

Difficult Dialogues Initiative

Selected Readings on Dialogic Communication

Anderson, R., Baxter, L. A., & Cissna, K. N. (Eds.). (2004). *Dialogue: Theorizing difference in communication studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

This edited book contains 16 chapters, each representing a distinct view of dialogic communication. One of the key values of the book is in showing the variety of ways that scholars in the Communication Studies field approach dialogue. The first chapter, "Texts and Contexts of Dialogue," provides an excellent literature review of dialogue, and includes an extensive bibliography.

Broome, B. J. (1993). Managing differences in conflict resolution. In D. J. Sandole and H. van der Merwe (Eds.), *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application*, pp. 95-111. Manchester University Press.

This chapter draws from Buber, Stewart, and other authors on this list and applies their work in conflict situations, arguing for a relational view of 'empathy'. Rather than emphasizing the re-creation in the listener of the meaning originally created by the speaker (the traditional psychological view of empathy), a relational view focuses on the creation of shared meaning during the dialogic encounter. Drawing on the concept of 'third culture', the author suggests that this type of understanding can occur only through genuine dialogue that shifts away from a preoccupation with self and similarity in resolving differences and focuses on focus is on co-creating with the other a shared reality. The chapter concludes by suggesting a set of 'dialogic attitudes' for use in conflict interaction.

Broome, B. J. and Jakobsson Hatay, A. (2006). Building Peace in Divided Societies: The Role of Intergroup Dialogue, in John Oetzel and Stella Ting-Toomey (eds), *Handbook of Conflict Communication*, pp. 627-662, Sage Publications.

In this chapter the authors examine some of the dialogic approaches that have emerged in response to the challenge of building peace in protracted intergroup conflict situations. A case study of peacebuilding dialogue initiatives in Cyprus serves the dual purpose of illustrating the diversity of dialogic approaches to peacebuilding as well as their strengths and limitations. They present a view of peace building as a multi-track dialogue process that integrates an inclusive effort of citizen peacebuilding with the inevitably more exclusive process of elite peacemaking and peace negotiations.

Buber, M. (1970). *I and thou* (W. Kaufman, Trans.). New York: Scribner. (Original work published 1937).

This classic work on dialogue is written by Martin Buber, one of the foremost philosophers of dialogue. Written in poetic style, the book eschews academic language and pretense in describing Buber's relational and practical approach to dialogue. Humans must by necessity exist in objectified and instrumental I-It relations. But it is only through I-Thou relations and genuine dialogue where people develop their full potential.

Buber, M. (2002). Elements of the interhuman. In J. Stewart (Ed.), *Bridges not walls: A book about interpersonal communication* (pp. 663-681). Boston: McGraw Hill. This short reading is an excellent introduction to Buber's approach to dialogue. It includes key concepts such as "being" versus "seeming" and "unfolding" versus "imposition."

Freire, P. (1999). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum. (Original work published in 1970). This classic work describes a revolutionary approach to pedagogy as the education of all humans, especially those who exist on the margins of society, to be transformed from controlled objects to empowered agents. Dialogue is at the heart of Freire's pedagogy. Through their dialogical encounters with others, which are first facilitated by teachers and educators, people develop the capacity to think and act critically in the world.

Hammond, S. C., Anderson, R., & Cissna, K. N. (2003). The problematics of dialogue and power. *Communication Yearbook*, 27, 125-157. Among other attractive features of this article, the authors describe key characteristics of dialogue, including immediacy of presence, emergent unanticipated outcomes, recognition of strange otherness, collaborative orientation, vulnerability, mutual implication, temporal flow, and genuineness and authenticity.

Herzig, M., & Chasin, L. (2006). Fostering dialogues across divides: A nuts and bolts guide from the Public Conversations Project. Unpublished Manuscript (available from the website of the Public Conversations Project (www.publicconversations.org)). The Public Conversations Project is well-known and successful practitioner group who specialize in conducting private dialogues on public issues with participants who hold different positions on the issues. This reading, available for free from their website, is a practical resource guide describing how to design and facilitate group dialogue events.

Maiese, M. (2003) Dialogue. in Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess (Eds.). *Beyond Intractability*. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2003 <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dialogue/>>. This article is from an online database containing hundreds of articles that deal with intractable conflict. In this piece, the author discusses the need for dialogue, how dialogue differs from other central modes of communication, how to prepare for dialogue, the benefits of engaging in dialogue, and the limits of the dialogue approach. Overall, this article provides a brief but solid overview of basic approaches to dialogue. It is intended for the practitioner.

Pearce, K. A., Spano, S., & Pearce, W. B. (in press). The multiple faces of the Public Dialogue Consortium: Scholars, practitioners, and dreamers of better social worlds. In L. Frey and K. Cissna (Eds.). *Handbook of Applied Communication*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This chapter provides an over view of the Public Dialogue Consortium's conceptual and practical approach to dialogue. It describes the theoretical commitments of the PDC as grounded in social constructionism and the coordinated management of meaning, and

illustrates how these commitments are applied to “real life” situations through an applied methodology.

Pearce, W. B., & Littlejohn, S. W. (1997). *Moral conflict: When social worlds collide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

One of the leading books on conflict in the Communication Studies field, this book advances the thesis that the most significant and intractable conflicts that humans face today are based in incommensurate world views or moral orders. As such, people on opposing sides of an issue have difficulty resolving their conflicts because they participate in different patterns of communication that lead them to construct their social worlds differently. Dialogic communication offers a possible solution to this problem by developing new patterns of communication that bridge disparate world views and moral orders.

Ropers, N. (2003). Assessing the role and impact of dialogue projects. *Berghof handbook for conflict transformation*, online publication located at <http://www.berghof-handbook.net>.

This article takes a critical look at dialogue projects in the international conflict arena. In recent years, non-official dialogue initiatives have become widespread, fostered by the continuing rise in the number of acute or potentially violent disputes, particularly ethno-political and protracted conflicts. However, some question the effectiveness of using the dialogue method, arguing that the ultimate concerns of most disputes are not stereotypical perceptions, differences of opinion, and varying cultural standards, but rather tangible conflicts of interest, structural factors, and the struggle for power and influence. In this article, the author seeks to place dialogues in the context of the overall dynamics of conflict and conflict transformation.

Spano, S. (2001). *Public dialogue and participatory democracy: The Cupertino community project*. Creeskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

This book is a case study account of a multi-year project designed to enhance the quality of public communication among and between residents and city officials in a local community. As described in the book, public dialogue is a form of communication that situates participants in relationships that flow back and forth between honest and candid expression and open and empathic listening. The book can serve as a resource for communication practitioners and others who are developing dialogue projects.

Stewart, J., & Zediker, K. (2000). Dialogue as tensional, ethical practice. *Southern Communication Journal*, 65, 224-242.

The authors of this article put forth the view that dialogue should be approached as a distinct and potentially useful form of human communication. In making this claim, the authors go on to argue that dialogue operates as a dynamic tensional practice. The primary tension that dialogue participants must navigate is between letting the other happen to me (being open to the other) and holding my own ground. To successfully exist within this tension involves taking action and making ethical decisions in “real world” situations.