

# Facilitating Dialogue & Learning

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Debate	Dialogue	Discussion
Assuming that whatever the answer is, it must not be based on personal exploration, but on tested reasoning	Assuming that many people have pieces of an answer and that together they can craft a solution	Assuming there is one global answer that exists to clarify most experiences
Combative: Participants attempt to prove the other side's rationale as inferior	Collaborative: Participants work together toward a sense of community and understanding	Conceptual: Participants work toward the formation of a theoretical community of generalities, frameworks, and collective truths
Debate is about winning	Dialogue is about learning from the valuable differences in experience in the room	Discussion is about saying the "right" (intelligent, polished) thing or framing an idea cleanly.
Listening to find flaws and make counterarguments	Listening to both understand and find meaning from other's experiences and emotional insights	Listening to gather non-emotional, logical pieces of a large intellectual whole
Silencing assumptions and biases that don't have adequate evidence	Admitting habitual assumptions and biases for reevaluation	Minimizing the reality of assumptions and biases through large, agreeable framing
Critiquing the other side's position	Reexamining all positions by disrupting and destabilizing long held ideas	Synthesizing a large, academic theory which may be distant from actual positions
Defending one's own views against those of others	Actively using others' thinking to complement one's own	Seeking out the most correct thinking according to academic standards
Searching for flaws and weaknesses in other positions	Searching for the sources of, and the value in others' positions	Searching for strengths and value in accepted frameworks
Seeking a conclusion or vote that ratifies your position	Discovering new opinions, not seeking closure  <u>Differentiating Dialogue From Discussion: A Working Model</u> (Kardin and Sevig: 1997)	Seeking a logically agreeable conclusion that blankets personal opinions



## *Definition of Dialogue*

**“Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other’s valid human claims so that he or she will act differently toward the other.”**

**Dr. Harold Saunders, Founder and President of  
the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue (IISD)**

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# Active Listening

- Active Listening involves:
  - ❑ **Clarification**—clear up ambiguity.
  - ❑ **Paraphrasing**—involves restating, in your own words, the essence of a participant’s message. Generally directed toward content.
  - ❑ **Reflection**—similar to paraphrasing except the focus is on the emotions being expressed by the participant.
  - ❑ **Summarization**—tying together two or more parts of message.

# Active Listening

- Active Listening is not a spectator sport – it involves:
  - Asking questions that support and challenge
  - Asking questions that stimulate reflection
  - Allowing time for thoughtful reflection

# Active Listening

- There are five styles of active questions:
  - Open-ended Questions
  - Close-ended Questions
  - Probing Questions
  - Leading Questions
  - Echo Questions

# Active Listening

- Active listening involves:
  - Eye contact (culturally appropriate)
  - Demonstrating attention, e.g. nodding
  - Avoiding other tasks at the same time
  - Avoiding unnecessary interruptions
  - Avoiding over-talking with your own 'story'

# Active Listening

- Active Listening involves:
  - Listening for silence
  - Encouraging silence
  - Using periods of silence to further explore and reflect on what is being discussed



# Active Listening

- ❑ Active Listening involves:
  - Reflection = first taking time to think about what is said rather than first formulating a response to what is said.

# Why Engage in Interfaith Dialogue?

- Power to promote change
- Build relationships
- Overcome fear
- Understand more, fear less