

COMING TOGETHER FOR RACIAL UNDERSTANDING

HANDOUTS

DAY #1

A Comparison of Dialogue and Debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

Dialogue remains open-ended.

Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

In debate, winning is the goal.

In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.

Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Debate causes critique of the other position.

Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.

Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.

Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

Debate implies a conclusion.

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617)492-1764

Moving from Debate to Dialogue

Moving from debate to dialogue: Understanding the differences between debate and dialogue can improve communication and relationships across differences

By Karen Pace, MSU Extension

Conversations about race and racism (and other issues related to human differences) can be very difficult for people. Many of us lack positive role models or very many opportunities for engaging in discussions focused on complex issues in ways that lead to increased understanding and positive relationship-building across differences. In addition, conversations about race, gender, class and other differences can trigger strong emotions in people including guilt, shame, anger, trauma and despair.

One way we can improve our conversations and relationships is to practice self-awareness, which includes noticing what we're feeling and thinking—and making intentional choices about how we want to engage in difficult discussions about hard issues. Deborah Flick, Ph.D. author of *From Debate to Dialogue: Using the Understanding Process to Transform Our Conversations* suggests that moving from debate to dialogue can increase our understanding of ourselves and others while improving our communication skills and relationships. Based on Flick's work, here are some differences between debate and dialogue:

Debate Process

- You're searching for one "right" answer.
- The goal is to be right, win the argument or persuade others.
- Your thoughts are evaluating and critical as you listen to others.
- You're listening judgmentally for errors and flaws in other people's perspectives.
- The question in your mind is "What's wrong with this picture?"
- Rather than listening deeply, you're planning your rebuttal.

Dialogue Process

- You're aware that there are multiple and valid perspectives about many issues.
- The goal is to understand others.
- You work to remain open and curious.
- You practice listening to other people's stories about their realities and lived experiences.
- You believe people about their realities and experiences—rather than becoming defensive and stuck in denial.
- The question in your mind is "What can I learn about myself and others?"
- You listen more than you talk.
- You practice reflecting on what you're feeling and respond in intentional ways rather than reacting in ways that lack self-awareness.

While debate processes may be helpful in some situations, the dialogue process is more likely to increase people's ability to connect in healthy ways in order to create environments that are safe, affirming and fair for everyone.

Michigan State University Extension provides resources and workshops focused on issues of social and emotional health and well-being—as well as ways to build and sustain authentic relationships across differences and other areas of diversity and multiculturalism.

To contact an expert in your area, visit msue.anr.msu.edu/experts, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

Creating a Common Language

TERMS	1.	Groups that are more likely to receive privileges and benefits in a society and who believe that their “way” is better. What are _____?
Equity		
Culture	2.	Groups that are “targeted” as “less than” or different because of their race, gender, age, sexual orientation, role or job, and other differences. What are _____?
Discrimination		
Diversity	3.	Rejection of differences and a belief in the superiority of the dominant group. What is _____?
Racial Equity		
Internalized Racism	4.	The contemporary and usually implicit existence of institutions, policies, and practices that continue to foster inequitable access to resources and opportunities resulting in disparate outcomes between people of color and whites. What is _____?
“Isms”		
Realms of Oppression		
Personal Mediated Racism	5.	An attitude that targets another group as “less than” and leads to that group receiving fewer resources, such as power, privileges and opportunities, because of color, gender, economic status, age, class, religion, sexual orientation, and other differences. What are _____?
Monoculturalism		
Unconscious/Implicit Bias		
Non-Target Groups	6.	The act of one person holding, expressing, and/or acting upon racist attitudes toward another person. This is typically what is thought of when a person is said to be racist. What is _____?
Racism		
Systemic/Institutional Racism	7.	Unfair treatment of a person or group. What is _____?
Prejudice		
Target Groups	8.	Treating people the same regardless of social, economic or cultural differences. What is _____?
Unearned Privilege		
Equality	9.	This is about fairness and equal access to opportunity. It takes social differences and the social structures of inequality into account rather than assuming that we all begin on a level playing field, and through hard work, anyone could succeed. What is _____?
Allies		
	10.	In the United States, this is the system in which white people maintain supremacy over people of other races through a set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures, plus institutional power. What is _____?

Creating a Common Language

TERMS

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|-------------------------------|-----|--|
| Equity | 11. | The unconscious acceptance of cultural norms that value certain attributes more than others, and then valuing people or groups who hold those attributes more than those who do not. This affect our very rapid, subconscious decision-making processes and our behaviors. What is _____? |
| Culture | | |
| Discrimination | 12. | A word describing many cultural differences. What is _____? |
| Diversity | | |
| Racial Equity | 13. | The values, beliefs and ways of thinking and speaking that a group develops to survive in a particular environment. What is _____? |
| Internalized Racism | | |
| “Isms” | 14. | The process whereby people in the target group make oppression internal and personal by coming to believe that the lies, prejudices, and stereotypes about them are true. What is _____? |
| Realms of Oppression | | |
| Personal Mediated Racism | 15. | These operate at the personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and grants advantages, favors, and benefits to members of non-target social groups at the expense of members of target groups. These are unearned, often invisible and they are granted people in the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not and regardless of their stated intent. What are _____? |
| Monoculturalism | | |
| Unconscious/Implicit Bias | | |
| Non-Target Groups | 16. | A judgment or opinion that is formed on insufficient grounds before facts are known or in disregard of facts that contradict it. These are learned and they can be unlearned. What is _____ |
| Racism | | |
| Systemic/Institutional Racism | 17. | The condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one will likely fare in life. It is the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment and impacts for all. What is _____? |
| Prejudice | | |
| Target Groups | 18. | People who are passionately committed to eliminating the systems of oppression that unjustly benefit them. What are _____? |
| Unearned Privilege | | |
| Equality | 19. | Four realms at which “isms” are expressed (personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural) and where positive change can be made. What are _____? |
| Allies | | |

CREATING A COMMON LANGUAGE

Answer Sheet

1. Groups that are more likely to receive privileges and benefits in a society and who believe that their “way” is better. **What are non-target groups?**
2. Groups that are “targeted” as “less than” or different because of their race, gender, age, sexual orientation, role or job, and other differences. **What are target groups?**
3. Rejection of differences and a belief in the superiority of the dominant group. **What is monoculturalism?**
4. The contemporary and usually implicit existence of institutions, policies, and practices that continue to foster inequitable access to resources and opportunities resulting in disparate outcomes between people of color and whites. **What is systemic/institutional racism?**
5. An attitude that targets another group as “less than” and leads to that group receiving fewer resources, such as power, privileges and opportunities, because of color, gender, economic status, age, class, religion, sexual orientation, and other differences. **What are isms?**
6. The act of one person holding, expressing, and/or acting upon racist attitudes toward another person. This is typically what is thought of when a person is said to be racist. **What is personally mediated racism?**
7. Unfair treatment of a person or group. **What is discrimination?**
8. Treating people the same regardless of social, economic or cultural differences. **What is equality?**
9. This is about fairness and equal access to opportunity. It takes social differences and the social structures of inequality into account rather than assuming that we all begin on a level playing field, and through hard work, anyone could succeed. **What is equity?**
10. In the United States, this is a system in which white people maintain supremacy over people of other races through a set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures, plus institutional power. **What is racism?**
11. The unconscious acceptance of cultural norms that value certain attributes more than others, and then valuing people or groups who hold those attributes more than those who do not. This affects our very rapid, subconscious decision-making processes and our behaviors. **What is unconscious/implicit bias?**
12. A word describing many cultural differences. **What is diversity?**

13. The values, beliefs and ways of thinking and speaking that a group develops to survive in a particular environment. **What is culture?**
14. The process whereby people in the target group make oppression internal and personal by coming to believe that the lies, prejudices, and stereotypes about them are true. **What is internalized oppression?**
15. These operate at the personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and grants advantages, favors, and benefits to members of non-target social groups at the expense of members of target groups. These are unearned, often invisible and they are granted people in the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not and regardless of their stated intent. **What are unearned privileges?**
16. A judgment or opinion that is formed on insufficient grounds before facts are known or in disregard of facts that contradict it. These are learned and they can be unlearned. **What is prejudice?**
17. The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one will likely fare in life. It is the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment and impacts for all. **What is racial equity?**
18. People who are passionately committed to eliminating the systems of oppression that unjustly benefit them. **What are allies?**
19. Four realms at which "isms" are expressed (personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural) and where positive change can be made. **What are realms of oppression?**