

# What is Dialogue?



## LESSON ONE

# WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

There are many terms used to describe what is going on when students are talking to each other in class including discussion, deliberation, debate and dialogue. Very often some of these terms are used quite interchangeably, and it is important to be precise about the differences – particularly if we are going to concentrate on cultivating one of these areas. Many classrooms incorporate a lot of discussion, which is when students discuss concepts and ideas freely, usually in quite an unstructured way. Deliberation, in the sense of trying to establish a consensus or reach a decision, is also practised in classrooms. Many education systems prize debate as a core skill for students (and indeed it is extremely important). Dialogue is subtly different to all of these, and it is important for us to appreciate the ways in which it is different.

### DEFINING DIALOGUE

This difference is probably best explained in the following comparison. In a *debate* there is a winner and a loser. One person wins by putting forward a better argument, the other loses. It is intrinsically competitive and is about establishing difference. In a *dialogue* there are two winners. I learn from you, you learn from me. We may compromise or agree to differ. It is profoundly reciprocal, and acknowledges similarity and difference equally. In our work with schools we describe dialogue (from a student perspective) as:

*An encounter with those who might have different opinions, values and beliefs to my own, dialogue is the process by which I come to understand the other's lives, values and beliefs better and others come to understand my life, values and beliefs.*

Through this mutual interchange students not only grow in their direct understanding of their own community, and the other individual, but they also develop an open mindset; learning to embrace diversity as a positive facet of contemporary global society. Participation in dialogue drives students to acquire and practise higher level thinking skills and to honestly and respectfully engage with a range of viewpoints. Through direct encounters with those who are different to themselves, students are empowered to overcome prejudice, and are armoured against those (such as religious extremists) whose narrative seeks to divide the world into a simple dichotomy of 'Us/Good and Them/Bad'. In addition, students acquire a range of skills, while simultaneously developing greater confidence and self-esteem as their opinions are engaged with respectfully by their interlocutors.

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These resources have been developed to help students to excel at dialogue – approaching one another in a respectful way. This will enable mutual peer teaching and learning with those of different cultures, faiths and world views. It is important to note that 'respect' does not mean 'agree with'. Indeed, respect really only comes into its own in the context of disagreement. We want young people to have the skills to disagree appropriately and to find other ways to express themselves than through conflict.

It is important to realise that there are a number of different theories or constructions of the idea of dialogue. There may be differences between the way we use the word in every day discussion and in a 'technical' or academic sense. Professor Robert Jackson explains the impact of dialogue in the classroom:

*“With this approach, the teacher often acts in the role of facilitator, prompting and clarifying questions, and much agency is given to pupils, who are regarded as collaborators in teaching and learning. The approach was found to raise children's self-esteem, to provide opportunities for developing critical skills, to enable under-achievers to express themselves, and to create a climate of moral seriousness. Children were also helped to engage with ideas*

and concepts from different religious traditions, to be reflective about their contributions and to justify their own opinions. They also discussed how they arrived at their conclusions and were encouraged to recognize the possibility of alternative viewpoints and to be open to the arguments of others.”<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of key factors that you can use as a checklist to define dialogue. None of them are particularly difficult, but they all need to be in place to ensure that dialogue is really taking place.

## CREATING A SAFE SPACE

It is critical to establish a safe space at the start, so that all participants are aware that they can feel safe about sharing their ideas. It is important to realise that this concept can be understood in different ways. William Isaacs<sup>2</sup> identifies both the *physical* safe space, where participants feel comfortable and dialogue will not be interrupted and a *psychological* safe space, where participants feel that they are able to speak freely and not need to self-censor.



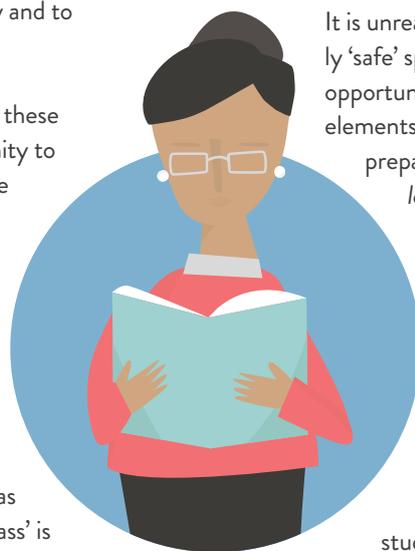
### TIPS FOR CREATING A SAFE SPACE

**1 Clear ground rules or expectations of behaviour that everyone should abide by.** We have included an activity here which uses an example of an approach that you can use to negotiate with your students. A few simple rules are better than a great many complex ones and it can be printed and used as a poster/aide-mémoire.

**2 A level of trust between the participants.** If you follow the approach established in these activities, your students will have the chance to practise their dialogue skills ‘neutrally’ – talking about non-contentious issues – and they will have had the chance both to get used to engaging in this kind of activity and to develop trust in one another.

**3 Being non-judgemental.** Working through these activities will give your students the opportunity to explore one another’s points of view. Dialogue is a space where we can challenge one another’s deeply held beliefs and values, but in a positive way, saying “I’m uncomfortable with x, because of y”, rather than saying “You’re wrong!”

**4 Inclusivity.** Ensuring that everyone takes part. It is important that everyone’s voice is heard in dialogue (or at least that everyone has the opportunity to take part – choosing to ‘pass’ is fine too). Many of our students are strong, confident



speakers, but it is equally important to remember that some of our students lack confidence, have low self-esteem, and may be excluded by their peers for various reasons. Their voices are critical to genuine dialogue as well. The activities in this pack cultivate speaking and listening skills for all students in a group.

**5 Trusted facilitation.** It’s important for everyone taking part in the dialogue that the facilitator is an honest broker; neutrality and encouragement for all is critical.



### KEY QUESTIONS: IS YOUR CLASSROOM A SAFE SPACE?

- How welcoming is the classroom to all students?
- Do wall displays reflect the diversity of your group?
- What is the seating arrangement?
- Does it encourage dialogue or are students in rows where they cannot see one another easily?
- Where does the teacher stand, sit or move?
- How do students show they want to speak?
- How do the students relate to one another?
- What activities are built into lessons that encourage collaboration rather than competition?
- How does the teacher deal with instances of disrespect and intolerance?
- Do these instances involve the participation of the other students exploring how the group feels when these instances of disrespect happen?
- How can the facilitator teacher draw in students who are reluctant to take part in dialogue?
- How do students know they are valued?
- Are different perspectives encouraged?
- Are all voices heard?
- Do students speak from the ‘I’ perspective sharing their own thoughts and experiences, instead of generalising?

It is unrealistic to expect any classroom to be an entirely ‘safe’ space for all students all of the time. Providing opportunities for student dialogue inevitably holds some elements of risk; these can be minimised through suitable preparation and training using the *Essentials of Dialogue* activities. Like all skills and competencies these will improve through practise.

## FACILITATION

Dialogue is usually facilitated. You will facilitate dialogue for your students. This is not difficult, but it is a different way of managing discussion to the one that you may be used to in class. You will find though, that students will quickly begin to be able to do it themselves. Facilitation requires no special knowledge, but it is about ensuring that the safe space is preserved.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Jackson on the dialogical classroom in *Signposts: Policy and Practise for Teaching about Religions and Non-Religious Worldviews in Intercultural Education*, Council of Europe, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Isaacs, W, (1999). *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*. Currency.

Facilitation is explored in more detail in a later lesson, but as an outline the facilitator should:

- 1 Ensure that one individual or group does not dominate
- 2 Try to be neutral
- 3 Ensure that many views are heard and encouraged
- 4 Ensure that the group members develop their curiosity and ask good questions
- 5 Check clarity when people express complex views (“I heard you saying...”)
- 6 Ensure that the agreed expectations are observed by everyone.

The process of practising dialogue will help your students to do more than understand one another and their global peers, it will also help them move beyond simple stereotypes of the Other. Through dialogue they will hear one another’s individual stories, understand the profound complexity of humanity, and let go of their need to stereotype.

In dialogue the facilitator is often the fair, impartial and encouraging chair of the discussion. However, in the classroom the teacher as facilitator has a slightly altered role. Primarily, the teacher-facilitator is a facilitator of understanding rather than a facilitator of dialogue. Dialogue is used as a tool to enable the learning but the teacher’s role is significant in that there will be times when she/he will need to intervene to clarify, check understanding, perhaps summarise what has been said, ask questions that take the learning deeper and challenge assumptions.

All of this said, it is crucial that the dialogue belongs to the students and that they have ownership of it with your support and direction. If a teacher’s take role is too directive, students may rely on the teacher’s arguments or not participate in discussion.

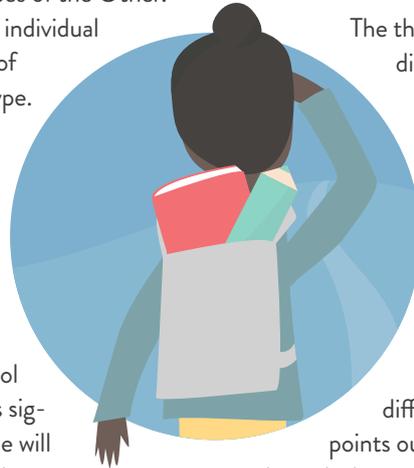
#### KEY QUESTIONS FOR FACILITATORS

- Are you able to be impartial on the topic? Be aware of your own pre-formed assumptions on the issue.
- How will you ensure students suspend judgment/start with an open mind?
- What are your techniques for ensuring that all feel they have a voice in the dialogue and that it is not hi-jacked by a few?
- How are you ensuring students feel safe to take risks?
- How can you model listening deeply and engaging in the dialogue?
- Are you encouraging responses to what is said as opposed to allowing the dialogue to become a Q&A session?

- How do you encourage students to show empathy towards one another?
- Are you ensuring that students are speaking about themselves and not on behalf of others?
- How do you encourage students to bring their own experiences to the dialogue?
- How will you measure the effectiveness of the activity?
- Do you have strategies to help students to recognise assumptions in their comments and/or questions and help them to rephrase in a less prejudicial way?
- Do you ensure that reference to people or groups not represented in the dialogue is fair?

#### FURTHER READING

A great deal of work has been done on dialogue, both by practitioners and by academics but, as yet, there is not a complete consensus as to how it should best be understood. Our understanding of dialogue is one that is based upon the opinions of a number of eminent thinkers in the field.



The thinker David Bohm begins his exploration of dialogue by emphasising that it is a process. He examines the derivation of the word from the Greek, ‘dia’ meaning through and ‘logos’ meaning the word, and suggests that dialogue should be seen as “a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us...out of which will emerge some new understanding.”<sup>3</sup> This helps us to get away from thinking of dialogue (as we often do) as an exchange or encounter between two different or opposed points of view. As Bohm’s work points out, dialogue is a journey that we take together, through the medium of words, and this idea is a valuable place to start as it reminds us both that dialogue is a process rather than a concrete result. It emphasises the creative and unpredictable development of new understandings that emerge from such a reciprocal interchange.

In unpacking the concept of reciprocity, it may be useful to refer to the “I-Thou” exchange of Martin Buber. Buber suggests that the whole concept of reciprocal encounter is the primary way for humans to understand existence. For Buber, existence is composed of a number of encounters between the self and the Other. Buber describes these encounters as being of two types; the first is ‘I-It’, where the other is seen as an object, a thing. Here the Other is quite literally objectified, seen and understood only in terms of its utility to the ‘I’. We might compare this to the encounter with the Other that our students have through the media – when they read or watch about another country, culture or faith, they are all too often being exposed to objectified representations, generalisations or stereotypes.

The other relationship, which Buber describes as the ‘I-Thou’

3 Bohm, D. (1996). *On Dialogue*. London: Routledge. p7.

relationship, is quite different. It is a significant existential and authentic relationship between two beings which grants ethical recognition to the Other. Such relationships are seen as significant encounters where some form of mutuality and exchange takes place: “one should not try to dilute the meaning of the relation, relation is reciprocity.”<sup>4</sup> This is particularly significant in terms of our experience with Face to Faith - inasmuch as it is not merely about learning from or about the other, but it is also about teaching the other – speaking about our own experiences, beliefs and identities. It is always a mutual, reciprocal exchange. This means that students are not passive consumers of information, using one another as resources, but engaged in a vital exchange through which they are empowered to feel that they have a voice that can be heard around the world. This is articulated beautifully in this feedback from an Egyptian teacher who was practising global dialogue with her students:

*“...they felt awesome at the end of VC, when they found out they could be persuasive and change for a moment the opinion of their counterparts in the US towards Egyptians. There were some very challenging questions from their counterparts which allowed my students to discover themselves more than ever.”*

The emphasis here is upon what students learned about themselves, not just in terms of their responses to their interlocutors, but also in terms of their reflections upon the experience. This mutual and reciprocal exploration is at the heart of the dialogical experience, and lies at the base of building a profound sense of relationship with the other.

Ultimately this is what we seek to build – genuine relationships across the perceived boundaries of faith, belief, culture and nationality.

Finally, it is useful to refer to some of the insights of Levinas, for whom ethical concern is the first element of mutual encounter. The obligation to care for the Other is the *a priori* state. Levinas refers to the idea of ‘the face’ as the way in which we encounter the Other:

*“...the encounter with the face – that is, moral consciousness, can be described as the condition of consciousness tout court.”*<sup>5</sup>

In this short quote one may find a distillation of three of the most significant elements of Levinas’ thought. Firstly that one meets the Other through an encounter with the face, secondly that this encounter is, by its very nature, a profound form of ethics and thirdly that the primary condition of consciousness itself is ethical concern – ‘ethics comes first’. We suggest that this focus reveals some of the power of the videoconference technology – because one is actually able to see the face of the speaker (and indeed we encourage students to think about their body language too), there is a surprising sense of connection. Students, teachers and visiting speakers have all commented upon this. Of course, sometimes the technology is imperfect – but the human ability to recognise a face should not be underestimated. Levinas’ language of “the face” is also unconsciously used by a student from the USA discussing the depth of his experience from global dialogue:

*“There is so much that goes on in the world that I have not experienced or truly understood despite having seen it all on the news. Actual contact with someone in a certain situation is far more meaningful to me than seeing someone analyse it on TV. It also puts a face to situations that I would probably otherwise consider distant or unimportant.”*

4 Buber, M. (1970). *I and Thou*. New York: Simon and Schuster. p58.

5 Levinas, E. (2002). *Is Ontology Fundamental?* In A. Peperzak, S. Critchely, & R. Bernasconi, Emmanuel Levinas. *Basic Philosophical Writings*. (pp. 1-11). Bloomington: University of Indiana Press. p11.

## A LESSON ACTIVITIES

### OBJECTIVE

By the end of this session your students should know what dialogue is and is not, understand the importance of listening to one another and have reflected upon its importance.

### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Students understand the significance of dialogue, that it is a particular kind of conversation and that there are particular skills to be used.

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The worksheets that accompany the activities below can be found at the end of the lesson.

#### STARTER ACTIVITY 1

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DON'T LISTEN

#### PURPOSE

This question gives students opportunities to explore the significance of communication and, using this approach, it requires all students to engage with the question, develop a variety of responses and practise their speaking and listening skills.

#### STEP 1

Have the question “What happens when we don’t listen to one another?” up on the board.

#### STEP 2

Explain to students that you are going to approach it in a new way and introduce *Sharing our Ideas* (see page 11) as the method by which they are going to share their answers.

#### STEP 3

Ask students to share their pair’s best two ideas either by oral feedback or by making new pairs.

Metacognitive feedback (can be helpful if students are dubious about the activity). Get students to total up how many different ideas they came up with – this will be many more than they would have done had you just asked for ideas individually and they will have come from many more people too. Also (if appropriate) reflect on how many people would normally put up their hands and how many wouldn’t – this approach has engaged everyone.

#### STARTER ACTIVITY 2

### LISTEN TO ME!

#### PURPOSE

Students work with a partner to share ideas. This activity enables

everyone to take part equally, limiting the enthusiastic (encouraging them to be focused) and encouraging those who would prefer to be quiet, while ensuring that all students take a full part in both speaking and listening.

#### RESOURCES

You will need a timer for this activity, preferably one that is visible to the students. You can download one from: [teachit.co.uk/702](http://teachit.co.uk/702)

#### STEP 1

Get students working in pairs. Pair them up with someone at their desk, a usual partner, someone that they choose, or use numbers/cut up pictures to pair them (hand out cards with numbers on – two of each number – when students come in, then ask them to find the student with the same number).

#### STEP 2

Outline the activity for the students. The speaker will have a set amount of time to share their ideas, and then the listener must give feedback. Then roles are exchanged. Both elements need to be well-prepared.

The speaker needs to be prepared to fill a whole minute with their contribution – ideally this should be personal and subjective (“What do I think about this?” “What matters to me?”). Speakers can refer to very brief prepared notes (a few bullet points – not a script).

The listener needs to be prepared to listen effectively (“Think what a good listener looks like” – teacher models good listening first) and then provide focused individual feedback - so finishing a sentence like “I was interested in....”

#### STEP 3

Establish who is going to speak or listen first.

#### STEP 4

Establish how much time students will have (one minute is optimal for speaker, thirty seconds for listener to give feedback).

#### STEP 5

Speakers then speak, listeners listen, then feedback is given. You may want to refresh instructions half way through. When the time is up encourage students to:

- Reflect upon what they’ve exchanged (write down your best 2/5 ideas, share your ideas with a new partner)
- Provide positive feedback to their partner (either a simple “you were great”, or finish the sentence “I enjoyed working with you because...”)

#### NOTE

This is a valuable tool that can be used throughout *Essentials of Dialogue*. Working through the materials you will find many references to this technique for sharing ideas.

## STARTER ACTIVITY 3

## SHARING OUR IDEAS

## PURPOSE

Like *Listen to Me!* this activity enables everyone to take part equally, while ensuring that all students play a full part in both speaking and listening.

## RESOURCES

You will need a timer for this activity, preferably one that is visible to the students.

## STEP 1

Get students working in pairs.

## STEP 2

Outline the question for the students. The question for this activity should be open-ended (and encourage divergent (creative) thinking) so it works best when you are asking students to either:

- Reflect upon what they have learned (“Remind each other what we covered last lesson”)
- Come up with a variety of possible answers to a question (“How many answers to the question X can you and your partner come up with?”)

## STEP 3

Allow some silent individual thinking time.

## STEP 4

Establish who is going to start.

## STEP 5

Establish how much time students will have (one minute is optimal).

## STEP 6

Students then take turns at sharing their ideas or responses – they have to move quickly and share as many ideas as possible. Ideally there should be no hesitation – they should be trying to share as many ideas as possible in the time allowed.

## STEP 7

When the time is up encourage students to:

- Reflect upon what they’ve exchanged (write down your best 2/5 ideas, share your ideas with a new partner)
- Provide positive feedback to their partner

## NOTE

This is a valuable tool that can be used throughout *Essentials of Dialogue*. Working through the materials you will find many references to this technique for sharing ideas.

## MAIN ACTIVITY 1

## DIALOGUE IS / IS NOT

## PURPOSE

To encourage students to reflect more deeply upon what dialogue is (that it is a specific way of thinking about talking and it is not just a generic chatter) and it has particular rules and expectations, thus setting up baseline understanding for subsequent work.

## RESOURCES

Worksheet 1.1: *Dialogue Is/Is Not*

## STEP 1

All students are given the cards accompanying this activity (see worksheet 1.1).

## STEP 2

On their own students sort the cards into two piles according to whether they think the description on the card refers to dialogue or to a different form of communication.

## STEP 3

Working with a partner, students scrutinise one another’s lists and discuss their decisions and make any changes that they agree on. Any descriptions they cannot agree on should be kept to one side. End with a class discussion about the descriptions including what students have written on the blank card.

## EXTENSION

Students to write a guide or recipe for good dialogue so that they are thinking of the necessary skills for effective dialogue. Older students could research some dialogue thinkers who have influenced the work of *Essentials of Dialogue*, for example: Martin Buber, Diana Eck, Paulo Freire, Emmanuel Levinas and David Bohm.

## MAIN ACTIVITY 2

## CASE STUDY: THE IMAM AND THE PASTOR

## PURPOSE

Students are able to explore the very positive impact of dialogue in making a positive difference in the world. Students consider an example of where dialogue has been used to help build peace. Please feel free to substitute a more culturally appropriate case study if relevant.

## RESOURCES

Worksheet 1.2: *When People Forget to Listen*

Film: *The Imam and the Pastor* ([youtu.be/oapAA0XUaH4](https://youtu.be/oapAA0XUaH4))

## STEP 1

Ask your students to read the *When People Forget to Listen* worksheet. Alternatively, read the worksheet out loud to them. Make

the link between the student's skills in this lesson (listening to others, engaging in dialogue, group work and empathy) whilst understanding the conflict and the peace building efforts.

### STEP 2

Show your class the 10 minute clip from the film *The Imam and the Pastor*. The film is an inspiring story that describes the transformation that took place in the lives of Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor Jame Wuye in Nigeria, moving them from armed militia members to co-workers on reconciliation efforts. Please note that there are some distressing images in this film so ensure you are comfortable with your students watching it before showing it.

### STEP 3

As students watch the film ask them to write down the things that are most striking about what they see and hear. After the film is finished ask them to share these thoughts with the person sitting next to them and then use these thoughts to start a class discussion. Points for a class discussion:

- Causes of the conflict
- Barriers to peace
- The role of dialogue in building peace. Use the two quotes from Imam Ashafa and Pastor James to stimulate discussion

### STEP 4

Finally, ask the students to reflect on where they think that there are peace related issues in their community. Could dialogue be used to help build peace in this situation too?

### EXTENSION

Your student's can explore this scenario further through a number of resources

- The Pastor and the Imam talk about their peace-building project in Kenya's Rift Valley after the post-election violence in 2008: [bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11734436](http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11734436)
- A transcript of an interview with Pastor James and Imam Ashafa in which they talk about their history and work: <http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-pastor-james-wuye-and-imam-muhammad-ashafa>
- For more in depth information on Nigeria and the conflict situation there visit the Centre on Religion and Geopolitics: <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/country-profiles/nigeria>
- If you wish to purchase the full film about Pastor James and Imam Ashafa to show to your class you can do so here: [www.fltfilms.org.uk](http://www.fltfilms.org.uk)

## MAIN ACTIVITY 3

### OUR RULES FOR DIALOGUE

#### PURPOSE

To enable the teacher to build a safe space by achieving agreement around expectations of students' behaviour during

dialogue. Through group or class work students should formulate rules for discussion; ideally everyone should agree on these, and it would be a good idea to ensure that students are able to refer to them in future sessions.

#### RESOURCES

Worksheet 1.3: *Example Rules for Dialogue*

#### STEP 1

Students should write them down, use a print out, make a poster or a PowerPoint slide that can go up on the board while students arrive for future lessons.

#### STEP 2

You can refer to the example sheet as part of this discussion. There will be ideas on here with which students may not be familiar – look for opportunities in subsequent lessons to practise them.

## REFLECTION ACTIVITY 1

### WHAT'S MY DIALOGUE SCORE?

#### PURPOSE

The dialogue score activity is particularly useful in two ways – firstly it encourages students to reflect upon the specific skills required for dialogue, and secondly it enables you to work with them to identify the areas that might require focused help in future sessions. In this activity, students assign themselves, or their partners, a score on a number of key dialogue skills. You can use this activity in a number of ways in preparation for the next lesson.

#### RESOURCES

Worksheet 1.4: *What is my Dialogue Score?*

#### OPTION 1

Students can complete the sheet on their own, or with a partner (the latter is often better – as it tends to drive deeper reflection).

#### OPTION 2

Use it in conjunction with the *Dialogue Checklist* (see page 18) and your professional judgment, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of your class in terms of dialogue skills.

#### OPTION 3

You can then use this information to determine the activities upon which you are going to concentrate in the next lesson – if your students' lowest score is in 'Speaking' for example, then try to pick activities that might improve that. You might even divide your class up and give different groups different tasks to do, according to their strengths and weaknesses.

Remember that, as these are skills, everyone can improve (even students who are already very good), and that regular practise is

often the secret to swiftly developing the skills.

### REFLECTION ACTIVITY 2

## WWW/EBI: WHAT WENT WELL? EVEN BETTER IF...

### PURPOSE

This is a very simple technique that can be used with a variety of strategies to enable students to reflect upon their own individual performance, and that of their classmates. Students complete two statements:

**WHAT WENT WELL (WWW):** Students have to identify those areas of the activity that were a success – this can either be in terms of outcome or of the skills that they demonstrated in order to reach it.

**EVEN BETTER IF (EBI):** Students have to identify what they would need to do better – it is important that these are expressed positively – it is about looking forward!

It is a good idea to encourage students to write 2 or 3 bullet points for each one – so a short plenary session might produce something like:

WWW	EBI
<b>WWW 1:</b> We produced a really great powerpoint presentation.	<b>EBI 1:</b> Everyone in the class was on task when we were preparing the presentations
<b>WWW 2:</b> We had a thoughtful discussion and came up with some good ideas.	<b>EBI 2:</b> Everyone followed instructions carefully.

You can see that the two EBIs are really criticisms of some individuals – but they are expressed in a positive and anonymous way. When you are starting to use this technique it might be a good idea to have some examples of WWW/EBI statements for students to emulate, but you will find that they are quick to get the hang of this simple reflective technique.

### OPTION 1

After a single activity you can do a quick WWW/EBI analysis. Give students a set period of time (30 seconds for example) to write one point for each (either about themselves individually, their group or the whole class, as appropriate). You can then share these by getting students to put them in the middle of the table, pick another at random, and then call on random students to read the ideas that they have in front of them.

### OPTION 2

As a reflection activity at the end of a lesson, you:

- **Must:** Do something quickly as above – just one or two points, and share with a partner using either of the activities *Sharing our Ideas* or *Listen to Me!*
- **Should:** Come up with and write down three points for each, then share with a partner or group. Call on random students for feedback
- **Could:** Write down their three points. Share with a partner. Then, carefully manage feedback; get students to vote on the best comment on their table. Students should mix around the room, sharing their comments. Give students the opportunity to re-draft their points once they have talked to others.

### OPTION 3

As reflection at the end of the module use the WWW/EBI sheets to manage students' reflection on the whole module, as part of a larger reflection. They should be able to produce WWW/EBI points for both themselves as individuals and the whole group.

Start by giving them the opportunity to identify what they have done (either through discussion or a card sort or similar activity).

Then encourage them to work individually to do a WWW/EBI analysis, before moving onto work together as groups to produce cooperative work, upon which they can then base targets for future work.

### NOTE

This is a valuable tool that can be used throughout *Essentials of Dialogue*. Working through the materials you will find many references to this technique for self and peer assessment.

## WORKSHEET 1.1

**DIALOGUE IS/IS NOT**

In an encounter with those who might have different opinions, values and beliefs to my own, dialogue is the process by which I come to understand the others' lives, values and beliefs better and others come to understand my life, values and beliefs. Sort the cards under these headings: **DIALOGUE IS** and **DIALOGUE IS NOT** (one card is left blank for your own ideas).

THE SAME THING AS A  
DEBATE

TRYING TO FIND OUT  
HOW WE ARE ALL  
THE SAME THROUGH  
DISCUSSING  
SIMILARITIES

ASKING QUESTIONS  
TO FIND OUT MORE  
ABOUT THE LIVES OF  
OTHERS

MAKING FRIENDS  
WITH SOMEONE ELSE

AN INTERVIEW

LISTENING CAREFULLY  
TO WHAT OTHERS SAY  
AND RESPONDING TO  
THEM

AN ARGUMENT

TRYING TO  
UNDERSTAND A  
DIFFERENT WAY AT  
LOOKING AT SOMETHING

WORKING TOGETHER  
TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO  
SHARED PROBLEMS

A DISCUSSION WHERE  
I FEEL SAFE ENOUGH  
TO ASK DIFFICULT  
QUESTIONS/SHARE  
DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES

TRYING TO FIND OUT  
HOW WE ARE  
DIFFERENT AND  
UNDERSTAND THOSE  
DIFFERENCES

READING PREPARED  
STATEMENTS TO OTHER  
PEOPLE

WAITING FOR MY  
TURN TO SPEAK

## WORKSHEET 1.2

## WHEN PEOPLE FORGET TO LISTEN...

The Nigerian population is made up of 250 distinct ethnic groups who speak over 100 languages. Its population is mainly Christian and Muslim with the majority of Muslims living in the north and the majority of Christians in the south. Political power has, in the past, been divided between Christians and Muslims but this system appears to be breaking down.

Nigeria's religious landscape changed dramatically in the twentieth century. In 1900, it is estimated that the population of Nigeria was 27% Muslim and 2% Christian. The rest of the population followed traditional religious beliefs. During the twentieth century Christianity grew rapidly in the south and in the Middle Belt and there are Christian minorities now in the predominantly Muslim north.

Conflicts, fuelled by religious and ethnic divides, inadequate governance and economic problems have increased throughout Nigeria. In the Plateau State, one of the poorest states in Nigeria, its capital Jos sits along the Christian-Muslim fault-line that divides the country. Issues around unequal rights and the balance of power have repeatedly led to violence between Muslim and Christian communities. In Plateau State, at least one thousand people were killed each year in 2001, 2004 and 2008. In Kaduna state a controversy over the implementation of Sharia law led to three days of violence in January 2000 during which Christian and Muslim youth gangs killed 2,000 people and destroyed much property.

### PASTOR JAMES AND IMAM ASHAFI'S STORY

Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye are Muslim and Christian religious leaders respectively who live in Kaduna State. Today they work together to help others to resolve their conflicts; but they did not start out as peacemakers.

In the 1990s, Pastor James and Imam Ashafa led opposing armed militias and

were dedicated to defending their respective communities. Pastor James said he formed a Christian militia group because he wanted to protect his people: "My hate for the Muslims then had no limits and no Muslim ever impressed me for whatever reason."

Violence broke out in Kaduna State in the 1990s and Christians and Muslims fought each other, destroying each others' homes, crops and attacking each others' families. In fierce battles, Pastor James lost his hand and two of Imam Ashafa's close relatives were killed. Despite this hatred for each other the two men met unexpectedly in May 1995. The meeting took place at a gathering UNICEF had organised about health issues in their communities. A mutual friend was present at the event and during a break he put Imam Ashafa and Pastor James' hands together and said "I know you have the capacity to keep the state in peace. I want you to talk."<sup>1</sup>

Over the course of the next year Imam Ashafa initiated contact with Pastor James and slowly their relationship evolved. Pastor James came to believe that he could not preach Christ with hate in his heart and that forgiveness was important. And, Imam Ashafa heard a similar message about the teachings of the Quran and Allah's love for all mankind and how the Prophet forgave those who persecuted him.

### THE INTERFAITH MEDIATION CENTRE

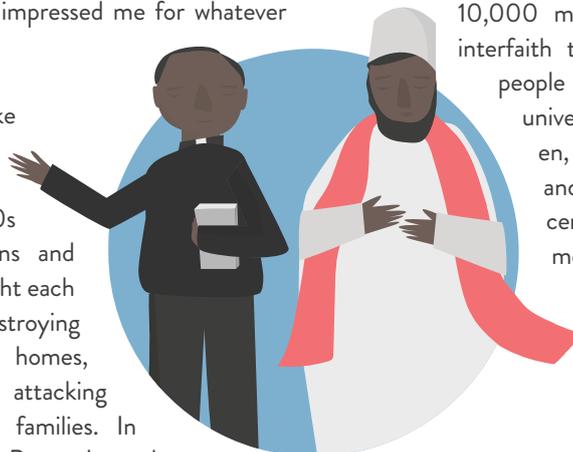
After much talking and relationship building between them the two men eventually

reconciled and decided to work to bring peace to their community. As a result in 1995 Pastor James and Imam Ashafa together launched the Interfaith Mediation Center, an organisation with now over 10,000 members providing interfaith training to young people in schools and universities, to women, religious leaders and politicians. The center brings youth, men and women of both faiths together in dialogue and to mediate.

Imam Ashafa says, "there is an understanding that it is not about being Muslim or Christian, it's not about debates between the two, or winning and losing. It is about dialogue and focusing on issues that affect both of us and how we can move our society forward."

Pastor James says, "we are grateful to God that we have learned this ability to hear one another and create a safe space to dialogue – without which we will always be assuming things from afar, and you can kill someone based on assumption. We have learned a bitter lesson."

They began their work in Kaduna State by establishing dialogue between youth leaders from the two religious communities. They also offered training to at-risk youth in not only conflict resolution but also the skills needed to gain work. After riots in 2000 they campaigned for peace using local media and helped to repair both Mosques and Churches. The Interfaith Mediation Center's work now includes a wide range of activities across Nigeria and they have also used some of their expertise abroad such as in Kenya.



<sup>1</sup> <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-pastor-james-wuye-and-imam-muhammad-ashafa>

## WORKSHEET 1.3

**EXAMPLE RULES FOR DIALOGUE**

1. Always listen carefully to what other people are saying.
2. Think before speaking.
3. Always try to be positive.
4. Only one person speaks at a time.
5. Raise your hand to be recognised if you want to say something.
6. No interruption when someone is speaking.
7. When you disagree with someone, make sure that you make a distinction between criticising someone's idea and the person themselves.
8. No laughing when a person is saying something (unless they are making a joke).
9. Encourage everyone to participate.
10. Always use 'I' statements – don't generalise.
11. Take other people's points of view seriously; they may find it difficult to accept things that are obvious to you.
12. Remember your body language and manners (don't get angry).
13. Use open-ended questions.
14. Be honest in what you say.
15. Speak positively of your own faith or points of view, rather than negatively about other people's.
16. Respect other people's views, even if you disagree.
17. Do not treat people here as a spokesperson for their faith.
18. Do not tell others what they believe, but will let them tell you.
19. Acknowledge similarities and differences between your positions.
20. Do not judge people here by what some people who share their perspective say or do.
21. Do not insist that people agree with your views.
22. Make every effort to get along with everyone regardless of their faith, gender, race or age.

## WORKSHEET 1.4

## WHAT IS MY DIALOGUE SCORE?

SCORE FOR EACH COLUMN	1	2	3	SCORE
	NOT LIKE ME	A BIT LIKE ME	VERY LIKE ME	
I can give good descriptions, details and explanations when speaking about my community, my background or things that are important to me.				
I'm able to explain my experiences to someone who is not familiar with them.				
I'm able to build upon what other people say to help people understand.				
<b>SPEAKING TOTAL...</b>				
I know how to show people that I'm really listening with body language.				
I know how to show people that I'm actively listening to them rather than just waiting to speak.				
I can reflect upon what I've heard from other people in order to work out what more I would like to know.				
<b>LISTENING TOTAL...</b>				
I can ask good questions based upon what I've heard, to deepen my understanding.				
I can ask open questions that encourage the speaker to develop their explanations.				
I can ask questions that look for deeper meaning and help me to understand someone else's perspective.				
<b>QUESTIONS TOTAL...</b>				
I'm able to explain how I feel about other peoples' ideas and experiences.				
I'm able to respond with empathy to other peoples' ideas and experiences.				
I'm able to disagree with someone's views in a polite and respectful way.				
<b>RESPONDING TOTAL...</b>				
I'm able to reflect upon and explain what I've learned in talking to others.				
I can reflect upon and explain the similarities and differences between my experiences and someone else's.				
I can identify and explain the way that my own skills and attitudes are changed by what I hear.				
<b>REFLECTION TOTAL...</b>				
<b>GRAND TOTAL...</b>				

**WORKSHEET 1.5****WWW/EBI: WHAT WENT WELL? EVEN BETTER IF...**

Write two or three bullet points under each column below:

<b>WHAT WENT WELL?</b> Identify those areas of the activity that were a success.	<b>EVEN BETTER IF...</b> Identify those areas of the activity that could be done better.