

CREATING SPACE FOR DEMOCRACY

*A Primer on Dialogue and Deliberation in
Higher Education*

*Edited by
Nicholas V. Longo and Timothy J. Shaffer*

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DISCUSSING DEMOCRACY

Learning to Talk Together

Nicholas V. Longo and Timothy J. Shaffer

You can't solve a problem if you can't talk about it," observes Beverly Tatum, former president of Spelman College, in reflecting on the 20th anniversary edition of her bestselling book, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (Kenney, 2017). The inability to discuss complex and divisive issues such as racism and segregation permeates our public life. We might shy away because we don't want to offend people or say the wrong thing. Or we might be concerned that we don't have "all the facts," so we feel unprepared or uninformed. For many, it can be exhausting to face the constant need to explain a part of one's identity or beliefs that might be marginalized or go against the norm. Even when we want to engage in these conversations, it's difficult to know how to get the "right people" in the room or how to structure deliberative processes when we have so little practice in talking across differences. The resulting failure to engage in meaningful dialogue or sustained collaborative work means that public challenges go unaddressed.

This has to change. Rather than feeling powerless, we need to learn how to organize genuine dialogues that lead to productive action. As Peter Levine (2013) notes, to answer the fundamental question of civic studies—What should we do?—we need to work collectively to consider facts, values, and strategies. Facts are important because "we should not try to do something that is impossible, or redundant, or that has harmful but unintended consequences" (p. 25). We need values to distinguish between effective action that is "good" (e.g., the civil rights movement) and "bad" (e.g., fascist movements). Finally, Levine concludes, we need strategies: "It is insufficient to wish for better outcomes and determine that those outcomes are possible. We need a path to the desirable results" (p. 25). In short, we need to start

talking with one another, and then turn these conversations into collective action. This book is about taking those first steps in order to make this happen on college campuses.

With the fraying of public life and the loss of community over the past decades, this collaborative engagement can't happen soon enough. Confidence in major institutions has reached historic lows, while we face a growing number of intractable public problems—such as inequality, racism, climate change, and gun violence—that cannot be solved with technical fixes. Historically fringe voices are gaining strength and becoming more visible, while the engaged, democratic citizens¹ most needed to address problems are sidelined with diminished roles and expectations because of the professionalization of public life, among other factors (Dzur, 2017; McKnight, 1995).

Engagement among citizens, it should be noted, also too often contributes to the polarization threatening American democracy as echo chambers provide content that reinforces existing beliefs, isolating us even further from contrasting views. And, according to a recent Pew Research Center (2018) study, a growing majority of Americans (53% in 2018 versus 46% in 2016) now say that “talking about politics with people they disagree with” is generally “stressful and frustrating,” whereas a decreasing number (45% in 2018 versus 51% in 2016) say such conversations are usually “interesting and informative.” Given this context, it is difficult even to engage in civil discourse about issues that matter (Boatright, Shaffer, Sobieraj, & Young, 2019).

Higher education is not immune to these challenges. Colleges and universities serve as microcosms for democratic life and its discontents. It should come as no surprise that the fall 2016 entering cohort of first-time, full-time college students had the “distinction of being the most polarized cohort in the 51-year history” (Eagan et al., 2017, p. 4) of student surveys by the Higher Education Research Institute. Once a beacon of achievement, higher education is also increasingly seen with scorn; 61% of Americans say the U.S. higher education system is going in the wrong direction, according to a new Pew Research Center survey (Brown, 2018).

There is also a deep partisan divide around most issues connected with higher education, with a sharp rise—from 37% to 58% in just two years—in the number of Republicans saying that “colleges and universities have a negative effect on the way things are going in the country” (Fingerhut,

1. When we refer to *citizens*, we use the term inclusively of individuals who are community members, broadly defined. We do not use the term to refer to legal status, but instead point to the idea of citizenship being an “office, a responsibility, a burden proudly assumed” (Walzer, 1989, p. 216).

2017). By comparison, a wide majority of Democrats (72%) continue to view colleges and universities as having a positive effect (Fingerhut, 2017). Although there is some consensus about issues such as the negative impact of the high costs of college and the need for greater development of work-force skills, issues involving political discourse elicit wide partisan disagreement. For example, views on professors bringing their political and social views into the classroom diverge sharply, with 79% of Republicans saying it has a negative impact, compared with just 17% of Democrats. Similarly, 75% of Republicans see too much concern about protecting students from views they might find offensive, compared with 31% of Democrats (Brown, 2018). In this context, tensions around free speech and diversity and inclusion abound (Knight Foundation, 2019). With controversial speakers and counterprotests being stoked by national leaders and garnering a disproportionate amount of media attention, it can seem like our campuses are ground zero for polarization and the partisan culture wars. Yet these tensions are also missed opportunities for civic learning, which can be catalyzed through participatory, democratic processes such as dialogue and deliberation.

To feel safe to take risks and speak genuinely, people need to have the opportunity to participate in shared life in educative spaces that are humanizing, authentic, and productive. As the authors of *Free Spaces* (Evans & Boyte, 1992), *The Great Good Places* (Oldenburg, 1999), and *Palaces for the People* (Klinenberg, 2018) argue in unique but interrelated ways, places we might not first think of as sites for democratic discussion are essential to community life and social change. When describing what they call *free space*, *third spaces*, or *social infrastructure*, these scholars point to the importance of creating spaces in which ordinary people can share experiences, associate and organize, participate in public decision-making, and plan for collaborative action. Sometimes this process involves reconceptualizing familiar locations—such as libraries or barbershops—as civic spaces. Other times it utilizes locations away from everyday life, such as retreat centers and folk schools. Regardless, these types of spaces are essential to the healthy functioning of any society (Malena, 2015). Throughout history, free spaces have served as “seedbeds of democratic change in education and beyond” (Boyte, 2017), which then serve as training grounds for developing civic leadership among diverse groups of people working collectively to solve problems.

Using free spaces to cocreate knowledge offers an alternative to the dominant expertise paradigm of the academy. Much of the framework for teaching and learning is situated within a context in which the narrow technical expertise of a professor provides the sole basis for instruction. Dialogue and deliberation, however, build on the change from an instructional to a learning paradigm—an important conceptual shift in higher education that Robert

Barr and John Tagg (1995) flagged almost 25 years ago. With this shift, colleges recognized their responsibility to “create environments and experiences that allow students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves and to become members of communities of learning that make discoveries and solve problems” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p. 15). Since then, more active educational practices—what George Kuh (2008) refers to as “high-impact practices”—have grown through curricular interventions (e.g., first-year seminars, capstone courses, global learning) and classroom practices (intensive writing, undergraduate research, collaborative assignments), as well as through student life experiences (common intellectual experiences, learning communities) and off-campus engagement (internships, service-learning courses).

These are spaces where people interact with one another in ways that value the uniqueness and diversity of each other’s stories, experiences, and ideas. These spaces become invitations to “listen eloquently” to people with different backgrounds and views, to use a phrase from educator Herman Blake (1996, 2014), and then turn these stories into not only meaningful learning experiences but also sustained common work. This type of cocreative, asset-based learning process is empowering; it needs to be the touchstone for learning in our networked society, where information is no longer the exclusive purview of experts and gatekeepers. We all have something to contribute. This means that learning and knowledge creation take place within an ecosystem that extends beyond the professor and students to include those in the larger community affected by an issue. Most significantly, through these participatory processes, learning becomes the foundation for a democratic society.

This work is important because strong evidence is amassing that democracy is in crisis. In the *Journal of Democracy*, Larry Diamond (2015) referred to a global democratic recession. Although we live in an era when more than half of the world’s countries qualify as democratic, “more democracies than ever before are in decline” (p. 144), according to researchers at the Varieties of Democracy Institute. In the United States, and around the world in nations as diverse as Brazil, India, Russia, Turkey, and Venezuela, we see a rise in *autocratization* even in countries that have been heralded as exemplary democracies (Lührmann et al., 2018). The Kettering Foundation has been researching what it takes to make democracy work for several decades and recently remarked on the dangers of becoming “a citizenless democracy” (Mathews, 2010, p. iv), because ordinary citizens are being pushed to the sidelines, making it harder to work together to solve public problems or even to feel empowered to try. But more than simply noting these global trends, there are opportunities to think about democracy and its challenges in our own lived experience—especially on college campuses.

Civic Purposes of Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities were founded with civic purposes. The missions of higher education institutions of every type still call upon campuses to “serve a larger purpose” (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011). But “democracy” often shows up only in the lofty rhetoric of administrators or as the subject of study in survey courses reviewing historical events or legislators in faraway capitals. Higher education itself has little experience with the actual work of democracy, especially as part of the student experience. The growth in community engagement and service-learning has led to an abundance of opportunities for structuring “good deeds,” often through short-term volunteering. Yet the framing and practicing of engaged learning and civic engagement on college campuses remain thin. As Harry Boyte (2015) notes, “The fate of higher education and the larger democracy itself is inextricably tied *to the way* those of us in higher education understand citizenship, practice civic education, and convey our purposes to the larger society” (p. 1).

This insight emerged from extensive research and conversations about civic education in higher education with a diverse group of faculty members from campuses across the globe. Over the past decade, this group of scholars participated in a series of workshops known as “learning exchanges,” hosted by the Kettering Foundation and led by Maxine Thomas, which led to the publication of *Deliberative Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Engagement* (Shaffer, Longo, Manosevitch, & Thomas, 2017). One central finding from this research is that *public deliberation must be part of the next generation of democratic engagement for colleges and universities to realize their public purposes*.

Myles Horton, cofounder of the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, reflected: “When you believe in a democratic society, you create spaces for education that are democratic” (Horton, Kohl, & Kohl, 1998, p. 68). This is a simple yet profound idea about the connection between education and democracy from a savvy educator who found ways to put this idea into practice during the labor and civil rights movements. Yet making this connection today is particularly challenging in our colleges and universities. Despite putting in place mission statements and pronouncements about the importance of educating democratic citizens (Morphew & Hartley, 2006), higher education institutions do too little to put these lofty democratic ideals into practice in classrooms or beyond. We have seen this firsthand on campuses we’ve collaborated with across the country, and we’ve seen the results: College students learn most about democracy by how it is practiced—or, more often, not practiced—on campus.

The Kettering Foundation's research on this topic over a period of decades has come to similar conclusions about the need for campuses to empower students with real opportunities for democratic engagement (Harwood Group, 1993; Kiesa et al., 2007). This research also found students "eager for opportunities to talk about issues with a diverse group of people in open and authentic ways" (Kiesa et al., 2007, p. 5). If we care about the future of democracy, we can't just give lectures or research it as an abstract idea; we need to put it into practice. This book offers a blueprint for doing so by incorporating dialogue and deliberation into learning at colleges and universities. We hope to help readers understand, build, and strengthen an ecosystem of democracy, with citizen-centered practices acting as a sort of lifeblood flowing through the system. Connecting this lifeblood to the multitude of educative spaces—both formal and informal, on campus and in the community—is vital work for higher education.

Colleges and universities have the opportunity to create spaces where students—along with faculty and staff—can learn to be democratic citizens. This involves discussing important topics and divisive issues while also charting paths forward to address collective challenges.

Efforts to cultivate informed civil discourse through dialogue and deliberation have flourished on campuses across the United States and beyond (Carcasson, 2013; Dedrick, Grattan, & Dienstfrey, 2008; London, 2010; Shaffer, 2014; Shaffer et al., 2017; Thomas, 2010). Although public dialogue is increasingly being embedded within offices of institutional diversity or centers for community engagement, there are many more places on campus where such discussions aren't occurring. For faculty members and staff who are not comfortable leading conversations about contentious civic issues, avoiding such discussions is the safe and preferred path. Campus leaders may recognize the importance of helping students understand significant public issues but be hampered by uncertainty about what is possible or appropriate, or feel unqualified to facilitate discussions about contentious issues (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2018).

These are missed opportunities. Our campuses—and our broader society—will benefit from democratically structured communication and education processes with the creation of space where diverse voices can speak and be heard. Such efforts respond to concerns about viewpoint diversity, so that students are able to gain awareness of their views and those of other stakeholders, while also modeling constructive discourse.² Ultimately,

2. Visit the Heterodox Academy website at heterodoxacademy.org for more information on the importance of viewpoint diversity and efforts to create conditions for awareness of one's own views and the importance of understanding others.

democratic discourse creates space for a wider range of perspectives to listen to, engage with, and build trust and respect for—an anomaly to our more familiar existences within information bubbles and like-minded social circles. If this doesn't happen in institutions of higher learning, where else will it happen in our society?

Engaged learning has taken up these issues as educators realize the importance of bridging political and cultural divides. The diverse interactions of everyday life—when students are more likely to build relationships—may offer even more promise than more formal settings (Conover & Miller, 2018). On college and university campuses, opportunities to take part in structured discussions are growing, but there are also many settings, such as residence and dining halls, in which informal conversations can transform into more substantive discussions. This transformation requires proper support and training. Although this type of professional development must take place as part of the core work of teaching and learning (Shaffer et al., 2017), many other opportunities for discussion, dialogue, and deliberation exist to create space for civic education.

What has struck us in our conversations with colleagues and others since the publication of *Deliberative Pedagogy* has been the desire on the part of many within higher education to utilize discussion-based approaches in their work. The challenge has often been that they are not sure how to go about it.

For those with experience in service-learning and other community engagement settings, discussion has long been part of the reflection on experiential learning, as well as a needed vehicle to hear underrepresented voices in community settings (Stoecker, Tryon, & Hilgendorf, 2009). Developmental, cohort programs like the Bonner Program, which provides scholarships for students engaged in meaningful community work, have integrated dialogue into multiyear student experiences. This approach acknowledges that being able to engage in critical discussion about issues can lead to desired social change, or at least better understanding of what challenges exist and why.

More broadly, in diversity affairs and ethnic studies, creating opportunities for dialogues about social identities such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity is seen as foundational to equity work on campus. Grounded in theories and practices of equity and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1974, 2000; Shor & Freire, 1987), deliberative practices in these settings become integrated with efforts to decolonize the university. Issues of power—too often overlooked in the broader field of dialogue and deliberation—become more prominent. As a result, centers for multicultural education often catalyze dialogue and deliberation to build bridges

between social and cultural identities on and off campus. Processes such as intergroup dialogue recognize the importance of social identity and focus on facilitating dialogue about group differences (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007).

Student affairs offices are also working to empower students to work through problems using respectful and civil conversations (Magolda, Magolda, & Carducci, 2019). For instance, in recognizing the efforts of sustained dialogue, deliberative dialogue, and intergroup dialogue as models used by student affairs professionals, one student affairs leader noted,

While the challenges are real, there is no better place to do this work than on a college campus, the place in our society most likely to be made up of diverse individuals, full of open minds, and characterized by the spirit of inquiry. (Rue, 2019, p. 13)

The work of dialogue and deliberation is an especially useful skill set for residence assistants and student leaders of clubs on campus, where facilitation of conversations, leadership, and conflict resolution are paramount. Other areas that work toward conflict resolution, such as the office of the ombuds—where students bring concerns and complaints about the university—are also potential sites for dialogical and deliberative practice.

Nevertheless, thinking about the use of dialogue and deliberation processes, especially with models that utilize facilitators as neutral voices in the midst of divergent and sometimes discordant perspectives and positions, is still outside the comfort zone of many educators. This book is designed to expand this comfort zone by providing models for the many settings in which faculty, staff, administrators, and students might choose to use dialogue and deliberation to frame and enhance educative experiences. Our hope is that all educators who are concerned about democracy and who recognize the power and impact of public talk will be able to pick up this book, learn from the contributors' insights and experiences, and feel prepared to adopt or adapt these models in their own settings.

A Deliberative Turn

Communities can make significant progress on complex problems when citizens—as opposed to experts—are at the center of decision-making. This has led a growing number of public officials, school administrators, and other traditional decision-makers to realize that public problems are too complex for them to resolve alone. That's why they are increasingly reaching out and convening diverse groups of community residents and organizations

to identify issues and develop and implement strategies to address them. Over the past few decades (building on traditions from much earlier), public deliberation has become more integral in domains such as public policy and the political sphere, with practices such as participatory budgeting getting more recognition for including diverse voices as well as for their tangible impact on communities.

This kind of engagement goes beyond simply asking residents for input or involving only select groups of people in decision-making processes. Instead, it is intentional about seeing residents as active and equal partners in all facets of planning, implementing, assessing, and improving efforts to strengthen communities. It is an approach that melds “top-down” and “bottom-up” strategies for decision-making, and it is inherently democratic.

Right now, a growing number of urban planning, civic, political, environmental, and educational groups are exploring and advocating citizen-centered approaches to a wide range of public problems, from community revitalization to clean air campaigns. In several states, groups have convened citizen-led deliberations that have produced a set of public priorities that local communities are now taking steps to enact. In New York City, every public high school uses a participatory budgeting process to make decisions on the use of funds (Lerner, 2018). Leading funders, such as the Ford Foundation, have even begun to develop deliberative processes to involve citizens and stakeholders in every aspect of funding decisions (Gibson, 2017). At the local level, cities and towns are opening the doors of their libraries and school gyms to bring people together to negotiate diverse interests, identify common ground, and make collective decisions (Longo & Gibson, 2017). These kinds of efforts—which are broadly understood as *dialogue* and *deliberation*—have also been occurring in colleges and universities around the world. These processes not only help solve problems by getting more voices into the conversation but also teach democratic citizenship.

Defining Dialogue and Deliberation

Given the significance of this work, it is essential to offer some clarity about what we mean by key terms. Fortunately, many scholars in this field offer definitions to clarify what can otherwise be muddled and confusing terminology for these concepts (Escobar, 2011).

At the most basic level, *dialogue* is not about trying to win an argument (the realm of debate); rather, it is a collaborative and relational process to engage with others and cocreate meaning. At the ontological level, in the words of philosopher Martin Buber (1947), “the basic movement of the life of dialogue is the turning towards the other” (p. 22). Educators like bell

hooks, Paulo Freire, Meg Wheatley, and Myles Horton have since expanded these ideas to make dialogue a fundamental vehicle for understanding issues and making social change.

With echoes of the seminal writings of Martin Buber and scholarly work in the area of communication studies, Laura Black (2015) describes dialogue as “communication that involves a moment of full mutuality between people” (p. 365). She notes further that dialogue is “a way of speaking and relating in which both parties are fully present, open about their ideas, and accepting of the other people involved, even while engaging in disagreement” (pp. 365–366). Dialogue in this sense is a way of being as well as a way of communicating between people or groups.

Deliberation adds another dimension, often coming after or intersecting with dialogue. Specifically, *deliberation* is a process in which a diverse group of people moves toward making a collective decision on a difficult public issue. Best known as part of the jury system in the United States, deliberation involves weighing tradeoffs and tensions, recognizing competing values and interests, and coming to what has been termed *public judgment* (Yankelovich & Friedman, 2010). Public deliberation, according to David Mathews (2014) of the Kettering Foundation, is used in situations “when there are competing imperatives about what is worth most to us and our collective well-being” (p. 75).

Even within seemingly defined models, some fluidity exists. Definitions in the field overlap and form concentric circles. It is helpful to distinguish and clarify differences, however slight, in order to understand how models and approaches might be useful in different settings. Table 1.1 provides some context by depicting the linguistic roots and meanings of common terms.

Together, dialogue and deliberation have the potential for transformative work through relational engagement and robust discussion. Nearly 100 years ago, Mary Parker Follett (1924) recognized this potential, writing that in human relations, “It is I-plus-you reacting to you-plus-me.” She explains, “I can never influence ‘you’ because you have already influenced me; that is, in the very process of meeting, by the very process of meeting, we both become something different” (pp. 62–63). It is this acknowledgment that we learn and cocreate knowledge when we enter into relationships, however fleeting, that reminds us of the importance of making those interactions as beneficial, constructive, and respectful as possible.

Naming and Framing Wicked Problems

Most complex social and public policy issues are best understood as *wicked problems* (Rittel & Webber, 1973). These challenges cannot be solved with technical fixes or the usual way of doing business. They involve complex

TABLE 1.1
Roots and Meanings

Debate	<i>De</i> = “down,” “completely” <i>Batre</i> = “to beat” <i>Debate</i> = “to fight,” “to resolve by beating down”
Discussion	<i>Dis</i> = “apart” <i>Quatere</i> = “to shake” <i>Discussion</i> = “to shake apart,” “to break apart” Same roots as <i>concussion</i> and <i>percussion</i>
Conversation	<i>Com</i> = “with” <i>Vertare</i> = “to turn” <i>Conversation</i> = “turn about with,” “keep company with,” “act of living with,” “having dealings with others”; “manner of conducting oneself in the world”
Dialogue	<i>Dia</i> = “through,” “between,” “across” <i>Logos</i> = “word,” “speech,” “meaning,” “reason,” “to gather together” <i>Dialogue</i> = “flow of meaning,” “meaning flowing”
Deliberation	<i>De</i> = “entirely,” “completely” <i>Librare</i> = “to balance, weigh” (from <i>libra</i> : “scale”) <i>Deliberare</i> = “weigh, consider well”

Source: Escobar (2011).

issues with competing values, multiple perspectives, and tough tradeoffs. As Martín Carcasson (2017) notes, wicked problems “call for ongoing communicative processes of broad engagement to address underlying competing values and tensions” (p. 3). As a response, he offers that a “deliberative mindset [can help] develop mutual understanding across perspectives, negotiate the underlying competing values, and invent, support, and constantly adapt collaborative actions” (p. 3).

A critical step for taking action is being able to discuss problems and approaches for addressing them with others in the school, neighborhood, or community. To put it another way, it is about naming and framing an issue in public ways (Rourke, 2014).³ *Naming* wicked problems is a fundamental step for addressing them because it identifies the specific issue that we need to talk about in a public way. People name problems in conversations all the

3. Rourke (2014) is a useful resource for groups trying to develop their own materials for deliberation. It offers step-by-step suggestions in a brief, accessible format for how to develop materials for deliberative forums.

time, a process that helps them capture their experiences and concerns. David Mathews (2016) explains that these conversations revolve around ordinary questions, such as the following: What's bothering you? Why do you care? How are you going to be affected? When people respond to these questions, they are identifying what is valuable to them. This is the first step toward being engaged—that is, “more likely to participate in making decisions and to see that . . . [citizens] have power to affect their future” (Rourke, 2014, p. 3).

This is a political, and sometimes defiant, act because professionals often name problems in different ways from the people and communities affected by a problem. For instance, professional stakeholders in education, such as school administrators, will often name problems differently from parents or students. This can be seen with an issue such as a chronically absent student who is forced to move during the school year: The challenge for families might be homelessness and housing insecurity, whereas school officials seemingly name the problem as “truancy.” In higher education, provocative free expression or even discriminatory language can be named as “free speech” by advocates of academic freedom, but “hate speech” by vulnerable groups who feel harmed by this speech. How do we approach such issues? Is there a correct option or choice for how to name the problem? Who decides?

People often name problems differently depending on their own backgrounds, experiences, and positionalities. These examples are meant to demonstrate that it is vital for people with direct experience with an issue to be involved in the initial naming of the topic—and that this work not be left to experts or outsiders. Encouraging participants to name problems on their own terms in a public way is empowering and helps to make sure subsequent dialogues are relevant. Ultimately, an inclusive and deliberative process of naming issues affords a greater sense of ownership, allowing ordinary people to reclaim a civic identity and responsibility that is too often relinquished to experts in their professional capacities.

Framing wicked problems is also an essential aspect of democratic public talk, both in dialogue and in deliberation. With dialogue work, framing the right questions is important for inviting the type of participation you most want to cultivate. According to Juanita Brown and her colleagues (Brown, Issacs, Vogt, & Margulies, 2002), “When people frame their strategic explorations as questions rather than as concerns or problems . . . a conversation begins where everyone can learn something new together, rather than having the normal stale debates” (p. 2). Building on the wisdom of the Public Conversations Project (now Essential Partners), the following is a helpful guide for framing questions:

- Is this question relevant to the real life and real work of the people who will be exploring it?
- Is this a genuine question—a question to which I/we really don't know the answer?
- What “work” do I want this question to do? That is, what kind of conversation, meaning, and feelings do I imagine this question will evoke in those who will be exploring it?
- Is this question likely to invite fresh thinking/feeling? Is it familiar enough to be recognizable and relevant—and different enough to call forward new responses?
- What assumptions or beliefs are embedded in the way this question is constructed?
- Is this question likely to generate hope, imagination, engagement, creative action, and new possibilities, or is it likely to increase a focus on past problems and obstacles?
- Does this question leave room for new and different questions to be raised as the initial question is explored? (Brown et al., 2002, p. 4)

Similarly, framing is a key practice for the choicework involved in deliberation. This is the process by which groups critically discuss various options—including positive aspects, along with drawbacks—for deciding what to do about a problem. David Mathews (2014) writes, “Framing issues, like naming problems, goes on as people deliberate to reach some common ground for action” (p. 92). A key element of framing is that it should not prompt the usual conversations; in fact, ideally it disrupts old patterns of public talk and opens up new conversations. This process, in Mathews’s words, “should not replicate the prevailing academic, professional, or partisan framework. It must reflect where citizens are in thinking about an issue, wherever that may be; it should start where people start” (p. 93).

Naming and framing an issue creates an environment for shared learning by acknowledging the complexity and scope of the issue, ways to invite dialogue about the topic, and the various ways to address the issue. As Mathews (2014) notes, “Deliberative frameworks or issue books that serve as guides to deliberation aren’t created to simplify complex issues but rather to underscore the perplexity that is generated by tensions among and within options, and by the need to make difficult trade-offs” (p. 93). Naming and framing issues in ways that highlight the aspects causing perplexity serve as a kind of agitation, prompting learning that informs actions. This kind of public talk is fundamentally rooted in learning and essential for exploring the interwoven roots of democratic practice and civic education.

Democratic Roots and Aspirations

Dialogue and deliberation are not new. This process for coming to public judgment about difficult issues has been “part of the ongoing development of democracy” (Leighninger, 2012, p. 19) and has for many centuries been at the core of what makes communities work (Nabatchi, Gastil, Weiksner, & Leighninger, 2012). Public deliberation was used from the time of the ancient Greeks as a basis for democratic decision-making, and more recently in American history in the labor, women’s, and civil rights movements, along with settlement houses, social centers, citizenship schools, and countless other civic engagement projects across the globe (Barker, McAfee, & McIvor, 2012; Dedrick et al., 2008).

The contemporary deliberative turn in political theory occurred in the 1990s and early 2000s as scholars shifted their focus to citizen-centered models of democratic life (Dryzek, 2000). Yet education has had a role in civic life since the founding of the United States, including as a vehicle for democratic renewal in formal and informal learning environments (Cremin, 1990). “Democracy has to be born anew every generation,” John Dewey (1916/1993) famously wrote, “and education is its midwife” (p. 122).

The interest in participatory democracy gave birth to the deliberative democracy movement as an alternative to institution-centric models of democracy (Held, 2006). As calls for greater civic participation by ordinary people animated participatory democracy from the 1960s on, efforts to rethink the purpose and promise of higher education offered a tangible way to approach democracy as a way of being rather than simply as something to be studied (Loss, 2012). With the establishment of national networks such as Campus Compact in 1985, followed by and later Imagining America, the American Democracy Project, and many others, we’ve seen a growing commitment to the civic mission of higher education (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011). Aligned with institutional commitments, we’ve also seen the movement toward engaged scholarship (Boyer, 1996; Post, Ward, Longo, & Saltmarsh, 2016) become more widespread, affording the opportunity for educators to make a commitment to engaging public stakeholders in increasingly diverse and democratic ways.

These educators serve as democratic leaders—not necessarily through the traditional means of advocating for a specific cause, but rather by embracing the role of facilitator, mobilizing others to be civically engaged. They embody what Stephen Preskill and Stephen D. Brookfield (2009) term *organic leadership*, in which the leader is more concerned with “helping members of the organization, movement, or community realize what talents, knowledge, and skills they can contribute to a vision they themselves have generated” (p. ix). In many ways, the dialogue and deliberation field calls on educators to act as

democratic professionals, which means developing a new set of skills so they can create space for learning and collaborative action.

This conception of learning and leadership necessitates the practice of openness, the “willingness to entertain a variety of alternative perspectives . . . and create dialogic open spaces—multiple opportunities for diverse voices and opinions to be heard” (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 21). Facilitators who show a passionate impartiality—that is, a deep commitment to democratic processes rooted in neutrality on the topic being discussed—give us an alternative model for democratic leadership (Sprain & Carcasson, 2013). This work needs educators with “skills in coaching without directing, listening without coddling or condescending, and challenging and energizing without dominating” (Boyte, 2017).

Engagement Streams in a Growing Field

Dialogue and deliberation are high-impact practices that attempt to create spaces for authentic and productive conversations. Grounded in real-world experiences, these democratic discussions and interactions can open up new understanding of issues and point us to action; ultimately, they can be not only educational but also transformative.

A multiplicity of approaches and spaces can help people engage one another in public talk that elicits insights and encourages action if a collective agreement can be reached about a path forward (see Levine, 2013). This book identifies some of the many ways in which people are using dialogue and deliberation in curricular, cocurricular, and community spaces. The chapters offer an introduction not only to what is happening now but also to what is possible for dialogue and deliberation in higher education to achieve in the future. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list or the final word on a robust and growing field; rather, we provide a range of models and approaches to demonstrate the depth and breadth of civic practices available.

On college campuses, dialogue and deliberation has grown as a form of civic education in recent years. To illustrate, 76% of colleges and universities hosted and/or funded public dialogues on current issues in 2015, according to a survey by Campus Compact (2015). Many disciplines, including education and communication studies, have long included dialogue and deliberation in pedagogical approaches and educational goals (Longo, 2007; Shaffer, 2017a, 2017b). These areas sprouted research on topics such as small-group communication (Follett, 1924; Gastil & Keith, 2005; Keith, 2007) and the scholarship of teaching and learning (Shaffer et al., 2017). Further, there is a growing infrastructure on college campuses for dialogue and deliberation—mirroring the capacity for other engaged pedagogies, such as service-learning and multicultural education.

Support structures for this work are varied and growing. Multiple consortiums promote dialogue and deliberation, including the Deliberative Democracy Consortium and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD). Endowed institutions such as the Kettering Foundation and Everyday Democracy support research and practice. Academic journals such as the *Journal of Public Deliberation* offer venues for sharing the research, projects, experiments, and experiences of academics and practitioners in the multidisciplinary field of deliberative democracy. Finally, a multitude of practices in higher education are emerging from organizations such as the National Issues Forums Institute, the Sustained Dialogue Network, the Difficult Dialogues Initiative, Essential Partners, and the Program on Intergroup Relations, among others. This book features many of these practices and offers a detailed list of resources on dialogue and deliberation.

One common element to all of this work is the importance of establishing ground rules as a first step in the process. This is best done as a cocreative process with participants, but it can help to start by considering some general guidelines such as those developed by the Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy at Kansas State University (Figure 1.1).

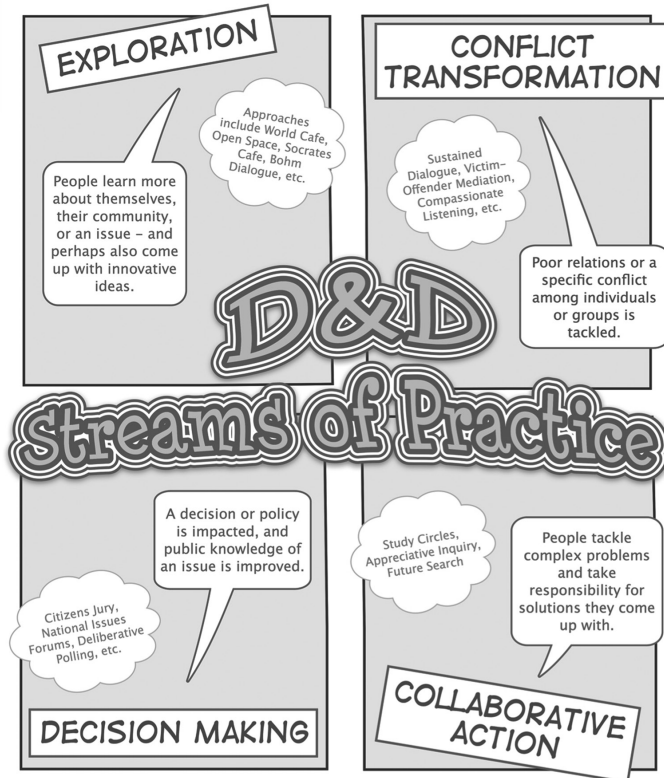
Another helpful resource for thinking about different ways of engaging through dialogue and deliberation comes from the NCDD. The NCDD's (2014) Engagement Streams Framework was designed to help navigate the range of approaches available by offering a simple-to-use reference guide outlining which process models might be useful for different types of groups, time commitments, and facilitator capabilities (Figure 1.2). Distinguishing among "Exploration," "Conflict Transformation," "Decision Making," and "Collaborative Action," the guide offers a glimpse into the distinct yet interrelated models that comprise dialogue and deliberation.

This book offers detailed descriptions and examples of many of these models in practice within higher education. Whether one is just coming into this field or is a seasoned practitioner, the Engagement Streams Framework is a tremendously useful tool when considering factors such as the number of people involved in a dialogue and deliberation effort, the way those people are invited or selected to participate, and the type of session envisioned (e.g., a one-day event or multimonth project). These considerations are significant, especially if what you are trying to accomplish really asks for a different process model from the one you may have chosen based on your previous experience or exposure. Nevertheless, these distinctions are often messy—like the work of dialogue and deliberation itself. Many people blend models once they become more familiar and comfortable with processes, recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of various options for their context. In Table 1.2,

Figure 1.1. Ground rules for public discussion.

- Seek understanding and common ground
- Expect and explore conflicting viewpoints
- Give everyone an opportunity to speak
- Listen respectfully and thoughtfully
- Offer and examine support for claims
- Appreciate communication differences
- Stay focused on issues
- Respect time limits

Source: Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy, Kansas State University. Retrieved from www.k-state.edu/icdd/images/ICDD%20Ground%20Rules%20poster.pdf

Figure 1.2. Engagement Streams Framework.

Note. This is a snapshot of the Engagement Streams Framework developed by Sandy Heierbacher and members of the NCDD in 2005. The framework helps people decide which methods of dialogue and deliberation best fit their goals and resources. Visit ncdd.org/streams for the full framework.

TABLE 1.2
Engagement Streams Dialogue and Deliberation Practices*

<i>Processes</i>	<i>Exploration</i>	<i>Conflict Resolution</i>	<i>Decision-Making</i>	<i>Collaborative Action</i>	<i>Role of Facilitator</i>	<i>Size of Group</i>	<i>Type of Session</i>	<i>Participant Selection</i>
Reflective Structured Dialogue (Essential Partners)	√√√	√			Works collaboratively to design a process and prepare participants, de-centered from the conversation	Single or multiple circles of 4 to 12	Multiple or single 1.5- to 2.5-hour sessions, but could be shortened	Preexisting groups in conflict or a dynamic of silence or avoidance
Dialogue to Change (Everyday Democracy)	√	√		√√√	Diverse local facilitators guide community members through dialogue, and deliberation, and action with a racial equity lens	Up to hundreds meeting in separate small groups of 8 to 12; all come together later for Action Forum	Four to six 2-hour sessions	Open; recruit for representativeness
Sustained Dialogue (Sustained Dialogue Institute)	√	√		√√√	Leads group through committing to talk openly, relationship-building, brainstorming, and action planning	Eight to 15	Series of at least seven 1-hour or longer sessions	Open to people able to commit to ongoing process over a span of weeks or months

Intergroup Dialogue (The Program on Intergroup Relations)	✓	✓✓✓	✓	Peer cofacilitators lead the group through the 4-stage dialogue model over the course of the semester; lead activities, respond to journals, help surface and process conflict in the group, and model dialogic inquiry for their peer participants	Twelve to 16 student participants divided into 2 groups, each representing a privileged or marginalized social identity category; two student cofacilitators, each representing one group in the dialogue	One 3-hour session per week for 12 to 14 weeks	Student participants in course rank three dialogue topics (e.g. gender, race, educational justice); Intergroup Relations then sorts students into dialogues based upon interest and availability of facilitators
Story Circles (Junebug Productions)	✓✓✓	✓	✓	Introduces and guides the process, offers prompt for stories, shares story as well, ensures adherence to values and agreements	Circle is best with 4 to 8; can do any number of circles	Thirty to 40 minutes in smaller circles, and then 30 to 40 for processing discussion	Open

(Continues)

TABLE 1.2. (Continued)

Processes	Exploration	Conflict Resolution	Decision-Making	Collaborative Action	Role of Facilitator	Size of Group	Type of Session	Participant Selection
Deliberative Forum (National Issues Forums)	✓	✓	✓✓✓		Leads participants through discussion guide and reflections	Twelve to 30; smaller meetings with breakout groups	Two hours or series of shorter sessions	Open or among preexisting group
Exploratory Discussion (Interactivity Foundation)	✓✓✓		✓		Organizes the discussion event, introduces the topic and process, offers discussion prompts, guides discussants through exploration of topic and guidebook; encourages agreed-upon discussion guidelines	Six to 8 people; can be adjusted to accommodate larger or smaller groups	Multiple or single 1.5- to 2.5-hour sessions, but can be modified	Open

Source: Adapted from NCDD. (2014). *Engagement Streams Framework*. Retrieved from www.ncdd.org/files/rc/2014_Engagement_Streams_Guide_Web.pdf

*Three checks indicates the particular practice focuses significantly on that aspect. One check indicates secondary foci for that practice.

we have adapted the Engagement Streams Framework to help readers navigate the multiple models and approaches presented in Part Two of this book. These processes serve as vital tools and resources for educating for democracy on college campuses.

Conclusion

Creating space for democracy is critical for shifting the dominant paradigm in higher education, which asks students to be passive consumers of knowledge. Faculty confront—and contribute to—this paradigm in classrooms where students have been asked to defer by sitting in rows of chairs behind desks and regurgitating information. Students are further removed from decision-making in other areas of campus life, from curricular matters to campus housing to broader policy decisions about topics such as tuition increases, endowment investment, and relations with local neighborhoods. The disempowerment of young people is even more pronounced in the wider world of politics and public policy, where the voices of students are among the most marginalized.

The work of dialogue and deliberation is about changing this paradigm by making conversation, connection, and collaboration the center of public life. This book is meant to empower educators to facilitate this change, with concrete examples of how we can rethink learning environments. This includes developing curricula that focus on discussing issues that matter in a way that values the stories and experiences of students; creating spaces on campus, such as democracy walls and engaged libraries and residence halls, that foster public conversation; developing reciprocal partnerships in the community through third spaces and participatory research methods; and building networks that enable civic work to go beyond a single course or campus experience.

The field of dialogue and deliberation is developing and ever-changing, but we have a strong foundation for what works to engage citizens in public life. Much of this wisdom is in the chapters that follow. The contributors invite us to think and act in new ways in educating for democracy. When we create space to talk with one another about this great task, students become cocreators of their education, opening up possibilities for solving problems, together.

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