (2020). The virus is a reminder of something long lost ago. *The Atlantic.* https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/coronavirus-is-changing-habits-of-mind/609181/

Lorde, A. (2012). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. [Kindle Version].

McIntosh, P. (2003). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. In S. Plous (Ed.), *Understanding prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 191–196). McGraw-Hill.

Nagda, B. A. (2019). Intergroup dialogue: Engaging difference for social change leadership development. In B. A. Nagda & L. D. Roper (Eds.), *New directions for student leadership: No. 163. Centering dialogue in leadership development* (pp. 29–46). Jossey-Bass.

Ryan, J. (2006). Inclusive leadership and social justice for schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 5*(1), 3–17.