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Talking the Walk: Incorporating Intergroup Dialogue Processes into a Critical Service-Learning Program

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Talking the Walk: Incorporating Intergroup Dialogue Processes into a Critical Service-Learning Program

A Dissertation Presented

by

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DEDICATION

To Milton Polsky (with his era of social justice activists and educators)

and

Quinn Neely (with the coming generation of social justice advocates)

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mentored me as a professional, I am even more inspired by the way you have modeled servant leadership and truly live your values.

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Thank you, Dad, for all of your support, for reading my dissertation proposal, and for telling me how proud you are of me. That has meant so much! Joe, you continue to inspire me through the courageous actions you take to confront and interrupt racism and other forms of injustice in your daily life. Mom, you have supported me in this process in more ways than I can possibly count, but what means the most to me is your friendship and constant love for me just as I am (doctor or not). Quinn, though I had aspired to write the final words of this dissertation before you were born, it is so much sweeter to be able to share the final steps of this journey with you in my arms. Every day you remind me what matters most in life – not degrees and titles, but hugs and giggles! Maddy, were it not for your perpetual love and support – moving to a new city, listening to me for hundreds of hours talking through my doctoral highs and lows, rubbing my sore shoulders, making handmade signs to encourage me through challenging stretches, and staying up late while I wrote "just one more sentence" – I would never have crossed the finish line. Babels, you are my rock!

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is my hope that in even the smallest of ways, this dissertation (and the dialogue project

upon which it was based) contributes to movement for justice-oriented social change.

ABSTRACT

TALKING THE WALK: INCORPORATING INTERGROUP DIALOGUE
PROCESSES INTO A CRITICAL SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM

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Service-learning, particularly critical service-learning, is relational work that endeavors to create and maintain more just relationships among students and community members within and across social identity groups (Mitchell, 2008). It is essential that students in service-learning courses learn how to talk, listen and collaborate with community members in ways that acknowledge and explore how social identities, privilege, and oppression impact people's life experiences and relationships. However, in our socially-segregated society, in which schools and neighborhoods are as divided by race and income as they were half a century ago (Reardon & Bischoff, 2011; Reardon & Owens, 2014), many college students are not accustomed to talking, learning, and working with others across differences. Research suggests that when college students participate in structured dialogue across differences, such as intergroup dialogue, they are better prepared to understand and engage with others across diverse social identities (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). Yet, research on the outcomes of integrating intergroup dialogue pedagogy into service-learning courses is sparse.

Informed by existing literature on service-learning and intergroup dialogue, this qualitative case study of the Citizen Scholars Program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst provides an account of how 18 undergraduate students learned about and practiced dialogue processes as a curricular component of a multi-semester, cohort-based service-learning program. Case study methodology was employed to analyze 25 individual interview transcripts, 36 final papers, and 126 reflective memos. Three significant findings emerged from the thematic analysis of the data. First, learning to dialogue and engaging in dialogue with others about social identity issues profoundly mattered to the CSP students. Second, practicing dialogue in a structured, reflective curriculum, facilitated students' broader civic learning, evidenced by the ways they extended dialogue to their community service relationships and integrated dialogue sensibilities into their everyday lives. Finally, students' learning to dialogue (and the subsequent outcomes linked to this learning) was supported by an intentionally-designed, engaged learning process. These findings suggest the significant potential of incorporating dialogue across differences into service-learning as part of a broader approach of centering social justice processes and outcomes to promote students' development of civic sensibilities and social responsibility.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> When two or more opposing accounts, perspectives, or belief systems appear side by side or intertwined, a kind of double or multiple "seeing" results, forcing you into continuous dialectical encounters with these different stories, situations, and people. Trying to understand these convergences compels you to critique your own perspective and assumptions. (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 547)

Many institutions of higher education across the United States assert that preparing students for citizenship and civic engagement is a core value (Ehrlich, 2000). One study revealed that "serving the local area" is the topic most commonly included in the mission statements of public colleges and universities (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 464). This is true of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the site of this dissertation research project where the University's mission is, "to provide an affordable and accessible education of high quality and to conduct programs of research and public service that advance knowledge and improve the lives of the people of the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world." (University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees, 2005, p. 1).

However, while institutional rhetoric avows a commitment to civic outcomes and public service, there are conflicting indicators that colleges and universities are not as supportive of community needs and aspirations as in prior generations (Checkoway, 2001) and higher education is not living up to its potential to engage students in civic learning (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). In addition to other forms of experiential learning, such as internships, cooperative education, and community-based research, one type of civic engagement that has seen considerable growth in higher education over the past three decades is service-learning,

which has emerged as an immensely popular pedagogy for connecting students' on-campus, classroom learning with hands-on community service opportunities (Moore, 2010). Research has shown that when thoughtfully designed and implemented, community service-learning has the capacity to positively impact a wide range of cognitive, interpersonal, and civic outcomes for participating students (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Increasingly, over the past decade, scholars and practitioners have begun to question the extent to which service-learning pedagogies align with social justice processes and outcomes (Butin, 2007; Cipolle, 2010; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Maybach, 1996, Mitchell, 2008; O'Grady, 2000). While some advocates of service-learning make the assumption that an inherent connection exists between service-learning and social justice, others convincingly disagree (Chesler, 2005; Eby, 1998). Many service-learning and civic engagement initiatives fall short of preparing students to understand and challenge the broader systems of power, privilege, and oppression that result in a wide range of ongoing community crises and needs at the local level. However, critical approaches to service-learning place an explicit focus on working toward social justice in both the classroom and in the community. Mitchell (2008) highlighted three unique characteristics of critical service learning that differentiate it from more traditional approaches: "working to redistribute power amongst all participants in the service-learning relationship, developing authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community, and working from a social change perspective" (p. 50). In addition to engaging in community service and reflecting on their service, students also require intentional, structured opportunities to develop the competencies necessary

for meaningfully engaging with others across difference. Finley (2011) elaborated on this point, noting that

> A number of scholars have argued that most forms of service-learning (or other forms of apolitical community engagement) fail to intentionally engage students in the activities and processes central to democratic-building (i.e., deliberative dialogue, collaborative work, problem-solving within diverse groups). In essence, these scholars argue it is not enough for students to engage in the community; they must also engage in the skills, values, and knowledge development that educate them to be better citizens. (p. 1)

In particular, the ability to communicate and collaborate across differences is a critical component of civic engagement (Keen, 2010). A number of major research initiatives involving college students, including the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership attempt to measure the extent to which college prepares students for *civic discourse* or civic communication (Keen, 2010). Keen broadly defined civic discourse as "skills of dialogue across boundaries of perceived difference" (p. 1). These types of difference include not only differences in ideas and perspectives but, more importantly, differences in social identities and the ways those identities are differently located in systems of power, privilege, and oppression (Johnson, 2006).

However, prior to enrolling in a service-learning course or program, many students have not had structured opportunities to learn about and reflect on their own and others' social identities or about the ways in which they, as individuals, are privileged and disadvantaged by their memberships in multiple, intersecting social identity groups, including race, ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, sexual orientation, and abilities/disabilities. Most of today's college students grew up in racially and economically segregated communities in which they had few opportunities to engage

with others across these socially significant forms of difference. Importantly, for those students who did grow up in more racially diverse communities or attend more racially diverse schools, these spaces were still racially segregated, one manifestation of broader systems of racism and white supremacy (Tatum, 1997). Further, most college students have not considered how power, privilege, and oppression – core concepts of social justice (Bell, 2007; Johnson, 2006) – are directly connected with their community service or social change efforts. Finally, students engaged in service-learning initiatives have rarely participated in focused, meaningful conversations about their social identities, particularly with students from social identity groups different than their own. When service-learning practitioners create intentional structures for students to engage in dialogue with others across difference, they provide an opportunity for students to develop and practice a specific set of communication skills that support the creation of more authentic relationships with their peers and with members of the communities in which they engage.

Dialogue Across Differences for a Diverse Democracy

Learning how to engage in honest and open dialogue with others within and across many forms of difference, including race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, first language, and ability, is essential to participating in a diverse democracy (Bowman, 2011; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). A major report recently published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, titled *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*, named "intergroup and deliberative dialogue" as one of three "powerful pedagogies that support civic learning" (The

National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012, p. 55). The

authors explained that

> [Intergroup and deliberative dialogue] address head-on an essential skill in a
> diverse democracy: the capacity to deliberate productively and respectfully with
> others who hold different views, in order to deepen mutual understandings and, in
> the best of cases, to agree on a shared set of actions. (p. 55)

Thomas (2010) explained that in an ideal deliberative democracy (which is not the

prevailing system in the United States today), "people examine an issue through a

deliberative process in which they invite and consider dissenting perspectives, manage

conflict, design solutions that are for the common good, and collectively implement

change" (p. 2). McCoy and Scully (2002) posed an important question about embedding

the core concepts of deliberative democracy into civic engagement. The authors suggest

that

> Good communication is key to making and strengthening connections and
> working relationships. That is why a growing number of civic engagement
> processes feature some form of public talk or conversation. These processes go by
> different names—dialogue, deliberation, or public conversation—but the common
> denominator is face-to-face communication among citizens on issues of common
> concern. (p. 118)

Based on the experiences of thousands of citizens who have participated in dialogic *study

circles*, a conversation format designed by the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC),

McCoy and Scully (2002) advised that participants in community-building or problem-

solving groups engage in a form of face-to-face communication referred to as

deliberative dialogue, which incorporates aspects of both dialogue and deliberation.

While study circles are most frequently employed in community settings and are typically

composed of community members, elected officials, and other stakeholders, many

aspects of the process can be extended to similar efforts with college students. Other

models of dialogue common on college campuses today include Intergroup Dialogue (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007) and Sustained Dialogue (Parker, 2006). There is great potential for integrating structured dialogue processes into academic service-learning courses as well as co-curricular service-learning programs.

Dialogue Across Differences and Critical Service-Learning

While learning to dialogue about social identity issues, students have an opportunity to develop the skills and confidence needed to better understand their classmates and the people who live in the communities where they serve and learn. Not only does dialogue support students in identifying connection points with others and creating new shared meaning across difference, it also provides an opportunity for students to begin to recognize how others' personal stories and life circumstances (e.g., poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity) are connected to broader systems of privilege and oppression. This understanding and awareness has the potential to create more authentic relationships, one goal of critical service-learning (Mitchell, 2008). In defining what constitutes an authentic relationship, Mitchell proposed that "common goals and shared understanding create mutuality, respect, and trust leading to authenticity" (p. 58).

By working to build a dialogic and democratic community within a learning cohort – one that names and challenges systems of privilege and oppression – service-learning instructors and students may create a model of how to work more collaboratively and justly across difference. hooks (2003) proposed that "forging a learning community that values wholeness over division, disassociation, splitting, the democratic educator works to create closeness" (p. 48). Within a critical service-learning cohort, it is important to establish an honest and open learning community in which students feel safe

sharing stories and asking each other questions about the challenges that they encounter in their service experiences (Jones, Gilbride-Brown, & Gasiorski, 2005). In a critical service-learning community, an environment of trust and goodwill is also essential so that students and instructors are able to respectfully challenge one another's opinions and behaviors (Mitchell, 2008).

To assert that the inclusion of dialogic processes in service-learning and civic engagement courses is a novel idea would be largely inaccurate. Some practitioners in the field have called for this integration of dialogue and deliberation within civic engagement initiatives. Shaffer (2014) proposed, "using deliberation in both the classroom and community adds yet another way to address public issues alongside service learning opportunities that position students and faculty members as co-creators with the broader community around new insight or knowledge" (p. 2). Many critical service-learning instructors already create space for dialogic conversation in their courses as a part of establishing and maintaining more democratic classrooms. Open dialogue among students and instructors as co-learners is a core element of critical pedagogy, one of the foundations of critical service-learning. In an effort to raise students' (and instructors') critical consciousness of structural oppression, critical pedagogy places an emphasis on making use of democratic educational practices that seek to dismantle the traditional power relationship between students and teachers. The title of a famous essay by Audre Lorde (1984) declared that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p. 110). In the same way, critical service-learning cannot prepare students to work with community members in eliminating exploitive and oppressive social conditions when power relationships within the classroom are similarly oppressive. Giroux (2001)

explained that "transmission modes of pedagogy must be replaced by classroom social relationships in which students are able to challenge, engage, and question the form and substance of the learning process" (p. 202). Examples of critical pedagogy can be found in the literature on service-learning, particularly by those advocating for critical service-learning. Drawing on Freire (1970), Zivi (1997) contended:

> [In a democratic service-learning classroom,] students are no longer seen as empty vessels or receptacles of information, as passive recipients of knowledge. Instead, students are active learners bringing a certain expertise and information base, gained from their service, to the classroom, knowledge that the instructor has not given them, but that the instructor can help process. In this model of teaching and learning, the instructor becomes a facilitator and guide on the path toward learning. (p. 61)

One example of critical service-learning pedagogy that supports dialogic conversation is arranging chairs or desks in a circle or meeting in a casual environment (Mitchell, 2007). This arrangement of the classroom space helps to create the capacity for what Miles Horton (1998) referred to as a "circle of learners" (p. 150). However, Brookfield and Preskill (2005) cautioned that a circular seating arrangement alone without thoughtfulness and transparency can act as a system of surveillance that "strips students of the right to privacy" (p. 78). They further elaborated that "the circle can be experienced as a mechanism for forced disclosure as much as a chance for people to speak in an authentic voice" (p. 78). They asserted that intentional conversation procedures and techniques need to be introduced and followed in order to create a space in which "people feel that all voices are valued equally" (p. 78).

Another way to support dialogue and create a more egalitarian learning community is to de-emphasize the role of the instructor as the sole expert responsible for disseminating course content and provide students with leadership roles as peer-

facilitators and instructors (Addes & Keene, 2005; Chesler, Kellman-Fritz, & Knife-Gould, 2003). Brookfield and Preskill (2005) advised that

> Although discussion leaders sometimes interject new material or introduce leading viewpoints from current scholarship, this should be done as sparingly, dialogically, and concisely as possible…. Teachers should share their knowledge and understanding in discussion only to help students gain a personal and critical perspective on what is learned, not to show off in front of them. (p. 192)

Statement of Problem

The service-learning literature continues to question the extent to which the pedagogy actually leads to meaningful social change in communities and increases students' understanding of the ways that broader systems and structures perpetuate injustice toward the members of some social groups while bestowing privilege on the members of other social groups (Butin, 2015; Mitchell, 2008; Simpson, 2014). Too frequently, students are not well prepared to understand, learn from, and engage in authentic relationships with diverse people in the communities they enter. However, learning to engage in dialogue within and across difference provides an opportunity for students to reflect not only on their own social identities but on the social identities and experiences of the people who live in the communities they enter. By developing critical dialogic skills, including active listening, identifying assumptions, suspending judgments, and voicing, students involved in service-learning can begin to reflect on how their individual and collective engagement in community settings ultimately supports or undermines movement toward social justice.

Service-learning, particularly critical service-learning, is relational work that endeavors to create and maintain more just relationships among unique individuals and across social identity groups (Mitchell, 2008; Rhoads, 1998). Engaging in dialogue across

difference creates an opening for achieving these aspirations in an increasingly diverse society, one "where relationships have been undermined and undervalued" (Judkins, 2012, p. 34). Though research has shown that college students who participate in intentionally structured dialogue pedagogies, such as intergroup dialogue are better prepared to understand and engage with others across difference (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013), there has been little formal integration of dialogue pedagogy into service-learning courses. And, where service-learning programs have attempted to create more opportunities for dialogue, these efforts have not been well documented or assessed.

By following students through a full academic year, the study presented in this dissertation explored how students in the Citizen Scholars Program (CSP), a cohort-based, civic leadership program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, learned how to dialogue about social identity-based issues. The study explored the impact of these students' dialogue experiences on their awareness of their own and others' social identities, privileges, and oppression. Finally, the study sought to better understand the impact that learning to dialogue about social identity-based issues had on students' relationships with their peers within their cohort as well as the diverse people they worked with as a part of their ongoing community service experiences.

<u>Potential Contributions of the Study</u>

The findings from this study have the potential to support service-learning and civic engagement practitioners and researchers in better understanding how teaching students to dialogue supports their development of essential civic skills that can be extended to many aspects of their lives, including, but not limited to their direct service

engagement with members of local communities. In particular, insights may be gained as to how dialogue impacts the quality of relationships that are formed both within a service-learning cohort and also between students and the members of the community with whom they work and learn with as a part of their community service experiences. The study also sheds light on the way that intentional dialogue impacts classroom discussions in which students critically reflect on course content (including both required readings and their service experiences), cohort development, and their own personal development. Because this specific topic of study has not yet received considerable attention in the research literature, the findings presented later in this dissertation serve as a starting point for other related research on the integration of dialogue and service-learning. The findings illuminate strategies for improving the social action component of intergroup dialogue courses and initiatives. Intergroup dialogue scholars and practitioners have called for maintaining a focus on connecting classroom dialogue experiences with sustained efforts for social action (Chesler, 2001). I propose that the pedagogies of critical service-learning and intergroup dialogue each have something to contribute to the other. While this study focused on the integration of dialogue pedagogy into service-learning, the findings may also be of use to those designing and facilitating intergroup dialogue courses or other initiatives focused on dialogue and deliberation to explore the structures of power, privilege, and difference.

<div align="center"><u>Research Questions</u></div>

Based on my review of the relevant literature, immersion in the service-learning field prior to this study, and early rounds of data analysis, I arrived at the following list of research questions:

1. How do students in the CSP learn how to dialogue with others?

2. How do students' dialogue experiences in the CSP inform their understanding of their own and others' social identities, privileges, and disadvantages?
3. How do students in the CSP understand the ways that engaging in dialogue about personal and social identities impacts their relationships with peers in their cohort?

4. How do students in the CSP understand the ways that engaging in dialogue about personal and social identities impact their relationships with others at their community service sites as well as family members, friends, and peers?

Overview of Chapters

In the second chapter, I review the existing literature related to the research questions, particularly philosophical backgrounds of intergroup dialogue and service-learning. In the third chapter, I introduce the conceptual framework that guided this study and provide a detailed description of the research methodology. I explain my rationale for selecting qualitative case study as a general methodological approach and outline in detail the specific methods I utilized in this study, including the selection of a case and participants, data collection, and data analysis. In Chapter 3, I also describe the specific steps I took to increase the trustworthiness of the study. In Chapters 4 and 5, I present the major findings that emerged from this dissertation research. Chapter 4 provides insight into how students learned to dialogue, what they learned about identities and social identity issues, and how dialogue across difference impacted their relationships with peers in the CSP cohort. Chapter 5 focuses on how students extended what they learned about dialogue to contexts outside of the CSP, including their course-linked community service and their relationships with family members, friends, and other students. Finally, in Chapter 6, I discuss significant findings and suggest implications for service-learning pedagogy and future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This study draws primarily on two bodies of literature: service-learning and dialogue across differences. My intention in this chapter is to situate the proposed study among broader "currents of thought" by reviewing the conceptual roots of service-learning and dialogue as well as contemporary pedagogical approaches and recent research (Schram, 2006, p. 63). The chapter begins with a brief history of the field of service-learning, focusing particularly on the fundamental differences between traditional models of service-learning and more critical approaches to service-learning that explicitly foreground social justice. Next, the literature on dialogue across differences is reviewed with a specific focus on intergroup dialogue pedagogy. Finally, I introduce four college programs that have intentionally integrated dialogue across differences into civic engagement initiatives, including the Citizen Scholars Program (CSP) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the site of this research.

Defining Service-Learning and Civic Engagement

There is no shortage of terms and definitions related to service-learning. More than two decades ago, Kendall (1991) identified 147 different terms referring to the practice of combining community service and learning. Despite this wide "diversity of language" that Kendall found, she surmised "that there is something uniquely powerful about the combination of service and learning, that there is something fundamentally more dynamic in the integration of the two than in either alone" (p. 18). Jacoby (1996), a pioneer in the field, defined service-learning as "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together

with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" (p. 5). The literature review below complicates what may appear to be a simple definition of service-learning.

Service-learning is typically considered to be nested within the broader category of civic engagement; however, there is a lively, ongoing debate about what exactly civic engagement means (Finley, 2011; Saltmarsh, 2005). To this point, Jacoby (2009) suggested, "There are probably as many definitions of civic engagement as there are scholars and practitioners who are concerned with it" (p. 5). Some common definitions of civic engagement are more politically-neutral, such as Ehrlich's (2000) suggestion:

> [Civic engagement is] working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. (p. vi)

Other conceptualizations of civic engagement signify the importance of considering how systems of power, privilege, and oppression function, while communicating and working collaboratively across difference to create social change (Checkoway, 2001; Simpson, 2014). Checkoway proposed that "for democracy to function successfully in the future, students must be prepared to understand their own identities, communicate with people who are different from themselves, and build bridges across cultural differences in the transition to a more diverse society" (p. 127).

Conceptual Roots of Service-Learning

Though the term service-learning may not have come into common usage until the late 1980s, the primary elements of combining community service and college student learning began to flourish in the 1960s and 1970s. Jacoby (1996) pointed to the establishment of the United States Peace Corps in 1961 as a foundational moment in the

expansion of college-based community service and service-learning initiatives. Between 1971 and 1979 more than 10,000 students from 100 colleges and universities participated in community service projects through the federal University Year for ACTION program (Kendall, 1991). From another vantage point, less frequently acknowledged in many service-learning histories, Oden and Casey (2007) traced the roots of service-learning to the Black Panther Party's efforts in the 1960s and 1970s to directly engage community members in taking action to create a more just society.

Over the past three decades, service-learning courses and offices have become a staple feature on most college and university campuses. Campus Compact, a coalition of college and university presidents, whose purpose is to advance "the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility," boasts more than 1100 member institutions (Campus Compact, 2013, p. 12). One common thread across the existing body of service-learning research is that it has focused primarily on student outcomes. Often, this emphasis on students' learning has overshadowed thinking about the impacts (positive and negative) of service-learning on community partners and reflecting on the quality of relationships between community partners and university constituents, including students, faculty, and service-learning staff members (Maybach, 1996; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009; Warren, 1998).

The most significant study to date focusing on the experiences and outcomes of community partners involved in service-learning was conducted by Stoecker and Tryon (2009), who asserted, "There has been growing dissatisfaction among many people both inside and outside the service learning movement since the 1990s, particularly when it

comes to the issue of whether service learning truly serves communities" (p. 3). In a comprehensive, qualitative research project, they interviewed 67 staff members at a wide range of community organizations engaged in service-learning partnerships to gain a more complete understanding of community organizations' perceptions of the service-learning relationship. A strength of this study was the involvement of community organization leaders in what can be considered an action research project. Based on information gathered in initial interviews, the research team added focus groups to learn more about the types of access community organizations wanted to have to higher education resources. The findings demonstrate that while community organization leaders recognized some benefits of partnering with colleges and universities, they frequently played an accommodating role to the needs and desires of students and faculty members, tolerating higher education structures that detracted from their ability to best fulfill their missions. Specific examples of unfavorable conditions included the short-term nature of most students' service engagement and accommodating academic calendars that did not best align with the community organizations' needs. Many community organizations indicated that one of the reasons they continued participating in service-learning partnerships was not for their own benefit but to help educate students about the broader social issues related to their missions and services.

Critical Service-Learning

Building upon traditional frameworks of service-learning practices and research, critical service-learning places a specific focus on social justice processes and outcomes in the community and in the classroom. Rhoads (1997) introduced the term "critical community service," which was likely the precursor to the now commonly-used term

critical service-learning (p. 208). Explaining what he meant by critical community

service, Rhoads suggested, "When we think of community service activities as a form of

classroom, a concern arises as to how critical and feminist pedagogies may be used to

inform service and the learning that comes with it" (p. 216). To provide educators a

roadmap for designing and implementing critical community service activities, Rhoads

proposed eight guiding principles:

- critical community service calls attention to the notion that a commitment to working with others is fundamentally tied to an individual's sense of self and vision of others

- critical community service demands that mutuality undergird all service activities and projects

- community building must be recognized as a central objective of critical community service

- critical community service seeks to build multicultural service communities and thus ought to involve a wide range of diverse students in community service work

- critical community service must include reflective action linked to broader social concerns, with the goal being to foster a critical consciousness among students

- critical community service seeks to link traditional classroom learning (academic or theoretical knowledge) with the experiential learning that often accompanies service

- critical community service is intended to create social change, and therefore it is expected that participants engage in the larger struggle to improve social conditions

- critical community service must be thought of as part of the larger struggle to create a more liberatory form of education (p. 219-221).

Maybach (1996) also suggested that a paradigm shift was needed within the field of

service-learning. She proposed, "The most important feature of the new paradigm of

service learning is that for the result of the service to be empowering, the individuals

involved in the service experience need to be striving for a non-oppressive relationship"

(p. 234). Though purporting to be of service to others, some commonly-used language in

the traditional service-learning literature is indicative of the unequal power relationship

between the service "provider" and the service "recipient." In this type of relationship,

the student (and the well-resourced college they attend) holds the power to serve and the

community member (or community organization) is merely a receptacle for their good

will. Maybach (1996) instead proposed, "Partners in service should be used, not just as a

politically correct term but to denote an actual change in the service relationship" (p.

231). The service-learning and civic engagement literature is largely devoid of explicit

references to injustice and what justice actually looks like. Simpson (2014) posed the

critical question:

> When civic engagement scholars profess a commitment to justice, and yet largely
> refuse to name the material practices and consequences of injustice, how can one
> be certain about what these scholars actually want to change? A great deal of the
> civic engagement literature says little to nothing about injustice – where and why
> it occurs, what it looks like, who it affects, and what will contribute to its
> undoing. (p. 91-92)

Of course, substituting new language, such as "critical" and "justice," does not

shift service-learning approaches and practices on the ground. Creating more reciprocal

partnerships that seek to interrupt oppressive structures is an ongoing challenge for

service-learning practitioners. The types of volunteer service (or other forms of college

student support) that are most essential to the operation of community partner

organizations may not be glamorous or of immediate interest to many college students.

Warren (1998) offered an example of how a student enrolled in a service-learning course

began to understand that their role was to support the needs of the community partner

instead of only fulfilling their own interests. One student realized that "making an impact

in grassroots not-for-profit organizations is more about licking stamps than about direct service to individuals" (p. 137). The most egalitarian partnership models exist in which the community partner organization plays a major role in determining the most appropriate projects and roles for the student partners (Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

In reconceptualizing service-learning as a pedagogy that supports social justice outcomes, it is important to clearly define what is meant by social justice. In their exploration of ways to move service-learning away from charity and toward social justice, Marullo and Edwards (2000) defined social justice as "the state of institutional or structural arrangements in which there are no inequalities that are unjustifiable in terms of the greater social good or that are imposed unfairly" (p. 899). This definition challenges most traditional models of service-learning. To incorporate social justice into service-learning, students must gain a more complex understanding of the institutional, cultural, and political systems that undergird and perpetuate social inequality.

Differentiating Charity from Social Justice

For some, it may be difficult at first glance to perceive how a practice that connects students with volunteer community service opportunities could actually function to maintain structures of inequality. However, a closer look into the differences between charity and social justice illuminates how many community service and service-learning initiatives do perpetuate systems of oppression (Eby, 1998; Illich, 1990). Eby's aptly-titled paper, "Why Service Learning is Bad," draws attention to seven ways that service-learning can have a negative impact on community organizations, community members, students' learning, and broader political movements. Eby cautioned that "if done poorly

service-learning can teach inadequate conceptions of need and service, it can divert resources of service agencies and can do real harm in communities" (p. 8).

One of Eby's (1998) key concerns that is echoed by many other critics of service-learning is that the concept of service is often introduced to students too simplistically. An unsophisticated notion of service implies a mindset and approach based on charity instead of on justice. Marullo and Edwards (2000) explained:

> Most of the community service that takes place is perceived to be an act of charity by the actor, intended to achieve a noble (albeit small) outcome that improves the life of individual service recipients at the expense of the volunteer who can afford to make such a private contribution. (p. 899)

In his broader work focused on increasing the critical consciousness of members of oppressed groups, Freire (1970) also explored the relationship between charity and oppression, suggesting:

> False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that those hands…need to be extended less…so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world. (p. 27)

Extending Freire's thinking to the context of service-learning, charity places power in the hands of students, faculty, and college administrators, whereas true generosity seeks to create more just relationships in which members of the community reach their own decisions about how service-learning initiatives can support their needs and aspirations in ways that respect their unique cultures and values. Rosenberger (2000) illuminated the complex, and often contradictory, relationship between service-learning and social justice, proposing that "the fact that service learning and Freire's beliefs are rooted in different contexts and philosophies creates both tension and synergy" (p. 29). Arriving at a related conclusion, Cruz (1990) explained:

It is possible to empower learners (through service learning) and *not* promote the common good (by reinforcing a sense of inferiority among those 'served' or a false sense of power among those 'who serve'). It is possible to use experience as an integral part of education and simply duplicate the realities we wish to change. (p. 323)

In the following section, I introduce some of the most important research focused on critical service-learning.

Research on Critical Service-Learning

Researchers have utilized different methods to evaluate if and how service-learning fosters a commitment to social justice. The research published on critical service learning, as is common of research on service-learning in general, frequently focuses on the outcomes of students, more so than on community partners. These studies vary substantially in quality. For example, while Cipolle (2010) presented an original theoretical framework connecting critical service-learning with White students' development of critical consciousness, the research on which this theory was grounded was limited in many respects. The description of the research methods, reported in only a few short paragraphs in the preface to the book, does not discuss the specific data analysis methods that were employed to arrive at the study's findings. Other details about the study are peppered throughout the book but do not provide enough information to thoughtfully evaluate the study's validity and trustworthiness. For example, Cipolle reported that interviews were conducted with 11 alumni; however, the number of alumni who responded to the survey is not reported. Because all of the participants were alumni of one small, private, Catholic high school, it cannot be expected that the findings will translate to any considerable degree to most other contexts. It is reported that the alumni participants spanned across 25 years (with graduation years ranging from 1975 to 1999).

Over this amount of time, one must question the extent to which any semblance of a common service-learning model was in place.

There can certainly be value in single case studies, and it is not always necessary that findings be highly transferable to other contexts. However, as this critique of Cipolle's (2010) study above demonstrates, there are considerable research limitations in one of the very few books published on the connections between service-learning and social justice. There is reason for concern that such books can far too easily become staples in the field, without the underlying research being appropriately vetted.

Other studies related to critical service-learning are carefully designed and implemented, including Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) work that the American Educational Research Association named Outstanding Paper of 2003 for Research in Social Studies Education. Westheimer and Kahne's taxonomy of different types of citizenship was honed and tested through a two-year, mixed-methods study. The authors proposed that different types of service-learning curricula foster students' development as three different types of citizens: personally responsible citizens, participatory citizens, and justice-oriented citizens. The authors compared findings from two high school service-learning programs: one aimed at developing participatory citizens and one focused on cultivating justice-oriented citizens. Data collection for these two programs involved multi-day observations at both sites, interviews with 84 students, interviews with at least three staff members at each program, and a pre/post survey. The authors found that the program aimed at developing participatory citizens focused on "making civic education meaningful" (p. 249), "making a difference in the lives of others" (p. 250), and provided students with "a vision of what to do and the knowledge and skills

needed to do it" (p. 251). The other program successful in developing justice-oriented

citizens engaged students in "critical and structural social analysis" (p. 257), "making the

personal political" (p. 258), and a "collective responsibility for action" (p. 259).

Importantly, the data also suggested that "links between participation and justice are not

guaranteed" and that "if both goals are priorities, the people who design and implement

curriculum must give explicit attention to both" (p. 264).

In a related study, Prentice (2007) surveyed 166 community college students

engaged in service-learning courses to assess their development in relation to the three

types of citizenship proposed by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). Prentice found that

students who participated in more than two service-learning experiences scored higher on

the justice-oriented citizen questions. Prentice concluded:

> If having two or more experiences with service learning helps a student to become
> more aware of how he or she can impact the community, then it makes sense to
> provide sustained and institution-wide support for courses that include this
> pedagogy. (p. 272)

Einfeld and Collins (2008) conducted interviews with nine college students to

evaluate their understanding of social inequality and commitment to social justice after

participating in an intensive AmeriCorps service-learning program in which they

completed 300-675 hours of volunteer service with social service agencies located

nearby. The study also explored how the program supported students' development of

multicultural competencies as well as their future intentions to be civically engaged. The

study was limited by a small sample size (which the authors openly acknowledged);

however, purposeful sampling techniques were employed. Procedures were followed to

increase trustworthiness of the data analysis, including member checking. The findings

were that, while many of the students gained an increased awareness of social

inequalities, very few actually became more committed to social justice. Einfeld and

Collins reported, "A high frequency of volunteering did not necessarily imply a deep

desire for social change" (p. 104). These findings are important because they reveal that

service-learning participation will not, in and of itself, lead to a commitment to

multiculturalism or social justice as some of the early, traditional service-learning

literature seemed to presume.

Service-Learning and Relational Engagement

In her review of the service-learning literature, Mitchell (2008) proposed that

"developing authentic relationships in the classroom and community" is one of three key

elements that distinguish critical service-learning from traditional service-learning (p.

50). While the move toward a more critical approach to service-learning has taken root

relatively recently, some of the early pioneers in the field also extolled the necessity of

cultivating and maintaining authentic and just interpersonal relationships. Nadinne Cruz,

former director of the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University has defined

service as "a process of integrating intention with action in the context of a movement

toward a just relationship" (quoted in Morton, 1995, p. 31). Rhoads (1998) also wrote

about the importance of building authentic, interpersonal relationships across difference

in service-learning. "When we truly learn about the lives and the problems others face,

they become more real to us. A connection forms between the self and the other as our

interdependence is uncloaked" (p. 44).

Thus, the ability to form more authentic relationships relies not only on noticing

difference but also by actively working to build new shared meaning across that

difference. Further, most of the differences students encounter in service-learning

(including, but not limited to race and class) are embedded in systems of power that oppress some groups of people while granting others unearned privilege. Writing about students' interactions with community members in service-learning placements Donahue and Mitchell (2010) proposed:

> Students [from more privileged backgrounds and social identity groups] who focus on similarities alone tend to minimize the implications of systemic inequities and may even blame individuals for their circumstances. Framing service as an opportunity for reciprocal learning about differences as well as similarities promotes more authentic relationships and urges students to consider their own identities and contexts as well as those of community members. (p. 16)

Therefore, it is essential that service-learning courses provide students with structured opportunities to develop an increased awareness of social issues (Cipolle, 2010) and learn about the underlying, hegemonic structures that uphold systems of oppression and privilege (Mitchell, 2008).

While the critical service-learning literature emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships (Mitchell, 2008; Rhoads, 1997, 1998), the specific techniques and pedagogical interventions for building such relationships have not yet received considerable attention. Rosenberger (2000) concluded that "much of the service learning literature shares a commitment to building mutual relationships and to letting members of the community identify the need. What is missing, however, is an approach for creating such relationships" (p. 37). Rosenberger also suggested that dialogue and problem-posing education are two particular pedagogical approaches that have the potential to help students develop a critical consciousness as an outcome of service-learning. Though they did not name dialogue in particular, Eyler and Giles (1999) also found that classroom discussions in service-learning courses can be an important venue for reflection and critical thinking. Eyler and Giles reported that "service-learning with a high level of

discussion—a measure combining both more discussion and discussion that focused on higher levels of intellectual activity—had a positive impact on students' assessment of their critical thinking ability" (p. 121). Learning to dialogue with others across differences provides service-learning students with a means to reflect on their own and others' social identities while developing skills to connect more meaningfully with the community members they interact with in their community service. In the following section, dialogue is defined and the conceptual foundations and research on dialogue across differences are introduced.

Dialogue Across Differences

Dialogue creates an opening for talking and collaborating with others across differences while crossing boundaries of social identities. When introducing the notion of cross-racial dialogue, Tatum (1997) proposed that there is not enough talk in the United States about race and racism. She explained, "Talk does not mean idle chatter. It means meaningful, productive, dialogue to raise consciousness and led to effective action and social change" (p. 193). Building on this notion, Ellinor and Gerard (1998) stated, "Dialogue helps us bridge the increasing diversity found within modern organizations today. It is through the exploration of meaning that we learn who each person is and how we can work together appropriately" (p. 19). Dialogue is also a generative process— creating new, shared meaning from the multiple, often contradictory ideas, assumptions, and values held by each individual participant. Specific approaches to dialogue across differences, such as intergroup dialogue, help students develop perspective-taking skills, a pluralistic orientation, and an understanding that conflict can enhance a diverse democracy (Hurtado, 2005).

Defining Dialogue

The term dialogue is widely used today and has different meanings in different contexts. For that reason, it is necessary to clearly define specific what dialogue means within the context of this study. Burbules (1993) articulated the specific attributes that make dialogue unique form of communication.

> Dialogue is not like other forms of communication (chatting, arguing, negotiating, and so on). Dialogue is an activity directed toward discovery and new understanding which stands to improve the knowledge, insight, or sensitivity of its participants…. Dialogue represents a continuous, developmental, communicative interchange through which we stand to gain a fuller apprehension of the world, ourselves, and one another. (p. 8)

To better understand what dialogue is, it can be helpful to contrast it with other forms of communication such as discussion and debate. Bohm (1996) explained, "Discussion has the same root as 'percussion' and 'concussion.' It really means to break things up" (p. 7). Instead, "dialogue is about gathering or unfolding meaning that comes from many parts" (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998, p. 20).

In her book, *The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue*, Tannen (1998) examined the impact that debate and argumentative forms of communication have had on our society, and suggests alternatives.

> Another option is to expand our notion of "debate" to include more dialogue. This does not mean there can be no negativity, criticism, or disagreement. It simply means we can be more creative in our ways of managing all of these, which are inevitable and useful.... In dialogue there is opposition, yes, but no head-on collision. Smashing heads does not open minds. (p. 26)

In her description of dialogue, Tannen highlighted a crucial aspect of dialogue that is often misunderstood. The intentional practice of dialogue frequently *does* include tension, disagreement, and conflict. The goal of dialogue is not for all participants in the conversation to arrive at a point of agreement but rather to develop a new, shared

understanding of a topic or idea while valuing the different perspectives and experiences of each participant.

Another way to understand dialogue is to identify the foundational communication practices that support dialogic engagement. Isaacs (1999) proposed that listening, respecting, suspending, and voicing are the building blocks of dialogue. Isaacs also emphasized the importance of creating a container for dialogue, a physical and emotional space where dialogue about contentious issues is possible.

> Containers for conversation hold a particular kind of pressure. As they become more stable and conscious, they can hold more pressure. It seems to take a certain amount of pressure for human beings to think together. As people come together and bring their differences out, the pressure builds. Then the questions arises, Is there a container to hold this pressure? If not, people will tend to try to avoid issues, blame one another, resist what is happening. It is possible to create containers that can hold the fire of creation. (p. 244)

To establish a durable container for dialogue it is important to create a set of norms and guidelines for communication that all dialogue participants agree to follow.

As an example of a dialogue container, Ellinor and Gerard (1998) suggested the metaphor of a basket that is supported by four dialogue skills: suspension of judgment; identification and suspension of assumptions; listening; and inquiry and reflection (p. 63). An essential feature of Ellinor and Gerard's basket is that a shared purpose or intention among group members is imperative for holding the dialogue together. They explained, "No basket holds together for long if the initial core from which the weave began unravels. This is why we place purpose and intention at this center point" (p. 63). In most conceptualizations of dialogue, creating shared meaning among group participants is one of the central purposes.

While defining dialogue, it is also important to address what is meant by difference. While most conceptualizations of dialogue intentionally focus on bridging or coming to a shared understanding across some type of difference, there is a distinction between some dialogue approaches that focus predominantly on improving interpersonal relationships and others that explicitly address grappling with the differences in participants' social identities are their positions in systems of power, privilege, and oppression. The next section introduces the conceptual roots of dialogue, describing how different cultural groups have practiced dialogue and highlighting the unique contributions of pertinent philosophers and scholars to the contemporary understanding.

Conceptual Roots of Dialogue

The underlying processes of dialogue can be traced to many different cultural groups, including indigenous peoples, preliterate societies, and the early Greeks, that predate formal theorizing about dialogue (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998). Some of the earliest examples of dialogic communication can be found in the customs of indigenous peoples who would gather to talk and think together as a community. Some contemporary small-group conversation practices utilize the American Indian custom of the "talking stick," to focus the group's listening attention on one speaker (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998). Another of the earliest-documented dialogue approaches can be found in the Socratic Method, named after the technique of inquiry utilized by the Greek Philosopher, Socrates, and documented by his student, Plato (see Plato, trans. 2008).

Dialogue has been practiced for many centuries in the Quaker tradition of reaching decisions through consensus in "Meetings" (Hare, 1973). One specific Quaker custom is the usage of clearance committees to assist a community member in thinking

through a troubling question or dilemma in his or her life. In this setting, the members of the committee do not make judgments or offer advice, but only pose questions (Burson, 2002). These early dialogic traditions from a range of cultures inform many formal dialogue processes utilized today in a variety of settings and organizations, including schools, colleges, communities, and workplaces (Schoem & Hurtado, 2001).

In contemporary times, the foundations of dialogue as a distinct form of communication are often attributed to a handful of philosophers and public intellectuals. In the sections below, I provide brief descriptions of some of the conceptual foundations of dialogue, focusing on the main ideas of Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, David Bohm, Paulo Freire, and bell hooks. The first three scholars introduced below, Buber, Bakhtin, and Bohm focus on the dialogical dimension of meaning making and human relations. Building upon these ideas, Freire and hooks emphasized the potential of dialogue to both humanize relationships among members of oppressed and oppressor groups as well as to encourage a sociopolitical understanding of dynamics involved, explicitly focusing on the potential of dialogue to foster justice-oriented change in communities and classrooms.

Martin Buber

The 20th-century Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, conceptualized some of the foundational qualities of dialogue. His influential book, *I and Thou*, Buber (1970) illustrated the importance of relational encounters in dialogic exchanges. Interestingly though, the word "dialogue" was not actually used in the book (Stewart, Zediker, & Black, 2004). To Buber, dialogue is not simply a means of interpersonal communication but the foundation for relating and existing with others, the world we live in, and God.

Jenlink and Banathy (2005) explained, "For Buber, dialogue was both an intersubjective relation between an individual and others, and between and individual and God" (p. 9).

Framing human interaction as the word pairs (or "basic words") "I-it" and "I-you," Buber (1970) proposed that many of our exchanges are best described as "I-it" relationships, in which the other is reduced to an "it" or thing, not as part of a reciprocal relationship. Instead, we are capable of "I-you" relationships that engage our full humanity through more complete interactions with other people (as well as broader ways of relating with the world and God). In Buber's words, "The world as experience belongs to the basic word I-it. The basic word I-you establishes the world of relation" (p. 56).

Another of Buber's (1970) significant contributions is his conceptualization of the space between people where dialogue occurs and meaning is made, what he termed "the sphere of the between" (*das zwischenmenschliche* in German). Writing about this concept of the "between," Friedman (2005) explained that "the meaning of this dialogue is found in neither one nor the other of the partners, nor in both taken together, but in their interchange" (p. 138). The value Buber placed on the interchange between people is also expressed in his conceptualization of "the interhuman," which Jenlink and Banathy (2005) describe as "a social sphere in which person meets person" (p. 6).

<u>Mikhail Bakhtin</u>

Twentieth-century, Russian literary and social critic, Mikhail Bakhtin, primarily theorized about dialogue in relation to written genres, most notably in the form of the novel. Strine (2004) said, "Bakhtin's preoccupation with novelistic genres as the discursive forms best able to represent a culturally diversified public sphere reflects his understanding of the limits of face-to-face public dialogue under real-life conditions of

unequal opportunity and uneven power relations" (p. 228). However, Bakhtin also

understood the relationship of written dialogue to interpersonal, verbal, dialogic

exchanges, and patterns of thought more broadly.

> The utterance is filled with *dialogic overtones*, and they must be taken into account in order to fully understand the style of the utterance. After all, our thought itself – philosophical, scientific, and artistic – is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought, and this cannot but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 92)

Bakhtin conceptualized dialogue as an ongoing, dynamic process where words or

utterances are not neutral and do not exist only in the present time. Anderson, Baxter, and

Cissna (2004) explained, "For Bakhtin, society is inherently and forever multivocal and

unfinalizable" (p. 4). The meaning of all written or spoken words is grounded in the

political meanings previously assigned to them as well as the anticipated future responses

to their usage.

> The utterance proves to be a very complex and multiplanar phenomenon if considered not in isolation and with respect to its author (the speaker) only, but as a link in the chain of speech communication and with respect to other, related utterances. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 93)

In this way, the selection and usage of every word is embedded within a continuous

timeline, with roots in the past and longevity into the future.

David Bohm

Interested in addressing the communication breakdowns and social divides in

modern society, Bohm (1996), a renowned physicist, sought to identify the primary

principles of dialogue, a process by which small groups of people meet together to

explore differences in a sustained conversation with the goal of creating new shared

meaning among all participants. Bohm sought to differentiate dialogue from discussion,

explaining that discussion, "really means to break things up" (p. 7). Instead, dialogue is a "stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us" (p. 7). One key component in Bohm's conceptualization of dialogue is that participants attempt to suspend their own assumptions so they can truly see them instead of suppressing them. Central to the practice of dialogue, Bohm highlighted the importance of simultaneously becoming more aware of one's own thought processes (what he referred to as "proprioception") while thinking together with others. In explaining the concept of proprioception, Bohm wrote,

> Thought should be able to perceive its own movement, be aware of its own movement. In the process of thought there should be the awareness of that movement, of the intention to think, and of the result which that thinking produces. By being more attentive, we can be aware of how thought produces a result outside ourselves. And then maybe we could also be attentive to the results it produces within ourselves. Perhaps we could even be immediately aware of how it affects perception. (p. 91)

Bohm (1996) suggested the importance of developing a "participatory consciousness" through dialogue (p. 30). He explained that in dialogue there is "harmony of the individual and the collective, in which the whole constantly moves toward coherence. So, there is both a collective mind and an individual mind, and like a stream, the flow moves between them" (p. 32). It is this ability to think collectively with others that sets dialogue apart from other forms of conversation.

Paulo Freire

The 20th-century, Brazilian philosopher and popular educator, Paulo Freire, saw dialogic communication as an essential element of the non-hierarchical, interpersonal relationships required to dismantle systems of oppression that divide people based on

race, class, and other social identities. For Freire, dialogue is fundamentally linked with critical thinking, reflection, and liberatory social action.

> Since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's 'depositing' ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be "consumed" by the discussants. (Freire, 1970, p. 89)

Freire also promoted the importance of remaining open to uncertainty and not closing off opportunities for dialogue with others. Writing to teachers and educators, Freire (1998) proposed:

> Closing ourselves to the world and to others is a transgression of the natural condition of incompleteness. The person who is open to the word or to others inaugurates thus a dialogical relationship with which restlessness, curiosity, and unfinishedness are confirmed as key moments within the ongoing current of history. (p. 121)

While Freire considered dialogue to include verbal conversations, he viewed dialogue more broadly as a form of relating and learning with others. The processes of codification and decodification that are central to Freire's approach to learning rely on people's dialogic exchanges to better understand the world and social structures. Akkari and Mesquida (2008) said, "Codification is the creation of a representation of reality for the purpose of analysis…. Decodification is analysis that takes place through dialogue, revealing the previously unperceived meanings of the reality represented by that codification" (p. 338). Ultimately, for Freire, dialogue is inextricably linked with participants' internal change as well as broader social change.

bell hooks

The contemporary feminist scholar and educator, bell hooks (1994), proposed that dialogue is an opening to purposefully cross boundaries of social identities, including

race and gender in an effort to publically confront differences and to model the possibility of solidarity among people who are differently located in systems of power and privilege. Writing about the necessity for collaboration among educators to create change in teaching practices, hooks proposed:

> To engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences. (p. 130)

Dialogue is an essential component of what hooks refers to as "engaged pedagogy" (p. 13). Drawing on Freire's (1970) focus on inspiring "conscientization" (or critical awareness) among the oppressed, hooks (1994) advocated for an "engaged pedagogy" that "emphasizes wellbeing" and calls on both teachers and students to be active participants in their learning. hooks (2010) explained that, "engaged pedagogy emphasizes mutual participation because it is the movement of ideas, exchanged by everyone, that forges a meaningful working relationships between everyone in the classroom" (p. 21).

Different Approaches and Types of Dialogue

There are a number of specialized approaches, formats, and curricula clustered under the umbrella of dialogue across differences. While the distinctions among these approaches are important, Isaacs (1999), cautioned that

> Those who try to minimize the complexity of dialogue by reducing it to a few simple techniques about talking together will be sorely disappointed. Doing so fragments conversations in new ways by imposing oversimplified rules instead of stimulating an inquiry into what is preventing people from talking well. (p. 25)

Some specific approaches to dialogue across differences include Study Circles (McCoy & Scully, 2002), National Issues Forums (National Issues Forums, 2015), and The World

Café (Brown, 2001). Intergroup dialogue is perhaps the most common type of dialogue across differences found on college campuses today. While the specific Four Stage Model of Intergroup Dialogue initially designed at the University of Michigan (described in greater detail later in this chapter) has been rigorously researched, there are other intergroup dialogue approaches with college students, including Sustained Dialogue, a co-curricular, student-led intergroup dialogue initiative (Parker, 2006).

Not all dialogue approaches focus on exploring social identity-based issues or aim to dismantle systems that perpetuate inequality. Some approaches to dialogue are more politically neutral. Schoem (2014) expressed concerns that "many dialogue and deliberation organizations, though clearly not all, shy away from either an explicit or implicit acknowledgement of issues of social justice or inequality, and power and privilege" (p. 1). Schoem instead proposed that these organizations should explicitly focus on working to create a more just society, exposing and interrogating issues of power and privilege. Indeed, dialogue can be a powerful approach for engaging within and across difference, supporting individuals in better understanding their own and others' social identities as well as the ways those identities are connected to systems of privilege and oppression. This type of dialogue is referred to by Gurin, Nagda, and Zúñiga (2013) as a critical-dialogic approach.

Intergroup Dialogue

Intergroup dialogue (IGD) is a specific critical-dialogic approach with college students that was developed at the University of Michigan in the 1980s (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). IGD is distinct from other approaches to dialogue, given its explicit emphasis on social justice processes and outcomes, including exploring

social identity-based issues and systems of privilege and oppression. Zúñiga et al. (2007) defined IGD as:

> [A] face to face facilitated learning experience that brings together students from different social identity groups over a sustained period of time to understand their commonalities and differences, examine the nature and impact of societal inequalities, and explore ways of working together toward greater equality and justice. (p. 2)

Aligning with the broader goals of social justice education (Adams, 2007; Bell, 2007; Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007), IGD has been adopted on a wide variety of college and university campuses as a venue for students to explore one or more social identities in a small-group setting while engaging in a dialogic form of conversation. IGD has become an increasingly popular intervention over the past decade as colleges and universities have sought new ways to engage students in learning about diversity and social justice, address ongoing social identity-based bias incidents on their campuses, and create spaces for students to grapple with ongoing acts of violence and intolerance targeting people of color and members of other oppressed groups across the United States.

The participants in an intergroup dialogue represent two or more different social identity groups, typically groups with a history and current reality of inequality or conflict (for example, female students and male students or Muslim students and Christian students). Typically, 12 to 18 participants are intentionally placed into an IGD group so that there is equal (or close to equal) representation of students in the disadvantaged social identity group(s) and the advantaged social identity group. Careful attention is given to placing participants into dialogue groups to help ensure equal group status within the setting, one of the conditions of optimal intergroup contact (Allport,

1954, Pettigrew, 1998). Another measure taken to ensure more even distribution of power in the dialogue group is to intentionally assign two trained co-facilitators, whose identities reflect the identities of the social identity groups engaged in each specific dialogue. For example, in a dialogue focused on race and racism, one facilitator will be a person of color and the other facilitator will be a White person (Zúñiga, et al., 2007). On some campuses, intergroup dialogue is peer-facilitated by undergraduate students (Beal, Thompson, & Chesler, 2001), while on other campuses, dialogues are facilitated by faculty members, student affairs administrators, and graduate students.

Intergroup dialogue introduces content knowledge (e.g., learning about the history and current implications of racism) while maintaining a constant focus on communication process within the group (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Dialogue facilitators support students in becoming more competent and confident applying the key elements of dialogue, including suspending judgments, deep listening, identifying assumptions, and reflecting with inquiry (Bohm, 1996). Another important facet of intergroup dialogue is that it encourages students to reflect on and share their own personal experiences and stories, placing value on sharing emotions as well as thoughts (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Keehn (2014) found that personal storytelling in intergroup dialogues (as well as in other discussion-based diversity courses) is a critical component of students learning about themselves and others. By providing students with content knowledge while engaging students' emotions, intergroup dialogue aligns with research findings that the mediating processes that support positive intergroup outcomes in pedagogical interventions are both cognitive and emotional (Dovidio et al., 2004, p. 245).

Many intergroup dialogues, based on the initial model developed at the University of Michigan, are composed of four stages spread over 8 to 12 weeks. The four stages are "setting an environment for dialogue; developing a common base; exploring questions, issues or conflicts; and moving from dialogue to action" (Zúñiga & Nadga, 2001, p. 313). These stages are designed to introduce new content and communication processes sequentially, based on the increasing comfort of individual participants and the group as a whole. For example, conflict is intentionally introduced in the third stage by raising challenging or "hot topics," once the participants have developed a base level of trust and community with one another.

Research on Intergroup Dialogue

The benefits associated with participation in intergroup dialogue are compelling, and research has shown that the model is highly successful in achieving its intended outcomes (Engberg, 2004; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Hurtado, 2005; Zúñiga et al., 2009). In the largest and most comprehensive study of intergroup dialogue to date, the Multi-University Intergroup Dialogue Research (MIGR) Project, conducted a mixed-methods study to assess the effects of intergroup dialogues. The research project involved undergraduate students on nine college and university campuses with 52 pairings of intergroup dialogue courses and control groups (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). The project included 24 measures of possible positive effects, grouped into four categories: affective positivity, intergroup understanding, intergroup relations, and intergroup action. Though effect sizes were small to moderate, compared with the students in the control group, the students who completed an IGD course showed gains in 20 of the 24 positive outcomes measured at the conclusion of the course. Even more impressive, one year after

completing the course 21 of the 24 positive outcomes were still significant. Only one

negative effect, "increasing negative interactions" was found at the end of the course, and

this effect was not significant one year later. The authors outlined five areas where the

findings were conclusive:

> One, students who participated in IGDs developed more insight into how
> members of other groups perceive the world. Two, they became more empathetic
> with the feelings and concerns of people who differ from them and more
> thoughtful about the structural underpinnings of inequality. Three, they had more
> positive relations with members of other social groups and showed greater
> understanding of their own social identities. Four, they increased in their
> motivation to reach out to other social groups and work with them. Five, they
> placed a greater value on diversity, took more steps to promote social justice, and
> became more committed to taking social justice actions in the future. (p. 170)

The MIGR Project not only found that IGD was successful in producing intended

outcomes but also utilized structural equation modeling to explain how specific features

of IGD pedagogy and communication process produced particular outcomes.

In addition to quantitative, survey-based methods, the MIRG Project utilized

qualitative methods, including interviews with students, analysis of students' final papers,

and analysis of video recordings of dialogue sessions in class meetings (Gurin, Nagda, &

Zúñiga, 2013). One aspect of the qualitative analysis that related closely to the research

questions in this dissertation study explored how participants engaged in dialogue

through listening, speaking, and active thinking (which included reflecting). The analysis

of dialogue participants' interview transcripts revealed that "96 percent of the students

described engaged listening, 72 percent described speaking, and 99 percent described

active thinking" (p. 215). In their interviews, the student participants provided detailed

descriptions of how they applied these processes in their dialogue groups.

Comparative studies (Hurtado, 2005; Mayhew & Fernández, 2007) have also been conducted exploring how outcomes differ among students who participated in different types of diversity initiatives: classroom diversity courses, service-learning, intergroup dialogue, and extracurricular diversity events. Compared with other interventions designed to help students learn about diverse groups, Hurtado (2005) found that participation in intergroup dialogue has "significant effects on students' perspective-taking skills (or capacity to see the world from someone else's perspective), the development of a pluralistic orientation, and the belief that conflict enhances democracy" (p. 605).

Critiques of Intergroup Dialogue

While many scholars and practitioners describe the considerable potential of intergroup dialogue to have a positive impact in educational, community, and workplace settings (Schoem & Hurtado, 2001), others provide critiques of intergroup dialogue and question if it actually supports social justice aims. One critique of intergroup dialogue is that it is overly procedural and requires that participants from marginalized groups join "at the cost of restricting their self-expression into acceptable channels of communication" (Burbules, 2000, p. 251). Another critique suggests that intergroup dialogue perpetuates oppressive relationships by asking people from disadvantaged social identity groups to empathize with and understand the perspectives of the very people who receive unearned privilege on the basis of that system of oppression. Is his critique of the power relationships entailed in intergroup dialogue, Gorski (2008) asked:

> Which people and systems do we protect when we request empathy from dominated groups without first demanding justice from the powerful? Dialogue experiences and other intercultural education practices reinforce prevailing

colonizing hegemony as well when, absent a central focus on social reconstruction, the rules of engagement require disenfranchised participants to render themselves more vulnerable to the powerful than they already are. (p. 521)

It is important for practitioners and researchers of intergroup dialogue to acknowledge these critiques and identify potential strategies to ameliorate these concerns. In the next section, four unique programs are highlighted that have sought to purposefully integrate dialogue and deliberation practices into service-learning and civic engagement.

Civic Engagement Programs that Emphasize Dialogue and Deliberation

There are limited examples in the research literature of college-level service-learning or civic engagement courses that place an intentional focus on helping students develop and practice dialogic skills across difference. These programs include the Michigan Community Scholars Program at the University of Michigan (Maxwell, Traxler-Ballew, & Dimopoulos, 2004; Schoem, 2005), the Democracy Fellows Program at Wake Forest University (Harriger & McMillan, 2008), the Bonner Scholars Program on multiple liberal arts college campuses (Keen & Hall, 2009), and the Citizen Scholars Program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (Reiff & Keene, 2012). Each of these programs has integrated aspects of dialogue into civic engagement for a diverse democracy in different ways. Detailed descriptions of these programs and summaries of research findings related to the programs are provided below.

Michigan Community Scholars Program

The Michigan Community Scholars Program (MSCP) is a residential learning community that is collaboratively coordinated by diverse members of the university community, including faculty from multiple departments as well as administrators from the division of student affairs. The MCSP focuses on exploring social justice and

democracy by incorporating both community service-learning and intergroup dialogue into its curriculum, along with other requirements. Referring to the intergroup dialogue component, Schoem (2005) explained, "Formal opportunities for MCSP students to participate in this form of dialogue help prepare them for productive interactions with one another, in and outside the classroom, and to participate in service learning experiences in ethnically and socially diverse neighborhoods" (p. 23). The MCSP course requirements for intergroup dialogue have changed over the past decade. Recent literature indicated that students were required to complete either a full-semester intergroup dialogue course or another civic engagement course to fulfill the program requirements (Schoem & Woods, 2014). However, even those students who do not select the intergroup dialogue course as their civic engagement elective are introduced to the principles of dialogue as a part of the introductory course required for all MCSP participants. Schoem, Daniels, Lane, Nelson, Robinson, and Vadnal (2004) explained:

> The attention to these [dialogue] process issues deeply enriches every discussion of the content and enables students to think more critically and with greater perspective than they ever would in a traditional classroom format. Not only do students listen more carefully to one another, but they read more analytically, take a greater personal interest in issues pertaining to their own social identity as well as their classmates' social identity, and they take the classroom discussion to the cafeteria and the residence hall floors in the evening (p. 164).

In addition to the instructors' attempts to foster dialogic communication inside the classroom setting, the previously required sociology course included an assignment that required students to participate in, and write papers about community engagement activities. As a part of this assignment, students were asked to "make two attempts at serious conversations about issues of social identity with people from different social identity groups" (Schoem et al., 2004, p. 165).

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Maxwell, Traxler-Ballew, and Dimopoulos (2004) conducted interviews with MCSP

students who participated in (and in some cases also facilitated) intergroup dialogue

courses. They found that students who participated in an intergroup dialogue had

opportunities to confront "inconsistencies of their worldview and the world as it is" (p.

130). They also found that participation in intergroup dialogue led students to appreciate

other people's real life experiences and value local knowledge. These skills were

particularly valuable to the students when they continued on to participate in service-

learning initiatives.

Democracy Fellows Program

The Democracy Fellows Program at Wake Forest University taught a group of

students the process of deliberation over the course of a five-semester, developmental

curriculum to prepare them for meaningful civic engagement in a diverse society

(Harriger & McMillan, 2008). Though public deliberation is not exactly the same as

dialogue, it shares a focus on gaining an awareness of others' views and working within

and across difference to identify directions for action. According to National Issues

Forums (2015),

> Public deliberation is simply a way for people to come together to share views
> about an issue that is important to them. Participants talk with one another, face to
> face, exploring options, weighing others' views, and considering the benefits and
> consequences of public policy decisions. (p. 1)

As part of an "intentionally developmental" process, students first learned and

practiced deliberative skills in the college classroom (Harriger & McMillan, 2008, p.

236). Next, they built upon these skills by planning, moderating, and participating in

deliberative forums on campus with members of the campus community and some

members from the local community. Finally, the students coordinated and moderated off-

campus deliberative forums with community members about an issue of current importance to the community (urban sprawl). A longitudinal qualitative research project found that students in the program had a stronger sense of efficacy on campus when compared with students in a control group (Harriger & McMillan, 2008). The study also reported important findings about the difference in the three difference contexts (classroom, campus, and community) in which the students participated in deliberations. Harriger and McMillan explained:

> We found the classroom to be a stronger venue for teaching knowledge and critical thinking than for simulating an actual political environment or for appreciating the dispositions of citizenship that reveal themselves when discussants are directly affected by the issue-at-hand. (p. 243)

The addition of a sustained community service/engagement experience, as is included in service-learning courses, would have provided students with an opportunity to explore real-world issues while they were learning a new set of communication skills. Though the students did have some community organizing experience while preparing for and moderating the public deliberation event that was held in the community, their actual engagement in the community was limited and not sustained over the course of the program. Formal intergroup dialogue courses also face the challenge of connecting students' classroom dialogue experiences with opportunities for ongoing social action (Chesler, 2001). While training in dialogue and deliberation provides students with opportunities for practicing the kind of talk that is needed for democracy and service-learning provides students with opportunities for direct action, it is the integration of dialogue and service-learning that allows students to both "walk the talk" and talk the walk. Also absent from the Democracy Fellows Program was an explicit focus on social justice or systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Though one of the classroom

deliberations focused on "race and ethnic tensions," the instructors/researchers did not

analyze the way that power relations played out based on students' and community

members' social identities (Harriger & McMillan, 2008).

Bonner Scholars Program

Another example of integrating service-learning and intentional dialogue can be

found in the Bonner Scholars Program, a co-curricular service-learning model that

engages more than 1500 students annually at 25 colleges across the United States

(Bonner Foundation, 2011). Over the course of four years, Bonner Scholars provide an

average of 10 hours of service each week during the academic year, participate in

multiple summer service internships, and attends regular reflection sessions (Bonner

Foundation, 2011). Dialogue in the Bonner Scholars Program takes place in situations in

which students engage with the other. Keen and Hall (2009) explained that "the other is

often a fellow student or someone on whose behalf they do community service" (p. 70).

While dialogue in the Bonner Scholars Program does not follow a formal, structured

pedagogy, findings from two recent studies demonstrate that opportunities to engage in

dialogue across differences had a significant impact on the Bonner Scholars.

A quantitative, longitudinal study of the Bonner Scholars Program (Keen & Hall,

2009) revealed that one outcome strongly related to participation in the Bonner Scholars

Program is an increased appreciation of *dialogue across boundaries of perceived*

difference. These perceived differences included "ethnicity, race, religion, culture,

physical disability, and social class" (p. 62). They found that "the importance of the

opportunity for dialogue was the strongest of 19 outcomes between freshman and senior

years" (p. 70). In a separate study, Keen and Hall (2008) surveyed 41 alumni of the

Bonner Scholars program from 10 different campuses who had high financial need as college students. They found that six years after college graduation, Bonner Scholars Program alumni were more likely than their peers in comparison groups to be in engaged in activities requiring dialogue "such as making online contact with peers and family regarding social and political issues, doing community projects with others, and working with others in a leadership role to improve the community" (p. 7).

The Citizen Scholars Program

The Citizen Scholars Program (CSP) at the University of Massachusetts has offered a unique, developmental approach to academic service-learning since it was established in 1999. Guided by a set of 16 well-defined learning objectives, the CSP "integrates theory and practice to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and vision they need to build community, be effective citizens, and advocate for social justice" (Reiff & Keene, 2012, p. 105). These learning outcomes are divided into three categories: "knowledge for democratic citizenship, skills of democratic citizenship, and vision for a more equitable society" (p. 107). Two of the CSP learning objectives, "Communication" and "Cultural Competence," underscore the Program's longstanding focus on preparing students for communicating with others across differences (p. 124). The description of the Cultural Competence learning objective specifically notes the ability to "hear, consider, and engage points of view that are different from our own" (p. 107) processes that are central to dialogue across differences.

The CSP places an emphasis on the importance of personal storytelling as a means to building a strong community. Storytelling and active listening are embedded in the political autobiography assignment that all new students complete at the beginning of

their first semester in the CSP. In this project, students write a political autobiography that they read aloud to the other students in the cohort at a weekend retreat outside of the regular class meeting time. In their political autobiographies, students recount personal stories in which they describe how their passion for civic engagement and social change is connected to their life experiences, values, and social identities. Students and members of the teaching team sit together in a circle for multiple hours actively listening to each other's political autobiographies and asking each other clarifying questions. This focused processes of personal sharing and active listening sets the stage for continued dialogic communication in the CSP. Class meetings include facilitated large group conversations and student-led small group conversations in which students share and engage in dialogue about their experiences engaging in the community, making connections with the concepts introduced in required course readings.

Over the past decade, the CSP has been the subject of numerous research projects, including three previous doctoral dissertations (Keisch, 2014; Henderson, 2012; Mitchell, 2005). A mixed-methods study is currently in progress exploring the impact of the CSP on program alumni more than five years after their graduation (Reiff & Keene, 2012). A more detailed description of the CSP is included in Chapter 3, in which I introduce the specific site of this dissertation research.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature on service-learning and dialogue across differences. By engaging the literature, I distinguished how critical service-learning pedagogy differs from more traditional approaches to service learning. Similarly, I highlighted the ways that intergroup dialogue, a critical dialogic approach differs from

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other models of dialogue that explore difference but do not foreground the ways that

individuals and groups are differently located in systems of power, privilege, and

oppression. I introduced four specific service-learning programs that have incorporated

deliberation and dialogue across differences into their curricula, including the CSP, the

site of this dissertation research. In the next chapter, I present the conceptual framework

upon which this study is based, provide a rationale for the research methods I selected,

and describe each step of the research process in detail.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the study's conceptual framework, provide a rationale illustrating why a qualitative, case study design was most appropriate for this study, and explain in detail the specific data collection and analysis methods utilized in completing it. These details include how I selected research participants, collected and analyzed data, and utilized recommended strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the research process and findings. Though the overall structure of the research design remained consistent since the original research proposal, some adaptations were made during the process of conducting the research, particularly in the area of data analysis, which was not described in sufficient detail during the proposal stage. Marshall and Rossman (2011) emphasized that "design flexibility is a crucial feature of qualitative inquiry, even though demands for specificity in design and method seem to preclude such flexibility" (p. 12). The specific strategies employed in data analysis and my justification for these decisions are described in considerable detail later in this chapter.

Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 provided the basis for the conceptual framework that undergirds the present study. A conceptual map is provided in Figure 1, illustrating how critical service-learning pedagogy and intergroup dialogue pedagogy influenced the design of the Citizen Scholars Program (CSP) Dialogue Initiative, the case studied in this dissertation research. Traditional service-learning research and practice, a focus on social justice processes outcomes, and critical pedagogy provide a foundation

for critical service-learning pedagogy. The pedagogy of intergroup dialogue draws

largely from theories and processes of dialogue and social justice education.
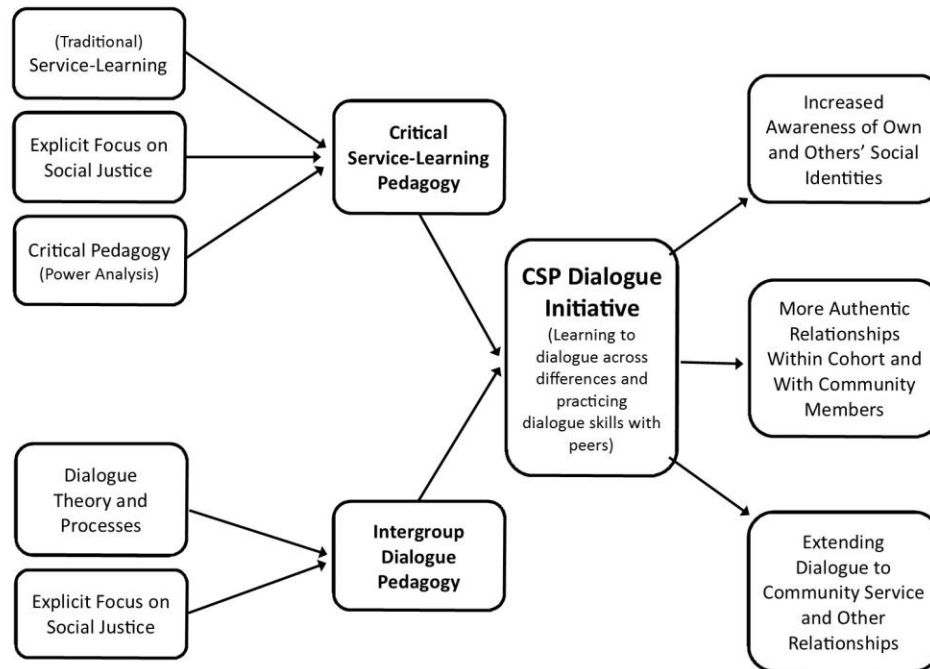
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Incorporating Aspects of Intergroup Dialogue into Critical Service-Learning.

The CSP Dialogue Initiative combined aspects of critical service-learning

pedagogy and intergroup dialogue pedagogy. Based on these theories and pedagogical

practices, the CSP Dialogue Initiative provided a curricular structure in which students

learned to dialogue and practiced dialogue skills with peers in their cohort over the course

of a full academic year. The intended outcomes of this initiative, those explored in the

current study, included that

1. Students would develop more authentic relationships both within their cohort and with the community members with whom they interacted as a part of their community service partnerships;
2. Students would learn more about their own and others' personal and social identities; and

3. Students would extend the practice of dialogue – an essential civic skill – to other contexts and relationships in their lives outside of the CSP.

Research Design

A qualitative research approach was best suited for addressing the four research questions and exploring the lived experiences of students who were engaged in learning and about and practicing dialogue while enrolled in the first year (two semesters) of the CSP. In the words of Corbin and Strauss (2008), "qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables" (p. 12). Qualitative methodology was the most appropriate fit for this study, which sought to provide a more complete understanding of the meanings that students make of their experiences participating in one particular educational intervention, purposeful dialogue about personal and social identities within a multi-semester, service-learning program.

In addition to being best suited for addressing this study's research questions, qualitative research methodology also aligns most closely with my own personal values and approach to learning. Marshall and Rossman (2011) recognized that those drawn to qualitative research "are intrigued by the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and the meanings that the participants themselves attribute to these interactions" (p. 2). These particular characteristics of many qualitative researchers are certainly true for me.

Case Study Methodology

Within the broader umbrella of qualitative inquiry, this study employed case study methodology to provide an understanding of one specific and unique case, the

experiences of a small cohort of undergraduate students in a unique program who were

introduced to the principles of dialogic communication and required to engage in a series

of one-on-one and small group conversations with their peers focused on exploring

personal and social identities. According to Stake (1995), "case study is the study of the

particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within

important circumstances" (p. xi). Yin (2009) contended that "the distinctive need for case

studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" (p. 4). Yin

explained further that case study methods have a "distinct advantage" over other methods

when "a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over

which the investigator has little or no control" (p. 13). This study met all three of these

criteria in that the research questions ask "how," the intervention explored is

contemporary, and I, the researcher, had only minimal control over the setting. Rossman

and Rallis (2003) suggested that "the strength of case studies is their detail, their

complexity, and their use of multiple sources to obtain multiple perspectives" (p. 105).

As outlined in considerable detail throughout the remainder of this chapter, this case

study was designed to meet Rossman and Rallis's criteria.

Because this study explored only one case, The CSP, it can be defined as a single

case design. Yin (2009) argued:

> The single case design is eminently justifiable under certain conditions—where
> the case represents (a) a critical test of existing theory, (b) a rare or unique
> circumstance, or (c) a representative or typical case, or where the case serves a (d)
> revelatory or (e) longitudinal purpose. (p. 52)

The dialogue pedagogy intentionally woven into the CSP in the 2011-2012 academic year

represented a very rare case indeed. Based on my review of the literature, only one other

multi-semester civic engagement program, the Michigan Community Scholars Program,

has attempted to integrate an intentional focus on teaching and practicing dialogue skills (Schoem, Daniels, Lane, Nelson, Robinson, & Vadnal, 2004). Further, the findings of this study may be considered revelatory since research on this specific educational intervention within service-learning and civic engagement courses has not been previously conducted.

This study is also an example of an "embedded case study design" in which only one particular phenomenon – the impact of dialogue – was being examined, not the complete nature of the entire CSP (Yin, 2009, p. 50). This research project can be defined as an *instrumental* case study. Stake (1995) explained that in an instrumental case study "we will have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that we may get insight into the question by studying a particular case" (p. 3). In seeking to better understand the outcomes of integrating intentional dialogue practices into a service-learning program, the CSP was identified as a unique case from which greater insight could be gained about the research questions.

The Case of the Citizen Scholars Program

In the CSP, students travel through an intentionally-sequenced series of four service-learning courses in small cohorts of approximately 15-25 students. In addition to the four-course sequence that students move through as a cohort over the course of two academic years, students are required to complete an elective course in social or political theory. CSP students are expected to complete at least 60 hours of course-linked community service with the same partner community organization each semester they are in the Program.

Students are invited to join the CSP based on an application process that includes participating in an interview with members of the teaching team (faculty instructors and undergraduate teaching assistants) as well as other current students in the program. At the beginning of their first semester of the program, students attend a community-building retreat and select the community organization where they intend to engage in direct service for the first two (if not all four) semesters of the program. In the final semester of the Program, students complete a research-based capstone project that is related to one of the focus areas of their community partner organization (e.g., domestic abuse, poverty, and food insecurity). In their capstone projects, students propose specific strategies for creating longer-lasting, more systemic social change. Mitchell, Visconti, Keene, and Battistoni (2011) provide a succinct description of the five courses that comprise the CSP program:

> "The Good Society," which examines visions of the good society, explores issues involved in working toward the common good and endeavors to liberate the imagination; "Tools for Change," which explores tools for bringing about structural change, including contemplative practices, communication skills, political mobilization, and participatory action research; "Public Policy and Citizen Action," in which students explore how laws and policies are made, meet with legislators, practice lobbying and undertake a substantial policy research project; "Organizing for Change," where students work in partnership with a community-based organization to formulate a community organizing project that will mobilize a constituency to take action to meet a community need; and an elective course in service-learning or social or political theory. (p. 123)

Since this research project was conducted with students in the first two courses in the CSP learning sequence, these two courses are described in greater detail below.

The Good Society

The first CSP course, The Good Society, encourages students to consider the wide range of societies (real and imagined) that are possible. From this exploration, students

are guided in creating a detailed description of what their ideal society would look like. Assigned texts describing both real and fictional examples of different societal structures serve as a catalyst to open students' minds to thinking about the limitless ways that social life could be organized. Required course readings in the Fall 2011 semester included Myles Horton's (1998) *The Long Haul* (which served to introduce many of the values of the entire CSP Program), Ursula Le Guin's (1994) utopian science fiction novel, *The Dispossessed*, Isaac Saney's (2004) *Cuba: A Revolution in Motion*, Alan Weisman's (2008) *Gaviotas: A Village To Reinvent the World*, and selected chapters from Michael Pollan's (2006) *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Students were also asked to read other short articles and chapters that present and critique different approaches to community service and service-learning.

<u>Tools for Democratic Change</u>

The second CSP course, Tools for Democratic Change, aims to introduce students to theatrical frameworks underpinning social justice education, including theories of social identity development, systems thinking, and models of power, privilege and oppression. An additional goal of this course is to support students in beginning to develop a metaphorical toolkit filled with different skills that are useful in enacting the social change they seek. Required texts in the Spring 2012 semester included Allan Johnson's (2006) *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, June Jordan's (1998) *Affirmative Acts*, and Pema Chödrön's (2000) *When Things Fall Apart*. Students read numerous additional selections focused on topics related to social justice and contemplative practice.

In one course project, students created a systems map of the community organization at which they provided ongoing service. These systems maps not only included processes internal to the organization (e.g., staffing, services offered, and budget allocations) but also explored how external policies, laws, and funding structures impact the organization. The intended outcome of this project was for students to gain a more complex understanding of the dynamic, interrelated processes at work within (and surrounding) one organization with which they were already familiar. Having applied a systems thinking approach to this one organization, students developed skills to look at other organizations, policies, and social structures through a systems lens.

The course culminated in students working in small groups to develop and deliver extensive, participatory workshops describing how one specific tool can be used to make democratic change. In the Spring 2012 semester, the tools chosen by students for their presentations included children's literature, rap music, cooperatives (co-ops), social media, humor, and food. In addition to facilitating a 45-minute workshop during class time, each group was responsible for preparing a detailed outline in advance of their workshop, developing a handout and annotated bibliography to distribute to participants during the workshop, and writing a final paper. In their final papers, students not only described what they learned about their chosen topic but also reflected on the process of collaboratively designing and delivering a workshop for their peers.

Dialogue Pedagogy in the CSP

In the Fall 2010 semester, the CSP program introduced a new dialogue assignment for students in the entering cohort during the first course in the program, *The Good Society*. In the 2011-2012 academic year, the dialogue assignment was extended

across both courses in the first year of the program (a full academic year). The formal

dialogue curriculum around which this assignment was based drew upon existing

dialogue and Intergroup Dialogue literature as well as my own personal Intergroup

Dialogue facilitation and coaching experience. The desired outcome of this intervention

was that by repeatedly practicing dialogue about social identity-based issues with their

peers and reflecting on these experiences, students would develop dialogue competencies

that they could integrate more holistically into many aspects of their civic lives.

The CSP dialogue curriculum included an in-class dialogue workshop, assigned

readings about dialogue, and the CSP Dialogue Assignment (Appendices A and B) in

which students were required to engage in a series of mutually-facilitated dialogue

conversations outside of class time. The CSP Dialogue Assignment that was distributed

to students at the beginning of each semester included a recommended agenda for each

out-of-class dialogue conversation, along with suggested prompts appropriate for each

stage of the conversation (e.g., a "Check-In" at the beginning of the conversation and a

reflective "Dialogue about the Dialogue" at the end of the conversation). In addition to

these written materials, a less visible, informal curriculum was occurring simultaneously

through the pedagogical choices made by members of the teaching team while facilitating

class sessions.

Dialogue Workshops and Reading Assignments

All students in the cohort participated in a 90-minute workshop introducing the

practice of dialogue and dialogic skills during the second week of the fall semester course

(Anthropology 297H: *The Good Society*). I co-facilitated this workshop with a recent

graduate from the Social Justice Education Master's Degree program at the University of

Massachusetts Amherst who had recently co-facilitated a semester-long intergroup dialogue course focused on race, ethnicity, and racism. In preparation for this workshop, students were asked to read selections from two books about the principles of engaging in dialogue and difficult conversations. These assigned readings were Chapter 3 ("What is Dialogue?") from Ellinor and Gerard's (1998) book, *Dialogue: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation* and two chapters from Stone, Patton, and Heen's (2010) book, *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. The workshop was experiential in nature and engaged all of the students in a series of role plays to help them learn to distinguish dialogue from two other types of conversation, discussion, and debate.

Early in the spring semester, as a part of the *Tools for Change* course, the students (all of whom had returned to the program from the fall semester) participated in a second dialogue workshop in which they engaged in a structured activity to help them continue developing active listening skills (adapted from Zúñiga & Cytron-Walker, 2003). This dialogue workshop was one component of a full-day retreat held on a weekend day. Before beginning the activity, students were reminded about the building blocks of dialogue, including suspending judgments, deep listening, identifying assumptions, and reflecting with inquiry (Bohm, 1996). Students were introduced to the concepts of "purposeful sending" and "active listening" described in Bidol's (1986) Interactive Communication Model (p. 207).

At the beginning of the activity, students were provided with a prompt to reflect on for five minutes: "Think about a time when you felt really heard or understood or a time when you felt really misunderstood." While reflecting on the prompt, students were

invited to write down some of their thoughts on a note card to prepare them for sharing

their story with others. Then, students were divided into groups of three and were

assigned to one of three different roles: speaker, listener, or observer. The students in the

speaker role were invited to share their reactions to a previously-provided prompt for two

minutes, focusing on sending their message as clearly as they could. The students in the

listener role were asked to focus solely on listening to the message the speaker was trying

to send, not responding or sharing their reactions. The students in the listener role were

encouraged to practice suspending the judgments that entered their minds as the speaker

was talking and focus back on the message the central speaker was trying to send.

Finally, the students in the observer role watched the exchange between the speaker and

listener, taking note of body language, facial expressions, emotional responses, and other

features of the interaction.

After the speakers finished sharing their stories uninterrupted for two minutes, the

listeners were asked to paraphrase what they heard. The speakers and listeners checked in

with each other to clarify any meanings that were not made clear. Then, the observers

shared what they noticed about the exchange. Students then rotated through each of the

three roles so that they could each engage in these different experiences related to active

listening. Between each round, the students were invited to sit in silence for one minute,

reflecting on the story that was just shared, before moving on to focus on the next story.

Following the three rounds of this structured activity, the course instructors facilitated a

large-group conversation in which students shared what they had learned and noticed

during the activity.

Mutually-Facilitated Dialogue Conversations Outside of Class Meetings

During the fall semester course, every Citizen Scholar participated in four intentional dialogue conversations (or "dyads") with four different members of their cohort. The students made their own arrangements to complete these self-facilitated, interpersonal dialogue meetings outside of class. The students were asked to focus the content of these conversations on a list of prompts that encouraged them to reflect on their personal and social identities and the impact these identities have on their service efforts in the community. The Dialogue Project Assignment for the fall semester (outlined in detail in Appendix A) stipulated that each dialogue conversation should last a minimum of 45 minutes. Students were assigned to write and submit a one-page reflection memo within 48 hours of completing each dialogue meeting, while the conversation is still fresh in their minds. The dialogue reflections were graded based on timely completion but not on the content.

During the spring semester course (Honors 393T: *Tools for Change*), students continued to practice intentional dialogue with one another as a course requirement. The spring semester dialogues differed from the fall dialogues in two substantial ways. First, two of the out-of-class, required dialogues were structured in small groups of 3-6 participants. As in the fall semester, the small-group dialogue conversations were mutually facilitated by the participants within the conversation, following a set of recommended prompts provided by the course instructors. Second, the spring semester dialogue prompts encouraged the students to focus more intentionally on talking about one or more specific forms of social identity and oppression. This focus on exploring

social identities, power, privilege, and oppression was supported by in-class conversations about the required course readings.

Instructor-Facilitated Dialogue During Class Meetings

Throughout both first-year CSP courses, The Good Society and Tools for Democratic Change, the instructors sought to integrate dialogic processes into their facilitation of large-group classroom conversations about course content as well as small-group conversations about students' community service experiences. In one of the last class meetings of the spring semester, the two co-instructors facilitated a focused dialogue with the full cohort that served as a capstone to students learning about dialogue over the course of the academic year. This hour-long, facilitated dialogue conversation focused on exploring in depth the concepts of intersectionality and bridging framed by a selection from Anzaldúa's (2002) *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*. In this conversation, the students were encouraged to do their best to apply dialogue skills, including active listening, asking clarifying questions, and suspending judgments.

<div align="center">Gaining Access to Research Site</div>

This dissertation study benefited greatly from the high level of personal investment and support that I received from the members of the CSP Teaching Team, including the co-directors of the program. When initially proposing this research project, the members of the Teaching Team expressed to me that they believed the findings and practical implications of my research had the capacity to benefit future cohorts of CSP students as well as the broader community of service-learning faculty and practitioners. The Teaching Team agreed that placing an increased focus on (and the subsequent usage

<div align="center">62</div>

of class time) helping students develop dialogue skills to explore their own and others'

social identities aligned with the stated learning outcomes of the Program. My request to

conduct the proposed study built upon a foundation of pre-existing personal relationships

I had built with the program's directors and instructors as a mentee and colleague.

After engaging in numerous informal conversations with members of the CSP

Teaching Team for many months, I submitted a written proposal requesting permission to

conduct this dissertation research project with the CSP. My request was considered by the

Teaching Team and approved. As Rossman and Rallis (2003) explained, organizational

gatekeepers "use their positions to reveal or protect what an outsider may see of

themselves, their colleagues, and their organizations" (p. 163). In the case of this research

project, the members of the CSP Teaching Team helped ease the way for me to have as

complete a view as possible of the Program. Instead of my needing to make special

requests for additional access to information about program pedagogy, one of the

Program's co-directors invited me to observe and participate in Teaching Team meetings

so that I would have more timely and complete information about decisions impacting the

teaching of CSP courses and the program as a whole.

Participant-Observer Role

My own personal life experiences, values, and assumptions have no doubt had

considerable impact on all aspects of this study, including the choices of research

methods, collection of data, analysis of data, and the presentation of the findings. Writing

about grounded theory research, Charmaz (2006) suggested that as researchers, "we are

part of the word we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories

through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and

research practices" (p. 10). I do not claim whatsoever that it was possible for me to remain completely objective in my role as a researcher; however, I have endeavored to make my own assumptions transparent throughout all stages of this study, particularly when writing memos about coding and analyzing the data. This process of ongoing self-critique aligns with the concept of crystallization. Ellingson (2009) explained:

> Crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (p. 4)

In an effort to engage in crystallization in this dissertation study, I outline in detail below the ways that my role as a researcher was complicated and augmented by other roles I held concurrently within the CSP.

As a member of the CSP Teaching Team throughout the course of this study, I was a participant-observer. Writing about the continuum of "participantness," Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggested that "some sort of direct and immediate participation in the research environment usually becomes important to building and sustaining relationships" (p. 113). As a participant-observer, I had a high level of involvement with the participants, the students enrolled in the 13th cohort of the CSP. When engaged in an ethnographic study of the CSP, Polin and Keene (2010) found participant-observation to be an indispensable method of data collection in their work. They explain that

> As a result of the multi-term, cohort-based format of the CSP and its commitment to relational teaching, the staff and instructors spend a great deal of time with the students, both in and outside of the classroom. This means we come to know students as individuals, as whole and complex people, certainly as more than the roles they play as students in a traditional classroom. (p. 28)

During both of the first-year CSP courses (*The Good Society* and *Tools for Change*), I was involved in course instruction to varying degrees. My responsibilities included attending and co-facilitating required class meetings (including weekend retreats at the beginning of both semesters), participating in weekly Teaching Team meetings with all course instructors, providing feedback to students on their written work, and engaging in "one-to-one" check-in meetings with each student in the cohort. Yin (2009) contended that participant-observation provides a distinct opportunity "to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone 'inside' the case study rather than external to it" (p. 112). Though not directly measurable, my presence in the classroom and attendance at other program-related events (e.g., retreats and "evening gatherings") most certainly did have an impact on the ways that participants engaged in this study and ultimately on the findings presented in this report. Similarly, it is impossible that my first-hand knowledge of the participants did not impact my analysis of the data and my reporting of the findings. These areas of potential bias and methods for ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings are addressed later in this chapter.

All this being said, my more intimate knowledge of the setting and of the participants also provided me with a unique and valuable vantage point from which I could better understand and explain the phenomena. Over the duration of this study, it has been important for me to continually interrogate how my personal life experiences and involvement in the research setting has impacted my assumptions and interpretations of events and participants. Rossman and Rallis (2003) explained, "Unlike the allegedly objective social scientist, the qualitative researcher values his [her, or their] unique

perspective as a source of understanding rather than something to be cleansed from the study" (p. 10).

Participants

All 18 students in the entering, first-year cohort of the CSP chose to participate in this study but to varying degrees. All of the students did not participate in all aspects of the study and the recruitment and selection of participants varied across the three different methods of data collection: textual analysis of students' written work, individual interviews, and classroom observations. Specific details regarding how participants were selected and involved in these different types of data collection are provided below.

When provided with an open-ended (write-in) format, students self-reported their genders as female (n=15) and male (n=3). They self-reported their races as Asian (n=1), Black/African (n=1), and White/Caucasian (n=16). It is important to note here that the one student who self-identified as Black, further identified as Nigerian, not as African-American. In addition to indicating their races, some students self-reported their ethnicities and nationalities, which included Armenian, Belarusian, Nigerian, and Vietnamese. The ages of students in the cohort (recorded during the first round of interviews in January) ranged from 19-20. In the year that the data were collected, students reported their year in college as either sophomore (n=11) or junior (n=7). One student in the cohort had recently transferred to the campus from another institution outside of the state. In addition to the categories named above, students had different socioeconomic class backgrounds, religious/spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, first languages, and citizenship statuses. The only information requested directly from students was their race and gender. Students disclosed many of their other social group

memberships during in-class conversations as well as in the required, self-facilitated dialogues that took place outside of class meetings.

In an effort to maintain students' confidentiality, gender is the only identifier included on the table of participants below. The pseudonyms included on this table and utilized through this dissertation were selected by the participants.

Table 1: Participant Roster with Pseudonyms.

Pseudonym	Gender	Final Papers and Memos Included in Text Analysis	Participated in First Interview	Participated in Second Interview
Devin	Male	✓	✓	
Emma	Female	✓	✓	
Jeff	Male	✓	✓	
Jenn	Female	✓	✓	✓
Karl	Male	✓	✓	
Lilith	Female	✓	✓	✓
Linda	Female	✓	✓	
Louise	Female	✓	✓	✓
Lucy	Female	✓	✓	
Margaret	Female	✓	✓	✓
Maria	Female	✓	✓	✓
Marissa	Female	✓	✓	✓
Mary	Female	✓	✓	✓
Olivia	Female	✓	✓	
Samantha	Female	✓		
Susan	Female	✓	✓	
Temperance	Female	✓	✓	
Vanessa	Female	✓	✓	✓

Data Collection and Management

As indicated above, three different methods of data collection were included in this study: textual analysis of students' written work, in-depth interviews with students and classroom observations. By collecting data in three different ways, I was better able to engage in a process of triangulation during data analysis, identifying points of congruence which improved the trustworthiness of this project (Creswell, 2009). First,

collecting and analyzing students' reflective writing assignments about their dialogue

experiences shed light on the unique ways that they each recalled and processed these

experiences. Also, "the analysis of documents is potentially quite rich in portraying the

values and beliefs of participants in the setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 160).

Second, engaging in in-depth interview conversations with almost every student in the

cohort allowed me the opportunity to inquire further about the meanings they made of

their dialogue experiences in a setting in which it was possible for me to probe for further

clarification and richer description. Put simply, "Interviewing takes you into participants'

worlds" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 180). Third, my direct observation of students'

behaviors and interactions with each other in the classroom provided me with a view of

the participants in their natural setting. Marshall and Rossman (2011) asserted that "to

some degree it [participant observation] is an essential element of all qualitative studies"

(p. 140). It was beneficial to see and document firsthand how dialogue impacted the

nature of communication and development of interpersonal relationships within the

cohort.

Textual Analysis of Students' Writing

The CSP regularly invites all new students to have their written work (across all

four courses in the program) included in ongoing assessment efforts. At the first class

meeting in the fall semester, the new students in Cohort 13 were provided with a copy of

the Citizen Scholars Letter of Informed Consent: Permission to Use Student Work form

(Appendix C). At this time, the students had the opportunity to decide whether or not to

grant permission to have their course writing assignments included not only in this

dissertation study but in any other ongoing assessment efforts, publications, or

presentations. By selecting either "yes" or "no" to multiple fields on the form, students were able to provide detailed directions about which particular types of writing they were willing to include. Types of writing were divided into five categories: journal assignments, research papers or reports, other writing assignments, portfolios, and course evaluations. Knowing in advance that I planned to include two types of students' written assignments in this dissertation study (dialogue reflection memos and final papers), I notified the students of this intention before they completed the Permission to Use Student Work form, and I agreed to answer any questions they had about the study. I notified students that they could change their mind at any point over the course of the academic year and ask to have their written work excluded from this study with absolutely no repercussion. All 18 students in the cohort privately and independently gave written consent for all of their written work to be included in program assessment, including this dissertation study.

In both the fall and spring semesters, students wrote sets of reflection memos (referred to as "five-minute papers") about their out-of-class dialogue experiences as well as their community service experiences. My analysis only included the dialogue reflections. Students wrote a total of seven dialogue reflection memos over the course of the academic year: four in the fall semester and three in the spring semester. Students submitted these reflection memos to the teaching team electronically (via email or by uploading them to an online class management application). In my role as "Dialogue Coach," I read every dialogue reflection and provided individual written feedback to the students. In my feedback, I posed questions to support students in reflecting more critically on their dialogue experiences, affirmed students' experimentation with dialogic

skills, and offered suggestions for how they might structure conversations differently in the future. Though students were required to submit dialogue reflections, these papers were graded only for completion. I did not determine any type of grade for the reflections. After providing students with feedback on their dialogue reflection papers, I catalogued them and stored them for continued analysis, ultimately importing the files into NVivo 10, a qualitative data analysis software application.

Individual Interviews

All students in the cohort were invited to participate in at least one individual interview. At the conclusion of the fall semester, after the students had submitted their four dialogue reflection memos, I invited all 18 members of the cohort to participate in individual interview conversations scheduled between the two semesters in January 2012. Seventeen students accepted my invitation and completed interviews in this first round. One student did not reply to the invitation.

I invited a smaller, purposeful sample of students to participate in a second interview immediately after the conclusion of the spring semester in May 2012. In total, 8 students accepted invitations to participate in the second round of interviews. Because the composition of the cohort was predominantly White (16 of 18 students) and female (15 of 18 students), a special attempt was made to include the voices and experiences of the students of color and men in the program in addition to those of White women. The two students of color and three White men were invited to participate in the second round of interviews. One of the students of color and one of the men agreed to participate and completed an interview. In addition to purposefully extending interview invitations to students based on their gender and racial identities, I also utilized "extreme or deviant

case" sampling to learn more from those students who had particularly significant experiences (either positive or negative) in their out-of-class dialogues (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28). Six additional students were invited to participate in second interviews based on the experiences and feelings they wrote about in their dialogue reflections and final papers. I wanted to ensure that I would have an opportunity to uncover an additional layer of details about the more significant experiences that some students had in the dialogues, beyond what I could ascertain from their written assignments and the comments they made in class.

Students were assured that their decision of whether or not to participate in an interview would have absolutely no effect on their grade in the course or future status in the CSP community. To ensure that students would not be treated differently by other students in the cohort or members of the teaching team based on their decisions, no one was notified of which students participated in individual interviews. Based on the high rate of voluntary participation in individual interviews I experienced during a pilot study with a similar group of students, I did not initially plan to offer students any monetary incentive for participating in individual interviews. Incentives were not mentioned when I invited students to participate in either round of interviews. However, after some students agreed to participate in the second round interviews, I decided to give them each a $10 gift card to a local bookstore to thank them for the time they spent in the two interviews. Students were not notified of this incentive in advance, and I waited until the conclusion of the second interview to give them the gift cards. Therefore, it is safe to say that none of the students participated in individual interviews for a material or monetary incentive. Instead, many students remarked that they decided to participate in interviews because

they felt invested in the CSP, wanted to be sure their voices and experiences were included in the study, and wanted to help me complete my dissertation research.

Before beginning each interview, I provided each participant with a written description of the study and a consent form for them to review. After the participant had ample time to read through the description and the consent form, I offered to answer any additional questions about the study. Interviews did not begin until each student voluntarily signed a consent form (Appendix D) that had been reviewed and approved by the College of Education's Institutional Review Board.

Interview guides (Appendices E and F) were used to provide a consistent framework across all interviews; however, the interview conversations were not restricted to only the questions included on the interview guides. I asked probing questions to clarify the participants' thoughts and feelings, and some interviews moved organically in unpredicted directions while still maintaining a connection to the research questions. The interviews conducted at the end of the second semester relied less on the interview guide and more closely exemplified *dialogic interviews,* which Rossman and Rallis (2003) described as "true conversations in which the researcher and participant together develop a more complex understanding of the topic" (p. 182).

Most interview conversations lasted approximately 45 minutes, ranging from just over 30 minutes to more than 70 minutes. All interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder. The interview conversations with students were held in semi-private or public settings on campus. Most conversations took place at tables or booths in a café on campus that, while popular with students, is not particularly busy or noisy. I decided to hold interviews in these casual, public settings to provide a more relaxed, conversational

environment in which the power relations between the students and me might not be as salient as they might be in an office or classroom (Elmwood & Martin, 2000).

Classroom Observations

All students were observed informally during regular class meeting times and other structured program events during the fall and spring semesters while I was a member of the Teaching Team. At the beginning of the fall semester, all students and members of the teaching team were made aware that in addition to my roles on the CSP Teaching Team (Dialogue Coach and Teaching Assistant), I would also be collecting data through my observations of classroom conversations and interactions.

In my role as a participant-observer, all regular class sessions were informally observed, while I often simultaneously co-facilitated conversations and other structured learning activities. In addition to my casual observations, two class sessions were more formally observed utilizing an observation guide (Appendix G) to focus on specific student behaviors and interactions. The class meetings (or portions of class meetings) selected for the formal observations were ones where the class lesson plan included full-class, large-group conservations for a majority of the class meeting period. During these formal class observations, I used the observation guide to take notes on five specific observable behaviors that support dialogue (asking a clarifying question to an individual, posing a question to the group, acknowledging an emotion or non-verbal, paraphrasing/referencing another person's contribution, and naming a dynamic in the conversation process) and one observable behavior that detracts from dialogue (interrupting/speaking over).I tracked how many times each student spoke during class conversations. While speaking is not the only way that students engage in class

conversations, it is an observable behavior, and keeping a count of the number of times that students shared verbally helped me to see how the balance of voices changed across the different observations.

Comparing Different Types of Data

While utilizing different data collection methods provided a rich and comprehensive data set and opportunities for triangulation, as I began coding the data, I noticed distinct differences in the character and tone of each type of data. I wrote a coding memo listing and exploring the variations I noticed among the different types of data. In particular, I made note of the strengths and benefits of each type of data as well as the challenges and potential concerns. A condensed version of this coding memo is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of Different Types of Data.

Type of Data	Quantity	Strengths	Challenges/Concerns
Dialogue Reflections (Fall and Spring Semesters)	126 (7 sets)	• Not a "graded assignment" and students may have been less likely to write what they thought the instructor wanted to hear in order to earn a favorable grade. Points were given for completion, not content. • Participants were reflecting within just a few days of the dialogues. Their experiences were fresh in their memory. • Feel "in the moment" and provide more of a gut reaction than the final papers. • Used more informal/daily language than the final papers.	• Considerable amount of variability across participants' dialogue experiences depending on with whom the dialogue was. • Some students provide more detail than others. Some reflections do not provide specific examples of the content of the conversation (what students talked about) or how dialogue skills were/were not utilized.
Final Papers (December 2011, May 2012)	18	• Since participants were looking back across an entire semester (a series of multiple dialogue conversation), they were more likely to point out broader themes or patterns they saw across all of their dialogues. • In the spring semester final papers, participants had engaged with a broader range of peers (at least 7 at this point, compared with only 4 at the end of the fall semester). They had more experiences to compare. • In the spring semester final papers, participants were able to compare both the individual dialogues and the small group dialogues.	• Time had lapsed since many of the dialogue experiences (particularly those from the beginning of the semester). • Participants received grades and may have been more likely to write what they thought the instructors wanted to hear. They may have skewed their responses to be more positive than they actually were.
Interview Transcripts (January, 2012, May 2012)	25 (17 in January,	• There is a greater level of detail since I was able to probe for specific examples and ask follow-up questions. • Interview transcripts are longer and richer than the reflections or final papers. There is much more data (more pages of words).	• Time had lapsed since many of the dialogue experiences (particularly those from the beginning of the semester or the prior semester). • Participants may have been more susceptible to social desirability in a face-to-face encounter with me (the interviewer). They may have been more likely to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear or withhold information about negative experiences they had with the dialogues. • Not all students in the cohort participated (17 in January and 8 in May).

Data Management

Qualitative researchers are cautioned to be prepared for amassing a large amount of data in different formats and at different times (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This was certainly true for this study, particularly because data collection was ongoing across an entire academic year, with 11 distinct data points at which students either submitted written work or participated in interviews. At the beginning of the study, I had a plan in place for keeping my data organized, which was helpful as the project unfolded. I created an electronic filing cabinet of sorts on my computer with folders for each type of data. I assigned a unique number to each participant that I used to keep track of individual files within the folders. After most of the data were collected, I started moving all of the files into NVivo 10, a qualitative data analysis software application. Because the data were already well organized on my computer, this transition to NVivo was relatively simple. Once all of the data in the project was moved into NVivo, I was able to find and export different types of data easily. Having all of the data stored in one place (as one NVivo document) also made it easier to back-up on external drives and secure server spaces.

Data Analysis

As a part of an iterative process, I began analyzing data informally while I was still in the midst of data collection. As suggested by Stake (1995), "There is no particular moment when data analysis begins" (p. 71). This informal process of data analysis began while I was reviewing students' written dialogue reflections and providing them with written feedback on their reflections. I was also informally analyzing data while I personally transcribed all of the interview audio recordings into written text. I started

writing memos about interesting and recurring concepts that captured my attention while transcribing the audio recordings.

After all data were collected and all interviews were transcribed, I began a structured process of coding data, following many systematic grounded theory coding processes outlined in the literature on qualitative data analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To be clear, while my data analysis processes most closely aligned with the grounded theory methods initially proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), other aspects of this study did not follow grounded theory principles. The aspects of my data analysis that drew on the traditions of grounded theory included "constructing analytic codes and categories from the data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses," "using the constant comparison method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis," and "memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships, and identify gaps" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 5-6). One important area in which this study differed from standard grounded theory methodology is that I began formally analyzing the data after it had been collected. In traditional grounded theory methods, there is "simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 5). Further, in true grounded theory studies, the researcher may continue collecting data as a part of a circular process to help answer questions raised in the analysis while striving for saturation, "the point in the research when all the concepts are well defined and explained" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 145). In this study, after completing my second set of individual interviews in May 2012, I did not return to the field to collect any additional data, even when new questions emerged while analyzing the data. My use of

some, but not all, grounded theory methods is considered acceptable in the field.

Charmaz (2006), proposed:

> Grounded theory methods can complement other approaches to qualitative data analysis, rather than stand in opposition to them. I occasionally draw on excellent examples from qualitative studies whose authors do not claim grounded theory allegiance or whose writing only acknowledges specific aspects of the approach. These authors bring an imaginative eye and an incisive voice to their studies – and inspire good work. Their works transcend their immediate circles. (p. 9)

I also allowed myself flexibility to make minor adaptations to the procedures outlined in my initial dissertation proposal as the coding process unfolded. This decision is supported by Corbin and Strauss (2008) who cautioned:

> No researcher should become so obsessed with following a set of coding procedures that the fluid and dynamic nature of qualitative analysis is lost. The analytic process, like any thinking process, should be relaxed, flexible, and driven by insight gained through interaction with data rather than being overly structured and based only on procedures. (p. 12).

Drawing on the processes suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1998) and Rossman and Marshall (2011), the data analysis process included reading the data multiple times, coding data to identifying concepts, organizing these concepts into broader categories, defining and refining categories, identifying relationships among the key categories through axial coding, and writing up the results in two findings chapters. While my data analysis process was guided by the research questions and conceptual framework, the process was inductive, and I allowed myself to be surprised by themes in the data that did not align with the research questions as they were originally articulated in the dissertation proposal. After completing my first round of initial coding, I rewrote one of my research questions to focus on how students learn to dialogue. In many ways, this question was

actually at the heart of this study, though I had not recognized its importance when drafting my initial research proposal.

Initial Coding

Strauss and Corbin (2008) defined coding as "taking raw data and raising it to the conceptual level. Coding is the verb and codes are the names given to the concepts derived through coding" (p. 66). I engaged in an intentionally-sequenced, two-phased coding process to first identify the key concepts in the data set and then begin exploring the relationships among these concepts. Charmaz (2006) referred to these phases as "initial coding" and "focused coding," terms I will use in the remainder of this chapter (p. 46).

I began my initial coding phase by coding a selection of the data line-by-line, literally providing a code for every line of data. I began by coding the interview transcripts from 5 participants at the line-by-line level to keep my analysis anchored in the actual words of the participants. Writing about line-by-line coding, Charmaz (2006) encouraged researchers to "build your analysis step-by-step from the ground up without taking off on theoretical flights of fancy" (p. 51). I used an online true random number generator (www.random.org) to select 5 participants to code at the line-by-line level, only selecting from those students who participated in both the January and May interviews.

My line-by-line coding of the selected interview transcripts yielded 669 initial codes. After carefully reading through this list multiple times, I began grouping these initial codes into a list of 85 broader codes. The next step in my initial coding process involved returning to the data to test and refine my code list in an effort to begin creating a code book. The process of refining the code list involved coding new segments of the

data to identify where the code list was and was not adequately capturing participants' feelings and experiences. In this process, I edited the code list by adding, removing, and combining codes. For example, the code "disagreeing" was added to capture instances in which dialogue partners disagreed with each other, the code "misunderstanding" was merged with a similar code "difficulty understanding," and the code "apologizing" was removed from the code list entirely since it was only used once and did not appear to be a common experience. I tracked all of the changes made to the code list in an ongoing coding memo, providing a brief explanation for why each change was made. An example of my initial coding processes is included below in Table 3, showing the initial codes produced in the line-by-line coding of one participant's first interview as well as the broader codes from the code book that were applied later when the data were recoded.

Table 3: Initial Coding Example.

Excerpt from Interview Transcript	Line-by-Line Codes	Codes from Code Book
What stands out most to me? I guess what was most.... I guess the kinds of connections that I've made with people. You know, when I think of the dialogues what pops into my head are those moments that I had in the various dialogues where we were agreeing and smiling and sharing an experience and um...in places that we wouldn't necessarily expect to. Because with the four people that I spoke to, I never had spent any time with them before except for outside of class and it was...going into those it was hard for me to think of places where we had stuff in common and where we could really connect beyond like class material. Um, and then sitting down and then taking the time to ask each other questions and share our own stories, you know, I really did begin to find this deeper connection with everybody and that was really exciting and meaningful and it then brought further depth to other interactions that I had with them later. It sort of helped lay a foundation for stronger relationships and you know better understanding of what they were saying for instance in class. So that was really important to me.	Connections Memorable moments Agreeing, smiling Sharing experiences Unexpected Hard to think of commonalities Connecting Taking time Asking questions Deeper connection Feeling excited Depth Stronger relationships Better understanding	Finding commonalities with dialogue partner(s) Change in interactions or connection with partner(s) Building community and strengthening relationships

In my initial rounds of coding I attempted to use gerunds for codes as much as possible. This is recommended by Charmaz (2006), who explained:

> We gain a strong sense of action and sequence with gerunds. The nouns turn these actions into topics. Staying close to the data and, when possible, starting from the words and actions of your respondents, preserves the fluidity of their experience and gives you new ways of looking at it. (p. 49)

Examples of codes I created using gerunds include "finding commonalities with dialogue partner," "avoiding disagreement or discomfort," and "sharing own story." Also, while many codes emerged directly through my reading and re-reading of participants' own words (*in vivo codes*), I also entered this study with a number of *theory-generated codes*

in mind, drawn from my in-depth review of related literature (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For example, some theory-generated codes included on the coding list were dialogic skills, such as active listening, asking clarifying questions, and suspending judgments. The combination of these theory-generated codes and the in vivo codes constructed in my first rounds of analysis constituted my code book, which included a list of codes, definitions, and direct quote examples from the data set. DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, and McCulloch (2011) suggested, "Like codes, codebooks are developed through an iterative process that may necessitate revising definitions as the researchers gain clearer insights about the interview data" (p. 138). After numerous rounds of revision, the final code book included 67 codes grouped into 13 families. An excerpt from the code book can be found in Appendix H, listing all of the codes in the Dialogue Skills and Competencies family. In the final stage of my initial coding phase, I used the code book to code the entire data set (interview transcripts, final papers, and dialogue reflection memos) electronically, utilizing NVivo 10 software. After coding approximately one third of the data myself, I engaged another doctoral student in coding some of that same data independently to crosscheck my coding work. After making a few additional revisions to the code book, I recoded the data I had already coded and then continued to code the remainder of the data in the set. This crosschecking process is explained in greater detail in the Peer Debriefing section below. While completing this round of coding, I wrote an individual coding memo for each of the 18 participants, noting patterns, themes, and inconsistencies across the different data points.

Focused Coding

After coding the complete data set with my code book, I entered into a focused coding stage to begin exploring the relationships among the codes and concepts. As Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggested, "Codes, data categories, and concepts are... closely related to one another. The important work lies in establishing and thinking about such linkages not in the mundane process of coding" (p. 27). To help see how frequently codes were used and how widely dispersed they were across the data set, I utilized the NVivo software to produce a matrix query report that showed me how many times each code was coded in total and for which participants. I utilized this information to help illuminate broader patterns in the data set; however, I was also careful not to overlook or discard codes that were not applied as frequently, since some of these lesser-used codes illuminated important outliers. Charmaz (2006) explained, "Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely" (p. 58).

<u>**Constant Comparison**</u>

Throughout my analysis of the data, I engaged in a process of "constant comparison," noting and exploring the similarities and differences among different incidents in the data set (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 73).I checked emerging codes and conceptual categories against the data in a process of refining them. After the data set was coded for in vivo and theory-generated codes, I began identifying the ways that concepts linked with one another and nested within broader categories and themes. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) explained, "The point is not to search for the 'right' set of codes but to

recognize them for what they are: links between particular segments of data and the categories we want to use in order to conceptualize those segments" (p. 45).

Axial Coding

My focused coding phase utilized axial coding strategies. Drawing on Strauss and Corbin's (1998) work, Charmaz (2006) explained, "Axial coding relates categories to subcategories, specifies the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembles the data you have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis" (p. 60). As a part of the axial coding process, I wrote analytic memos and created diagrams to better understand the ways that categories and sub-categories relate with one another. To help refine conceptual categories and see how they interrelated with one another, I created tables that defined the categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. Properties are "characteristics or components of an object, event, or action," while dimensions are "variations of a property along a range" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 45). Where it became necessary, categories were split into two or more sub-categories. I then looked at places where the properties and conditions of different conceptual categories overlapped or related with one another.

I utilized the "paradigm" established by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to refine and describe conceptual categories by looking at "conditions," "inter/actions and emotions," and "consequences" (p. 89). Conditions "allow a conceptual way of grouping answers to the questions about why, where, how, and what happens" (p. 89). Inter/actions and emotions are "responses made by individuals or groups to situations, problems, happenings, and events" (p. 89). Finally, consequences are "the outcomes of inter/actions or of emotional responses to events" (p. 89).

Another strategy that was particularly helpful to me within the process of axial coding

was "clustering," which Marshall and Rossman (2011) defined as "creative work in

which the researcher creates diagrams of relationships – outlines according to what is

most overarching" (p. 215). In my conceptual clustering process, I explored the key

components of Corbin and Strauss's (2008) paradigm described above. An example of

Figure 2: Example of Clustering: Learning to Dialogue.

clustering that I used in in the early stages of developing the "learning to dialogue" theme

is provided in Figure 2.

Qualitative Data Analysis Software

I utilized qualitative data analysis software to support data organization and

analysis. All data, including students' reflective memos, interview transcripts, and field

notes were converted into Microsoft Word documents and uploaded into NVivo 10, a qualitative data analysis software application. In addition to supporting my process of open coding, the NVivo software was useful for storing, organizing, and retrieving data. I took to heart Marshall and Rossman's (2011) caution "that software is only a tool to help with some of the mechanical and management aspects of analysis; the hard analytic thinking must be done by the researcher's own internal hard drive!" (p. 183). Over the course of my data analysis process, I utilized the NVivo 10 software but also coded data and sketched diagrams by hand. I found myself alternating between my use of the computer and a pencil. For example, in my axial coding process, I exported specific theme nodes (codes) from NVivo and printed out the content onto multiple pages of text. Then I wrote notes on the hard copies as I read them and drew maps by hand of the ways that concepts were related. Finally, I returned to the computer to convert my messy hand-drawn maps back into an electronic format.

Trustworthiness

The concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research – which draws on the standards of validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalizability common in quantitative research – is a means for evaluating a study's "goodness" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 39). I utilized many strategies suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1986) to increase trustworthiness in this study, including prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and the inclusion of thick descriptive data in my reporting of the findings. I explain in greater detail below how each of these strategies was specifically applied. As suggested by Creswell (2009), I remained self-reflective throughout the data analysis process, and I sought to clearly identify the biases that I

brought with me into this study. Marshall and Rossman (2011) explained the difference between triangulation and crystallization: "Crystals thus offer multiple perspectives, colors, and refractions. Conceptualizing validity through the metaphor of the crystal calls on a methodology that demands self-critique or self-reflexivity" (p. 43).

Prolonged Engagement in the Field

In my role as a participant-observer who was a member of the CSP Teaching Team while conducting this research, I had the valuable opportunity to observe and interact directly with students in the classroom on a regular basis (two times each week during the fall semester and weekly during the spring semester) across a span of eight months. The time I spent in the classroom with the students in their regularly-scheduled class meetings totaled more than 60 hours. In addition to these regular class meetings, I had the opportunity to observe students at retreats and evening programs. My sustained immersion in the CSP provided me with an opportunity to better understand the ways that participants related with each other in pairs, small groups, and large group settings. My extended time in the field of study allowed me to see broader patterns of group dynamics and make connections between what was happening during class time and the out-of-class dialogue conversations. It was helpful to see how both course content (e.g., reading an article about the pervasiveness of whiteness in the field of service-learning) and classroom dynamics (e.g., frustration about assignment deadlines or tension between classmates) extended into students' dialogues with each other.

Triangulation

As explained above, data were collected in three different ways (participant-observation, textual analysis of students' reflective writing, and in-depth interviewing).

Further, these data were collected at 11 different points across eight months. This provided an opportunity for me to note instances in which themes converged across different types of data and different points in time. In the words of Marshall and Rossman (2011), "Triangulation is not so much about getting the 'truth' but rather about finding the multiple perspectives for knowing the social world" (p. 254). Frequently, the same story about a dialogue experience would be referenced in multiple reflection memos and interview conversations.

For example, following an intense argument about ableism in one of the small-group dialogues, all four students who were a part of the dialogue wrote about the same significant moment in that conversation, providing different perspectives on what had happened and how they felt about it. I followed up with two of the students in their individual interviews at the end of the semester about this experience to probe for more information and to inquire about what they had learned from the experience after some time had passed. Furthermore, the notes I had written based on my personal observation of these students in the classroom in the weeks leading up to this confrontation provided me with some additional insight. The same conditions and tension that played out in the dialogue conversation were also present beforehand in their in-class, verbal exchanges and body language. Even though I was not a part of the small group dialogue conversation myself, all of this information assisted me in understanding the encounter from multiple vantage points, which I was then able to explicate when reporting the findings. While writing coding memos, I also engaged in the process of *crystallization,* going beyond merely triangulating external data to reflect on the ways that my own biases, values, and prior life experiences may have had an impact on my interpretation of

the data, what captured my attention, and where I may have overlooked important nuances (Ellingson, 2009).

Peer Debriefing

As a part of my data analysis process, I engaged in peer debriefing conversations with a critical friend (or peer debriefer) in an effort to have my data analysis choices considered and challenged by someone outside of the project. Rossman and Rallis (2003) proposed that a critical friend can "serve as an intellectual watchdog for you as you modify design decisions, develop possible analytic categories, and build an explanation for the phenomenon of interest" (p. 69). I invited another doctoral student experienced with qualitative methods to be a critical friend for my dissertation research, which involved coding a segment of my data set.

Creswell (2009) recommended that "single researchers find another person who can cross-check their codes, for what I call intercoder agreement (or cross-checking)" (p. 191). To ascertain the extent of intercoder agreement in this study, my critical friend independently read and coded four complete interview transcripts utilizing the code book I created during my initial coding phase. She identified points of confusion and redundancy in the code book as well as codes that she thought were not accounted for in the code book. After she independently coded the data, we met for more than two hours to talk about places where our coding did not align and why we made different coding choices. After this conversation, I reconsidered the way that some codes were defined, particularly where there were discrepancies across our individual coding. Similarly, my critical friend identified an area of confusion in which two codes overlapped and were not

distinct enough to merit their own unique codes. Based on her feedback, I consolidated these two redundant codes into one and reworded the definition of the code.

Negative Case Analysis

Corbin and Strauss (2008) defined a negative case as "a case that does not fit the pattern. It is the exception to the action/interaction/emotional response of others being studied" (p. 84). I sought out these negative or "discrepant" situations that did not align with otherwise cohesive themes (Creswell, 2009). For example, while the vast majority of students felt that they better understood and appreciated the perspectives of the other students with whom they had dialogue conversations, there were a few important outliers who strongly felt otherwise. In one of the most extreme scenarios, one student explained,

> Though I was like really interested in engaging with him, like I wanted to understand more, it got exhausting, I think, for me, which was a hard part. I just felt exhausted after a while of trying to piece things together and ask him more questions so I could better understand it. Toward the end I was just like what time is it? I want to leave.

Instead of ignoring or washing away these negative cases and reporting only the most common experiences, I considered this information to be of vital importance and spent extra time trying to understand the conditions that led to (and consequences of) these outlying cases. I endeavored to follow Corbin and Strauss's (2008) recommendation that, "looking for the negative case provides for a fuller exploration of the dimensions of a concept. It adds richness to explanation and points out that life is not exact and that there are always exceptions to points of view" (p. 84).

Thick Descriptive Data

The findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 use thick description and are composed largely of participants' own words from their interviews, final papers, and

reflective memos. This aligns with Stake's (1995) claim that "qualitative research tries to establish an empathetic understanding for the reader, through description, sometimes thick description, conveying to the reader what experience itself would convey" (p. 39). In my presentation of the findings I typically offer multiple examples from different participants to highlight the points of congruence around a theme as well as points of divergence that complicate and provide nuance to the interpretation.

Limitations

It is important to openly acknowledge the limitations of this study, many of which were beyond my control. One of these limitations was the unavoidable influence of my own personal, often subconscious, biases. Though I employed numerous strategies outlined above to help maintain the trustworthiness of the study, because of my considerable personal interest in seeing the CSP dialogue initiative be successful, I had to remain vigilant in identifying and reporting findings that pointed out weaknesses, shortcomings, and limitations of this pedagogical intervention, in addition to positive outcomes. Even after applying strategies for trustworthiness, it was still impossible to entirely strip away all unconscious personal biases that had an impact on the countless, ongoing decisions I made while collecting data, analyzing data, and reporting the findings. Even when working from a formal interview guide that helped maintain consistency across interviews, there were instances in which students' available time for an interview was limited, and I needed to make quick decisions in the moment about which questions to ask and which to skip. My selection of follow-up questions was inherently and even unconsciously influenced by my own hopes and goals. Similarly, some level of bias was unavoidable in my analysis of the data and reporting of the

findings. Even though a critical friend coded a section of the data to ensure a considerable degree of intercoder reliability, unconscious bias played out in my analysis of the data.

An important ethical consideration related to this study pertains to my role as a member of the CSP teaching team. Despite the protections outlined above that I put in place to keep students from feeling obligated to participate in the study, some of the students may still have felt peer pressure to participate in the study or feared that their grade in one of the courses or their relationships in the class community could be jeopardized if they chose not to contribute to the study.

Throughout this study, I continued to reflect on the ways that my role as a member of the teaching team impacted data collection and analysis. Because of my role, it was possible that some students may have spoken more favorably about the program or their experiences with dialogue than they would have with someone else who was not in my position. Over the course of the year, I became increasingly invested in supporting these students to excel in their academic pursuits as well as other aspects of their lives. In turn, it was evident that most of the students wanted to see me be successful with my dissertation research. It is likely that social desirability response bias had an impact on the information and stories students chose to share with me; however, recent research suggests that this type of interviewee behavior is less common than often assumed (Collins, Shattell, & Thomas, 2005). Despite these potential detractions, my relationship with the students in the program also had a positive impact on the quality of the data I collected. Because the students and members of the teaching team knew me well and had built a foundation of trust through the sharing of personal stories (both theirs and my

own) in class conversations and other program events, I believe that they were willing to share more openly, honestly, and vulnerably than they would with a relative stranger.

One final limitation to acknowledge is that given the many unique characteristics of the CSP and the highly customized design of the CSP Dialogue Assignment, one cannot expect that the findings presented here could be replicated in other service-learning courses or contexts. This is true of all single case studies. Nonetheless, this study and the resulting findings will hopefully provide a greater understanding of the potential impact of providing students with opportunities to learn how to dialogue about social identity-based issues and to practice engaging in dialogue within service-learning courses and programs.

Conclusion

As described in considerable detail above, this study was guided by a conceptual framework and intentionally designed, guided by the recommendations and best practices put forth in the qualitative research methods literature. Each phase of the research, including data collection, data management, and data analysis was carefully documented as the study progressed. While there were clear limitations to this study, many strategies were employed to increase the trustworthiness of the study. In the next two chapters, findings are presented divided into themes and subthemes. The findings in Chapter 4 describe how students learned to dialogue across differences and what they learned by practicing dialogue with their peers. In Chapter 5, findings are presented that describe how students extended the dialogue processes they developed to their community service sites and other aspects of their lives.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNING TO DIALOGUE AND LEARNING FROM DIALOGUE

This chapter focuses on how students learned to engage in dialogue, what they learned through their course-related dialogue experiences inside and outside of the classroom, and other outcomes related to their participation in the Citizen Scholars Program (CSP) Dialogue Project. This chapter addresses the first three research questions:

1. How do students in the CSP learn how to dialogue with others?

2. How do students' dialogue experiences in the CSP inform their understanding of their own and others' social identities, privileges, and disadvantages?

3. How do students in the CSP understand the ways that engaging in dialogue about personal and social identities impact their relationships with peers in their cohort?

These three research questions were selected to provide insight into the ways that a structured dialogue pedagogy supported students in increasing their awareness of social identities and developing dialogic competencies within the specific context of a multi-semester, curricular service-learning program. The research questions were specifically written to understand how the student participants themselves understood their own learning and other relational outcomes of participating in the CSP Dialogue Assignment. In the CSP, the site of this case study, every student was matched with a local community organization or campus advocacy initiative where they completed a minimum of 60 hours of volunteer service each semester. Students learning in these courses was supported by

assigned readings, in-class conversations, reflection activities, written assignments, and group projects.

This chapter is organized into three sections that highlight three major themes: Learning to Dialogue, Learning about Identities and Social Identity Issues, and Developing Interpersonal Relationships. Within each of these themes, multiple subthemes are presented illustrated by quotes from students' interviews, reflective memos, and final paper assignments. A diagram is provided for every major theme listing the subthemes that are nested within the theme. The chapter concludes with a review of the themes and subthemes.

Learning to Dialogue

The first research question asked, "How do students in the CSP learn how to dialogue with others?" This section begins with a brief overview of the CSP Dialogue Assignment, the unique context within which students learned to dialogue. Then, five themes are presented that emerged from the thematic analysis: Learning about Dialogue Processes, Working with Dialogue Prompts, Observing Others Model Dialogue Processes, Practicing Dialogic Processes, and Gaining Competence and Confidence.

Before presenting the findings that emerged from my thematic analysis of the data, it is important to note that students learning to dialogue in the CSP spanned an academic year and took place in multiple settings. These opportunities for learning included seven assigned, out-of-class dialogue conversations with peers in their cohort as well as dialogic conversations during CSP class sessions. Students' learning about dialogue was supported through structured and unstructured reflection on their dialogic conversations. Students reflected on their experiences by writing a required reflective

memo shortly after each of their out-of-class dialogue conversations as well as including

reflections about their dialogue experiences in their final papers at the end of both

semesters.

The diagram below illustrates how the subthemes in this section are organized.

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│   Learning to       │
│   Dialogue          │
└─────────────────────┘

        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │  Learning about     │
        │  Dialogue Processes │
        └─────────────────────┘

        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │  Working with       │
        │  Dialogue Prompts   │
        └─────────────────────┘

        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │  Observing Others   │
        │  Model Dialogue     │
        │  Processes          │
        └─────────────────────┘

        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │  Practicing Dialogue│
        │  Processes          │
        │  • Asking Questions │
        │  • Listening        │
        │  • Suspending Judgments
        │    and Assumptions  │
        │  • Voicing          │
        │  • Balancing Participation
        │  • Self-Awareness of│
        │    Triggers         │
        └─────────────────────┘

        ┌─────────────────────┐
        │  Gaining Confidence │
        │  and Competence     │
        └─────────────────────┘
```
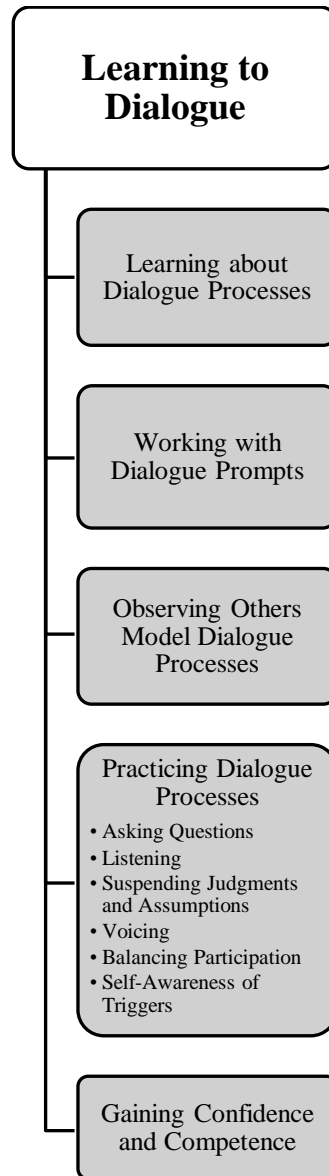
Figure 3: Learning to Dialogue Theme.

In the following sections, I move through each of these themes one by one, describing how each theme contributed to the ways that students learned to dialogue.

Learning About Dialogue Processes

This theme focuses on how students' initial learning about dialogue processes was connected to the CSP Dialogue Assignment. Students confirmed how certain components of the curriculum supported their learning about dialogue processes, the building blocks of dialogue. Only a few students in the cohort had prior experiences learning about and practicing dialogue in other courses or programs on campus. Students described how reading about the foundations of dialogue and participating in interactive activities (including role playing different types of conversations) helped them differentiate what makes dialogue a unique form of communicating and engaging with others. Jeff expressed that,

> Dissecting dialogue in the manner in which we did early in the semester made me aware of subtle differences which honestly I didn't even know exist. Sure, I knew there was a difference between debate, dialogue, and discussion, but I couldn't tell you what was always best to use when or even what these differences were.

Another student, Jenn, described her initial reaction to the Dialogue Assignment:

> Coming into this course I had no clue what Dave [the Dialogue Coach] was going to make us do. I'm getting credit for talking? That is probably the coolest and easiest assignment. [It] turns out we weren't just talking. We were dialoguing. Talking and listening and thinking critically and compassionately all at the same time isn't as easy as it sounds.

In a sense, the assigned out-of-class dialogues with peers served as a laboratory for practicing the dialogic concepts that students were learning about in class. In her final paper at the end of the fall semester, Marissa explained, "Actually practicing dialogues was beneficial while we simultaneously discussed in class what it means to be dialogic."

Samantha also described how in-class activities and reminders supported her learning about dialogue. She recalled that

> In addition to the communication benefits that have arisen from the dialogues, the dialogue workshop, and having Dave [the Dialogue Coach] present in class in order to remind us about dialogue, I have also enjoyed the dialogues because they were a great opportunity to get to know each other outside of class and in a very personal yet safe setting.

In the examples above, students validated that in-class activities supported them in learning how to dialogue. Students talked about how they learned to dialogue by using the dialogue prompts they were provided, observing others, and practicing dialogue processes.

Working with Dialogue Prompts

One specific element of the Dialogue Assignment that students highlighted as supporting their learning was the sequenced list of prompts provided to guide their conversations (included in Appendices A and B). Students confirmed that these prompts were useful in self-facilitating their dialogue conversations outside of class time, in some respects filling the role of a facilitator. Some students described how following a list of sequenced prompts kept them focused on talking about their social identities and encouraged them to explore topics they might otherwise have avoided. For Louise, "the questions acted as a springboard for voicing some really powerful things." Writing about her use of the prompts in greater detail, Samantha shared that:

> My first dialogue, although it was pleasant and fun, was unsurprisingly not very much of a dialogue at all but more of a casual conversation in which we skimmed the surface of some issues of identity. However, gradually through each following dialogue, I found myself sticking to the questions a great deal more, and found that the conversation not only flowed well with the questions as a guide but also became more focused and forced us to dive deeper into the topic.

Maria also found that the prompts helped her and her dialogue partners focus on talking about their identities, particularly when conversations started to veer off in other directions. She said

> I think it's a good idea to have them, because I feel like a lot of times the idea of identity…it's not something we're used to talking about. At least it's not something I'm used to talking about….Because, you can talk about identity and before you know it, you're talking about god knows what. It's off in a different direction. But, having the guidelines really did help. And it didn't stop us, didn't hinder the conversation from going down different routes.

Writing about the impact the prompts had on learning about herself, Olivia stated, "Without the prompts, I feel like I wouldn't have asked half the questions that I did. And they wouldn't have helped me reach the sort of profound understanding about me."

Students' conversations did not always follow the guiding questions included in the prompts, which had an impact on their learning and the extent to which they practiced dialogue processes. Karl noticed that his conversations were less dialogic when they veered from the prompts. He explained,

> I know that following the prompts is not an indicator of whether the talk was a dialogue or not, but I feel that when we did side-track, we fell into discussion and simpler forms of conversation such as when we reminisced about the Spanish class we had together last semester.

The guiding questions were also helpful for students who were not very comfortable opening up to others. Reflecting on her experiences with the prompting questions, Temperance noted:

> I felt that they were helpful in the beginning where it was just like, "Okay, what are we going to do to get on track and then we'll sort of answer the questions briefly and then I want to delve into this more." And especially since I'm not good at talking to people.

Alternatively, some students felt that the guiding questions were too prescriptive and detracted from their ability to spontaneously explore a wider range of related topics

that arose in their conversations. In her fall semester final paper, Temperance wrote, "To an extent, I did not enjoy the prompts and the fact that there was somewhat of an expectation to touch on a lot of topics and would much rather we were given more freedom." For others, following a structured agenda felt too rigid to relate authentically with their dialogue partners. Mary explained, "I didn't really look at the agenda. I feel like if we're so cut and dry about it, you can't really get that genuine feeling." Lilith talked about having a similar experience in one of her dialogues, noting that

> Because she [my dialogue partner] and I are both such orderly, uptight people, the structure of the dialogue prompts actually hindered our dialogic process - we felt compelled to go through the sheet like a to-do list rather than let the dialogue run its course. I would be interested in having a more unstructured, free-form dialogue in the future.

Talking about topics unrelated to the assignment helped some students feel more comfortable and relaxed. Speaking about one of her one-on-one dialogues, Linda explained that:

> [For] the first six or seven questions we like went in order, but then I think it was like the eighth one or something [we said], "Okay, let's talk about something."… We just started talking about parties. We shouldn't be talking about it, but it just went off, and that's when I just relaxed a little bit with him.

Similarly, another student expressed a desire to get to know her peers at a more basic, introductory level before delving into conversation about identities. Margaret said,

> I just really wish that the starting questions were a little bit, for lack of a better work, sillier. There is still so much I don't know about everyone in the cohort that I just want to know who they are, their quirks, what they did last weekend, something funny about them, anything on the lighter side.

It was a common experience for students to use the prompts differently from one dialogue conversation to another. Lucy shared that:

> While some of my dialogues specifically followed the question guide, others diverged from the questions and focused more on other personal matters that seemed more relevant to discuss at the time.

Students relied on the prompts less as they became more familiar with the process and more comfortable talking about their identities. Jenn explained that

> We used them [the prompts] a lot in the beginning, because we didn't know what to talk about. People I did dialogues with had never done dialogues before and we weren't sure what was going on. As we got more comfortable with it, we focused on some questions, but not others.

After becoming familiar with the prompts, having used them to guide previous dialogue conversations, some students began to focus their dialogues on social identities without relying on the guiding questions. Mary explained that "the way our dialogue went, you would have thought we were exemplifying by the prompt, when in reality, I don't think we touched it once". As illustrated by students' examples above, the dialogue prompts supported students' learning in different ways across their many out-of-class conversations. Another experience that was central to many students' learning to dialogue was observing others model dialogue processes.

Observing Others Model Dialogue Processes

Stemming from their participation in the in-class, introductory dialogue workshop and reading two required chapters about dialogue, students began to develop an increased understanding of what makes dialogue distinct from other types of conversations. Now better able to discern the unique aspects of dialogues, students described how they began to notice dialogue practices modeled by others in CSP classroom conversations, their required dialogue conversations outside of class, and in their interactions with friends.

One place where students observed dialogue practices was in the modeling of their instructors, including undergraduate teaching assistants. In her first interview, Mary

shared, "[Our undergraduate teaching assistant] was awesome at it. Every time she would

be like, 'What do you mean? What are you saying?' And every time she did it, I was like,

'She is so good at that. I need to work at that'".

In their assigned, out-of-class dialogues, students observed their conversation

partners exercising dialogic processes. Two students recalled instances in the fall

semester in which they saw their dialogue partners asking probing questions in a dialogic

way. Margaret shared that

> I have been somewhat discontented with certain aspects of my life, and Jeff was
> very helpful for me in sorting through this. He asked me a lot of questions and
> was able to relate to me in many ways, which really helped me to gain a better
> understanding of both myself and of him. I was definitely challenged to expand
> on many of my ideas through the questions that he prompted me with.

Similarly, another student remembered how one of her first dialogue partner helped open

their conversation by posing a direct, introductory question. Lilith said,

> She dove right in with the question, "What makes Lilith, Lilith? What makes you,
> you?" And that was another thing that knocked me off my feet because she was,
> you know, really ready to push those moments which I needed, because having it
> as my first dialogue experience meant that I was more apt to do that again with
> my other dialogues.

Lilith not only noticed that her partner's question successfully kick-started their own

conversation, but it provided her with an approach that she could incorporate into future

conversations with others.

In addition to posing thoughtful questions, students also observed their peers

modeling other dialogic processes. Maria was struck by her dialogue partner's sincere and

non-judgmental desire to learn more about her religious beliefs, an aspect of her life in

which she had frequently felt judged in the past. She explained that

> One of the highlights of our dialogic experience this semester was the first
> friendly conversation about religion that I have ever had. It was during my

dialogue with Louise, towards the end of our dialogue, when we had realized that we had not discussed it at all (quite possibly because I have become so adept at avoiding the topic). She directly asked me, "So what do you believe exactly?" The lack of hostility and presence of genuine curiosity in this conversation was refreshingly new.

In addition to their interactions within CSP, students began to notice how dialogue processes were present in their interactions and relationships with friends. Temperance described how she began to see her friends' probing questions in a new light. She explained that

> Learning and practicing dialogical skills gave me new perspectives on a lot of relationships that I already have. I'm a very private person – I don't talk a whole lot and whenever people are telling me something, especially if it is something personal, emotional, or uncomfortable, I don't usually ask questions because I'm afraid I'm being nosy or putting them in an uncomfortable situation. Whenever I talk to some of my friends from home about certain stuff, they ask a lot of questions and prod me for more information. It used to make me horribly uncomfortable and defensive, and I would get frustrated because I could not think about why they would want to know that. However, now I keep seeing such behavior as dialogical skills, and I'm grateful that my friends care about me enough and am interested in what I say enough to exercise their dialogue skills during conversations with me.

The students' experiences described above indicate that they were learning to differentiate dialogue from other forms of communication, noticing aspects of dialogue in many parts of their life, within and beyond the CSP classroom.

Practicing Dialogic Processes

In addition to learning by observing others, students learned how to dialogue by practicing many different dialogic processes themselves in their sustained series of seven dialogue conversations with different members of their CSP cohort over the course of the academic year. The dialogue processes that students described practicing most frequently were listening, suspending judgments and assumptions, asking questions, and voicing. Though mentioned by smaller numbers of students, two other aspects of dialogue

described by students were balancing participation and becoming more aware of emotional triggers. The ways that students practiced each of these dialogue processes are presented below.

<u>Asking Questions</u>

Students described how posing thoughtful questions in their out-of-class dialogues provided an opportunity for more completely understanding their peers' views and experiences, particularly when they asked questions that probed for clarification or elaboration. For some, this focus on asking questions was connected with slowing down and paying closer attention to what others said. Lilith shared that

> I'm addicted to asking questions now, because I really find it makes a difference. I think before I had a habit of if someone would say something to me, I would nod my head, acknowledge it, and move the conversation forward. But now, I take more time with a lot of my conversations. When people start talking to me, instead of just taking what they say, I try to think about what they say before I move forward.

Similarly, Linda observed

> I learned that I communicate better through having one-on-one dialogue because I pay close attention to things being said, I make sure that I understand what is being said, it gives me time to ask clarifying questions, and I am aware of things that I say.

Students also explained how asking questions facilitated their ability to expand a conversation. Devin observed that "through asking questions of Maria I had to reflect on my own experiences to draw important insights into what questions to ask next, what issues to probe, and what risks to take in diving deeper." Emma explained one of her dialogues.

> I feel as if all we did throughout our dialogue was inquire of one another [by asking] clarifying questions about the topics we discussed. It was surprising to see how long two individuals could discuss the same topic, without getting bored, and we were able to get deeper and deeper into the matter of our conversation.

Similarly, Maria noted that

> Asking questions was huge, because… we might come from different backgrounds, we have different perspectives. When someone asks a question, you're like, "Oh, I never...I never really related that, but let me talk about this." And it goes to a whole lot more depth that way or even more depth than you would have taken it to.

Asking clarifying questions, sometimes simply by asking a peer to elaborate on how they understood a certain word or concept, served as a means to exploring social identity issues. Lucy recalled that

> After Marissa mentioned that she hated when people made subtly sexist comments, I asked her what she meant by "subtle." After she responded with the example of when people offensively call her a feminist, we engaged in a dialogue about the negative connotations associated with being a feminist.

In retrospect, students also considered how they could have asked questions differently. After one her dialogue experiences, Temperance reflected about she could have learned more about her conversation partner by posing questions. She shared that

> If I could do this dialogue again, I'd definitely try and flesh out some topics of conversation that could have really gone places. It would have been a good way to develop my inquiry skills in dialogue, which is the one that I've always had the most challenges with. I think it would have challenged our points of view on a lot of places.

Listening

The importance of learning to actively listen to others in dialogue resonated with many students. In their process of learning to dialogue, students described that it was challenging to give their full attention to their peers instead of quickly forming an opinion on what they heard or rehearsing a response to what the other person was saying. In Jenn's words, "I still battle with myself sometimes to listen to what people are saying as they are saying it and not think my own thoughts." Emma similarly concluded that

I no longer begin to think of my responses to other individuals' comments while they are still speaking. I have now begun to practice this tool of active listening, by waiting for individuals to complete their remarks, taking a few moments of silence, and then directly responding to their statements.

Students learned that they needed to change patterns of interrupting others to be in dialogue. Jeff noticed how much he could learn from others when he avoided interrupting them. He shared that

I firmly believe that my experience with dialogue this semester opened up new avenues of knowledge to me. So many times, where in the past, I may have interrupted someone with my own thoughts; I've deferred and instead listened more. It is amazing what people will say when they are always talking.

Lilith recognized that to listen more fully, she needed to slow down and pause in conversations. She explained that

Now, I take more time with a lot of my conversations. When people start talking to me, instead of just taking what they say, I try to think about what they say before I move forward. Because I think a lot gets lost if you don't actually pause and take the time to like figure out what's going on in the conversation and I definitely feel like now a lot of my conversations...I come away with more.

In their reflections on their dialogue experiences, many students noticed how different dialogic processes are interrelated and do not function as simple, detached actions. For example, Margaret saw how asking questions was linked with listening. She noticed that "during our dialogue, I felt myself listen. I felt myself hear what she had to say and then react and ask questions." In some instances, the interconnected processes of listening and asking questions made way for students to engage in a process of learning together. Reflecting on one of his dialogue conversations, Karl concluded that

The sincerity of interest we had in the dialogue was very clear. We could tell that the other was genuinely interested in what the other was saying, and this created a very engaging atmosphere. We weren't just listening, but actively listening. Because of that, we were able to ask very insightful questions, which led to a lot of reflection. Sometimes we weren't able to answer those questions, so we worked together to come up with a range of possible answers.

Lucy highlighted another connection that existed for her between listening and

suspending judgment. In her final paper at the conclusion of the spring semester, she

noted that

> One significant improvement that has shaped me into a better friend is my ability
> to listen without being judgmental. Prior to the start of Tools for Change, I would
> hear the people in my surroundings speak but I would not always listen to their
> words. I now understand that there is a subtle yet significant difference between
> hearing and listening to someone.

Similarly, Marissa noticed a connection between her patience in listening and her ability
to remain more open-minded.

> I'm usually bad at interrupting people on accident and being impatient and I have
> found in the past month or so that I've been really, really patient when talking to
> people and really open-minded to what they say. I have noticed how I
> intentionally think about allowing them to speak first and say what they need to
> say before I interject, as well as suspending my judgments of people.

> Developing new communication processes in the CSP dialogue project had an

impact on how students engaged in conversations in other settings. Susan noticed how

her increased focus on listening impacted the way that she participated in other courses.

> I realized how bad of a listener I am. It's horrible, but I've found that I am
> stepping back and I'm letting people talk which most of the time is good, but in
> some of my classes, they're like, "Participate." And I don't participate as much
> anymore because I'm listening, and I'm taking a step back, and I want to respond
> to what they're saying. And we've already moved on by the time I've thought of a
> response to what they're staying…. I definitely take a step back and wait to
> respond more often than I did before.

Suspending Judgments and Assumptions

Students explained how they practiced and reflected on their capacity to suspend

judgments and assumptions that came to mind in their dialogue conversations. For

example, after her first dialogue conversation of the spring semester, Jenn reflected on

how she was able to suspend a judgment she was holding about her dialogue partner's

involvement in a specific social change effort.

I was able to suspend my judgment that Lilith was too radical and was working towards unnecessary changes. When she fully explained what she was striving for in gender equality, I understood her and was able to see the situation differently. For example, I never knew that up until very recently, (within the last year) it was not illegal to discriminate against someone for being transgendered. Once you can get past your own judgments and assumptions you can learn a great deal about something you didn't know there was to learn about.

While some students recalled instances in which they were able to suspend their judgments and assumptions, others reflected on the challenges they encountered trying to integrate this process into their dialogue conversations. This was particularly evident in the ways that students were able to recall when they had made judgments or assumptions of others during their dialogue conversations. For example, Marissa recalled an incident during the spring semester where she was frustrated and unable to suspend her assumptions. She explained, "I was assuming where Devin was coming from, which prevented me from exploring his feelings and background. Hopefully in the future I can become more patient when frustrated and suspend my assumptions in order to question why and how." Another student, Linda, also reflected on assumptions she made in a dialogue.

Another surprising thing for me in the dialogue was that I noticed myself making some assumptions of everyone. For example, before the actual dialogue, I made a comment that I am from lower middle class, but I know everyone is from the upper class or at least from the upper middle class. Devin questioned my assumptions by asking what class I think he in, I responded by saying upper class. Devin asked me a good question that no one has ever asked, he asked if I have ever felt that everyone around me has more than me or if I always feel that everyone around me are from the upper class family. I took a step back to reflect on the question because I certainly didn't know what to answer, and I kept mumbling in my own words.

Two White students explained how they were concerned and embarrassed about the assumptions they had made about a student of color in the cohort. Mary shared that

after feeling a bit embarrassed, I had to force myself to step back from all my presumptions I had made about anyone in any situation. Never had I thought Linda was censoring her thoughts out of fear that no one would respond. I had been under the assumption that she would have said whatever was on her mind, never even considering the factor of race

In a separate example, Jeff explained, "Before [my dialogue partner] spoke to tell her story, I found myself fighting the urge to infer and put words in her mouth, based, I must admit, primarily on a racial basis."

Voicing

A theme across the first three dialogue processes described above – asking questions, listening, and suspending judgments and assumptions – is that they help facilitate understanding someone else. To be in dialogue, it is also necessary for participants to give voice to their own perspectives and experiences so there can be opportunities for mutual understanding and learning among all participants. Samantha summarized this idea in her own words, writing

I have come to understand that to have a true dialogue there needs to be two voices, and not just one. It is all well and good for me to practice my active listening skills and try to work through issues that people present me with, however, I have learned that without my opinion or without expressing issues that I am struggling with, I am not only hindering my side of the dialogue, but the other person's as well.

Interestingly, almost all of the examples students provided about voicing their opinions and experiences took place in conversations later in the first semester or during the second semester. As illustrated by the quotes below, developing the capacity to share honestly and openly required some students to become more comfortable taking experimenting with new conversational behaviors. Reflecting on her final out-of-class dialogue conversation of the first semester, Vanessa wrote, "This dialogue, I believe, was

the best one I had by far. I made the most progress with this dialogue because I pushed

myself to ask and question and say my thoughts out loud."

Maria described her discomfort talking about herself.

> Another thing [I am] working on is being able to… communicate where I'm at
> and what I'm feeling and where I'm coming from, because talking about myself is
> another thing that I'm really uncomfortable with…. In particular it stems from a
> group of people that I used to kind of hang out with that would do nothing but talk
> about themselves and I was like super conscious of that, so I was like "All right.
> I'm not going to do this". So, sort of working on that in a way that I'm
> comfortable with has been like a big challenge for me.

> Looking back at their engagement in previous conversations, some students noted

a desire to have talked more about themselves. This sentiment is described in the two

quotes below. Devin, a journalism major, explained how he felt more comfortable and

experienced encouraging other people to talk about themselves. He stated

> Something I learned about myself in these dialogues, is I'm not that great at
> talking about myself, but pretty good at getting other people to talk about
> themselves. Again I think it's an occupational hazard, I spend most of the day
> everyday listening to other people talking about themselves, and getting other
> people to talk about themselves. But I like it. At the same time when it comes
> down to sharing with somebody in a conversation, there are definitely areas that I
> could improve.

On a related note, Emma remarked

> If I were to dialogue with the same group again I would like to have changed my
> participation. Although I did participate more than some other members, I still felt
> as if I had so much more to say. I need to focus less on the listening aspect of
> dialoguing and focus more upon getting my thoughts, reactions, and opinions
> heard.

> Certain conditions helped facilitate students' voicing. Some students described the

important role their dialogue partners played in encouraging them to share their views.

Samantha shared that

> I found myself holding back from the discussion when it came to personal
> information and anecdotes. I would not hesitate to ask clarifying questions of my

partner, but became rigid and uncomfortable when my partner did the same for me…. Oftentimes my dialogue partner would have to stop me from asking more questions in order to prompt me to say something about the topic, which I could do once I was asked to. Thankfully in my fourth dialogue, I felt myself open up more as a contributor to the conversation rather than just a simple listener.

Another student explained how she felt more supported sharing her opinions in a group dialogue setting, rather than in a one-on-one dialogue. Margaret wrote

I also felt more comfortable voicing more of my opinions because I subconsciously felt that I wasn't going to be the only one who was voicing an opinions that no one else agreed with, and I also could have more support. In a one on one, I become so much more vulnerable and less likely to say certain things.

In addition to the challenges some students experienced there were also descriptions of positive outcomes related to voicing thoughts and feelings. Olivia, described the "sense of liberation" she felt opening up about ableist assumptions she had held. She recalled,

Despite the hurdle, I found that by voicing my ableist stigmas, I was able to confront the sense of irrational fear which dominated my early subconscious. Instead of feeling guilt for the way I expressed myself, by marginalizing and targeting a group, I found a sense of liberation when speaking about assumptions and ableist power relations. (Reflective Memo 6)

Louise highlighted the significance of both her and her dialogue partner elaborating on their different opinions about college access, writing

Devin and I disagreed at one point about what going to college means to students who can't afford college, because we have very different opinions on the matter. But, we also both spoke of why we thought what we thought, which for me was really important and I think was key to the dialogue being a dialogue as opposed to a debate, because we said why we thought what we thought or what experiences contributed to that.

Balancing Participation

Alongside voicing their own thoughts and feelings, students described how they developed an increased awareness of the importance of balancing speaking and listening

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among participants in a dialogue. Reflecting on classroom conversation patterns during the first-semester course, Louise remarked

> Last semester, we were talking about how we raise our hands and how we alternate who's speaking and make sure everyone has a space to speak, and I was like "Why does this matter?" It should just be whatever happens….As we went on, I could just see the problems with how our conversation flows sometimes and actually care about it. Like, "Oh, I've noticed that this person hasn't been speaking. I wonder why or what they're thinking."

Balancing air time requires both stepping back and listening and stepping forward and speaking. Samantha noticed how she was not contributing enough of her own voice in her dialogue conversations.

> I have become such a fan of asking clarifying questions and thought-provoking questions to my dialogue partner that oftentimes I forget that this is a dialogue and not an interview on my behalf. I use clarifying questions to prod my partner into diving deeper into their own ways of thinking (and I have begun to do this in my personal life as well) however, oftentimes the air is not shared between us and I do not speak as much as the other person. As oftentimes I would rather listen than talk, personally I do not have a problem with this arrangement. However, I do think that it is not beneficial for me or for my dialogue partner for me to be quiet while they speak.

Through reflecting on their dialogue participation, students became more self-aware of personal habits and characteristics that interfered with air time being shared among group members. Lilith reflected that

> I know that I still need to pay careful attention to how much space I am taking up and practice stepping back. I am also trying to work on my tone of voice, as I know I often communicate in a very assertive manner that can sound commanding and may silence others.

Devin also spoke about an awareness of his conversation patterns.

> I feel like I sometimes dominate dialogues and that's something that I try not to do, but then...I definitely get a little bit, not awkward in silence, but…I try to play this balancing act, like… "Let's make it 50-50."

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Self-Awareness of Triggers

Another way that students learned to dialogue was becoming more aware of their emotional triggers and recognizing how these triggers impacted their involvement in dialogue. Two students specifically described new ways that they were becoming aware of their triggers and the impact that triggering had on their ability to remain in dialogue. Referencing a conversation in which she felt angry with her dialogue partner, Louise explained:

> While I appreciate that other people have very different views than me, I did feel judged and angered by his questions. However, I was too shocked to even say how I was feeling. As I look back now, I realize this is one of my problems in dialogue. The minute I feel upset or attacked I shut down. As a result, I lose out on a chance to really dialogue. I realize now that I certainly was not being attacked, but I assumed I was.

Marissa reflected on how she responds to triggers, asking herself

> How can I be dialogic and effectively communicate my views to someone who I feel doesn't want to hear them and doesn't make an effort to understand? Is there a way that I can check myself so that I don't get angry or triggered, to just stay calm and continue to be dialogic even if the other person does not choose to do so as well?

Though neither of these students identified specific strategies for working with triggering experiences in the future, their ability to notice and reflect their emotional responses in the assigned dialogue conversations provided them an opportunity to more effectively navigate triggering experiences in the future.

In-class dialogue workshops and assigned readings about the foundations of dialogue provided students with a basic understanding of dialogue and what differentiates dialogue from other forms of communication. However, it was through their sustained personal experimentation with dialogue processes, actually practicing dialogue with others, that students were able to learn how to dialogue. By reflecting on their individual

experiences of integrating dialogic skills into conversations, many students became more self-aware of their individual strengths and challenges. Continuing to practice dialogue over the course of an academic year resulted in students describing that they were becoming more skilled and confident engaging others in dialogue.

Gaining Competence and Confidence

Over the course of the year, as students continued learning how to dialogue by practicing dialogue processes with each other, they described the confidence they were gaining in their capacity to be more dialogic. Some students also noted that they felt more compelled to integrate what they were learning about dialogue into their everyday lives. However, each students' comfort and confidence with dialogue emerged at a different pace. After her first assigned dialogue conversation, Emma reflected, "Overall, this dialogue went fabulously…. I do believe though that dialoguing will get easier with more practice as this course continues." Reflecting on her second dialogue conversation, Linda recalled, "I felt a little nervous, but then it went away immediately…. I felt relaxed, more relaxed. Maybe because I got used to it. I knew what we're talking about now." Looking back across the entire first semester, Maria observed

> Initially, the assigned dialogues felt a bit awkward especially considering the personal nature of the topics we were discussing. However, as the practice became more routine, I felt as though practicing dialogue made it easier for me to articulate my uncensored thoughts on the matters of identity, aspects of my own personal background, biases, etc. in all situations (in and out of class and dialogue settings).

Students realized that internalizing a dialogic mindset and approach in their lives was an ongoing process. After an entire semester of dialogue experiences, some students began to reflect on the ways they were adopting a dialogic approach more naturally. Olivia noticed

My hope to be more dialogic, definitely did work out, because in my later dialogues I was able to incorporate things without having to name them. I kind of knew as I was doing them that I was in fact doing them…. And in that sense I was able to almost check off this imaginary list of, "Yes, this is something that I'm practicing. This is something I'm doing. This is something I'm noticing. This is something that I'm almost unconsciously incorporating in my everyday conversation."

In her interview at the end of the first semester, Margaret also reflected on how habits of dialogue began to take root through repeated practice:

Dialogic skills become a habit sort of as we keep doing it. Like when we force ourselves to practice it, it just becomes like a natural habit and… I feel like doing that is going to open up a lot of positive communication with people.

Similarly, Karl noticed how dialogic processes had started to become habitual over the course of the first semester. In an interview, he explained that

I've totally seen myself utilize aspects of dialogue without thinking about it, which I think is another quality that the individual dialogues might have is just from practice from doing it, you're not thinking about it. It just becomes the way that you communicate a little bit.

Jenn stated that her series of dialogues across the first semester "were definitely a progression, learning over time." When asked what she was progressing toward, Jenn elaborated, "Being more comfortable with the group. Challenging myself with different questions, things that I wouldn't think of before." Marissa expressed pride in the progress that she made over the course of the semester stating, "I am so glad that I got the chance to do the dialogues and I am proud of myself for coming really far in achieving better communication."

At the end of the entire academic year, after two semesters of practicing and reflecting on dialogue, students described additional changes in their capability and confidence to engage in dialogue. Lilith reflected on the new set of skills she could access in different settings.

I try to keep the dialogic skills sort of in my knapsack all the time, you know? So, I can whip them out when I need to and it really makes a difference. Even if I'm not engaging in dialogue, I can sit back and think, and reflect, and ask questions once and a while. That makes a difference.

When asked what stood out to her most about her dialogue experiences across the year,

Louise replied,

The contrast between where I was at the beginning of the year and where I am now in terms of my ability to convey what I'm thinking…while at the same time respecting that other's opinions and experiences are really different than my own.

As illustrated by Louise's quote above, by continuing to practice dialogue over a full year, CSP students noticed how learning to dialogue was changing not only the ways that they communicated but the ways they understood others and themselves.

In the previous section, themes were presented highlight how the CSP students described learning to dialogue. This learning was facilitated by learning about dialogue processes, working with dialogue prompts, observing others, practicing dialogue processes, and gaining competence and confidence engaging in dialogue. The next section focuses on describing what students learned about identities and social identity issues by engaging in dialogue with their CSP peers.

Learning About Identities and Social Identity Issues

A primary goal of integrating dialogue more intentionally into CSP was to provide a structured opportunity for students to reflect with others about their own and other's social identities and how their multiple identities are differently located in systems of power, privilege, and oppression. The five themes presented in this section shed light on the second research question: How do students' dialogue experiences in the CSP inform their understanding of their own and others' social identities, privileges, and disadvantages? These themes are exploring personal identities, exploring social identities,

exploring systems of privilege and oppression, going deeper, and avoiding exploring

social identity issues. A diagram is provided below illustrating how the themes and

subthemes in this section are organized. Each of these themes is then described one at a

time, incorporating quotes from the CSP students that illustrate each theme.

Learning about Identities Through Dialogue

Exploring Personal Identities

Exploring Social Identities
• Exploring Privilege
• Exploring Oppression
• Limited Diversity in Cohort

Exploring Systems of Privilege and Oppression

Going Deeper

Avoiding Exploring Social Identity Issues
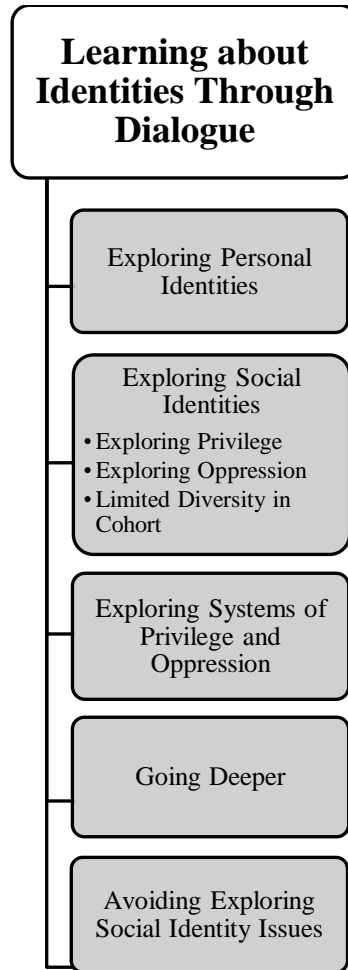
Figure 4: Learning About Identities Through Dialogue Theme.

Exploring Personal Identities

Many students described how talking about personal identities with their peers in their cohort created a foundation for exploring commonalities and differences in a lower-stakes, introductory capacity that helped them later delve into what they considered more challenging topics related to their social identities. Some students described their desire to get to know each other better outside of classroom conversations. Writing about one of her small group dialogues in the spring semester, Samantha suggested that

> We do not do enough check-ins nor do we take enough time to get to know each other's personalities. Coming to this decision, we decided that we needed to spend more time learning about each other so we took the time in our dialogue to do that. We asked each other why we chose to do our service at our service sites, how we ended up at UMass, what we like about our majors, etc. Just by talking about these seemingly simple facts about ourselves, opened up the conversation to so many details that we never knew about each other.

Writing about the same small-group dialogue, Temperance concluded that

> Obviously, we meant to focus on social identities, but when we were discussing one of the preliminary questions, we ended up having a conversation about how we don't know each other very well, and how we don't like that…. Our first real introductions to each other are political autobiographies, so I know about the worst thing that has happened to these people, but I don't know their favorite book or their middle name or whether they like cake or ice cream. These are all the little bits of information that I really like knowing about people.

Some personal identities that students most commonly talked about in their dialogue conversations included their involvement on campus involvement and roles in their family, such as being an older sibling. Vanessa recalled talking about her life as a college student. "This dialogue was by far the easiest for me…. I was able to have many exchanges about drinking, social scenes and issues of being a college student, our passions and interests, past and present hobbies, and our love life." Writing about a one-on-one dialogue conversation, Maria explained that

We began by discussing the most impactful aspects of our identity (as we perceived them). Both of us noted that having siblings drastically affects our decision-making processes, and we discussed our relationships with our younger siblings at length, particularly how they have changed since we left home for school.

While some students enjoyed the opportunity to get to know each other on a more surface level, others had different expectations for their dialogue conversations and wanted to talk more about social identities. Marissa explained

My first dialogue wasn't really a "dialogue," at least not in the way that CSP defines one. We talked a lot about our families and our lives currently at UMass, but we didn't talk about our [social] identities once. I was kind of disappointed by that because I felt like we could have spoken on a more deeper level, but it was still nice nonetheless to get to know her and find some similarities between us.

Mary explained how her conversations about personal identities helped build a foundation of comfort that set the stage for more meaningful conversations about social identities in the future. She wrote:

I wish we had dived more into topics like religion and sexuality and stuff like that. But, I think it was hard for us, because we don't even know the basics about each other, you know…. I don't want to be like, "What religion are you and why are you that religion?"…. Hopefully, this time around since definitely we've gotten to know each other and I think we definitely are more comfortable with each other, we'll be able to, go on further with those and definitely discover more.

The examples above demonstrate how talking about personal identities was important to many students as a way to establish connections with each other. The next section turns to describing how students their social identities in dialogue with each other.

Exploring Social Identities

In the majority of their dialogue conversations, students engaged in conversations about how their life experiences and perspectives had been shaped by their social identities and the ways their social identities were located in systems of privilege and oppression. Students described that they are craving opportunities to talk about social

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identities issues but often feel that others are not willing to have these conversations. The two quotes below demonstrate that CSP students were grateful to have a dedicated space to engage in meaningful dialogue about social identities.

> Thankfully I had some really great dialogues and we were able to talk about topics that I would never venture into with anyone other than maybe my father. Race, sex, religion, politics, and the economy are just too taboo to be spoken about with most of my friends unless it is done in a very joking manner. With the cohort we got to have meaningful conversations and check-ins. (Jenn)

> It was one of the best dialogues I had ever had, because I went deeper to talk about difficult things that people usually don't talk about. I talked more about my personal identities coming from Nigeria, and I felt really heard by Lilith because she asked me questions and she was able to make connections with her own life about other races. (Linda)

Some students described how the dialogue conversations provided an opportunity for them to reflect on how their own social identities connected with and impacted others' experiences. In her interview at the end of the academic year, Louise shared, "[Dialogue] helps me learn more about myself and my own identities and how my own privilege and oppression impacts other people. By that I mean how, how when I say something or when I do something, it impacts others."

> Talking about social identities made me more aware of my disability in a way and understanding how the disability connected with others in that…we all have positives and negatives or identities that are different from one another…. In many ways we all feel slighted in something. We all feel, you know, privileged in others. And if we can work together and understand [those] privileges and differences, and accept them and not judge which ones are better or worse, I feel that is good. (Jeff)

Some students described how they became increasingly more comfortable and confident engaging in conversations about social identities as the year progressed. In her interview at the end of the first semester, Lucy commented, "I'm definitely more comfortable talking about it [social identities], because I realized that whether you're privileged or the

oppressed group, everyone's made up of privileged and oppressed identities." Looking

back across the full year, Mary explained:

> Last semester, I was like, "Well, maybe I don't really know much more about myself, but I know everyone else pretty well and that's a good start." But now I'm like, "No. I really see who I am. And I understand who I am and definitely in comparison to my peers and people who are similar to me and different from me."

Some students described how their conversations about social identities included

a more nuanced focus on how different social identities intersected with one another.

Writing about a small-group dialogue conversation in the spring semester that focused

heavily on abilities and ableism, Olivia noticed

> As for my other group members, I found that the different social settings in which they were raised prompted them to speak about ableism in a certain way – Vanessa highlighting her [racial/ethnic] roots and Lilith talking about class privilege which caused some internal struggle early in her life. At the end, the group touched on ageism and how both ageism and ableism are interconnected in many ways.

Writing about the same dialogue conversation, Vanessa recalled, "I was the only one who

brought race into ageism or ableism when I talked about taking care of the elderly or

respecting people who are older than a young person." Karl reflected on the ways in

which some of his multiple, interesting identities were privileged, while he still

experienced the impact of oppressive systems. Describing this complexity, he wrote

> I also learned a lot about how interconnected some forms of privilege and oppression can be. For example, the most challenging part of the dialogue was trying to understand my experiences growing up and how to define the way I've been "oppressed" by my family and society. I still don't have an answer because I keep challenging my theories, but hearing about some of the ways Maria has been privileged and oppressed helps me see connections in my own life more clearly. I see traces of oppression from patriarchal structures, authoritarianism, ageism, religious bigotry, and classism.

The next two sections describe the ways that students specifically explored topics related

to privilege and oppression through dialogue.

Exploring Privilege

While almost all of the students in the cohort specifically described having conversations about their social identities, many provided specific examples of ways that they had explored and reflected on their own privilege during, or as a result of, their dialogue conversations with their peers. The different forms of privilege students explored included White privilege, ability/able-bodied privilege, male privilege, and class privilege.

Four White students described specific ways that they explored their White privilege through their dialogue experiences. Marissa explained, "I realized how little I talk about or think about race in my life, and I suppose it is part of my White privilege that I am able to forget about it." Samantha described a dialogue where she began to reflect on her privileged identities as well as her disadvantaged identities. She wrote

> Through this dialogue, I learned that being a white person does not mean that I do not have a social identity…. Oftentimes I find myself feeling as if I wished that I had a culture, even though it is impossible to grow up without a culture…. I also realized that in terms of privilege, I have more privilege than most do. In many senses I am in the alleged superior or majority group, other than the fact that I am a woman. Through dialoguing with Karl I really saw the importance in understanding my privilege just as much as I understand my disadvantages and my oppression.

Mary's learning about White privilege, though drawing on a generalization about of people of color, stemmed from a conversation about college awareness and expectations. She recalled that

> I learned something about myself during this dialogue…. As we discussed our initial thoughts on privilege because of our white skin, I began to realize that I indeed was in a position of privilege in that I always had the indefinite plan that I was going to attend college. For many people of other races, this isn't even an option or they don't know it is an option because their parents never attended college. This was definitely an "Ahhhh!" moment, one where I see clarity on something that I previously was blind to.

Maria described one specific small-group dialogue conversation where she and her

dialogue partners unpacked the topic of White privilege detail, as opposed to avoiding or

briefly acknowledging it:

> The most challenging part of this dialogue was actually tackling these issues that
> had, heretofore, been avoided. It is easy to state that, being White, we have
> privilege, use that as a blanket statement, and move on to the next facet of our
> identities. We intentionally, in this dialogue, did not allow ourselves to do this.
> While challenging, it brought specific examples of/experiences with my White
> privilege to mind that I had never thought of before.

Three students provided specific examples of ways that they explored their ability

and able-bodied privilege. Louise described a conversation that led her to reflect more on

her own abilities than focusing only on other's disabilities. She shared that

> Our first topic of conversation was ableism. When we brought the topic up, there
> was an awkward silence. We all just looked at each other and laughed nervously.
> This is indicative on my general feeling on ableism. I generally do not have much
> to say because ableism is so broad and in my experience, something I rarely talk
> about. I am certainly more aware of it in my work as a PCA at a nursing home.
> People in wheelchairs at the nursing home have to wait for someone to bring them
> to the whirlpools. Everything, for everyone, takes a lot longer because older
> bodies cannot be as certain. Eyesight and hearing difficulties are a daily reality.
> However, this is the extent to which I generally think of disability. Very rarely do
> I think of my ability.

Olivia described how sharing personal stories about abilities and disabilities provided a

foundation for a meaningful conversation.

> Hesitating at first, we soon learned that disability is not something very prominent
> in our lives and that we all seem to avoid speaking about it unless presented with
> the opportunity. I found that by starting with a story and explaining the emotion
> and consequence behind what took place, allowed other group members to take
> on a similar sense of reflection. As a result, we went around speaking about
> instances or moments that we found particularly moving or aspects of the
> underlying, irrational fear associated with disability.

On the topic of male privilege, one student, Devin, described a profound realization he

had about himself, writing that

> Of all the different ways this class has changed my perspective and showed me things I never saw before, this course and this community showed me ways I am blind to gender inequality, and the way that affects both sexes, has been the biggest revelation. Some members of the cohort felt that I in particular was not letting others speak, and saw the issue as an extension of gender inequality and my privilege as a White male. At the time I didn't see it this way but came to understand where the other parties were coming from.

Jenn described how talking about her boyfriend's experiences helped to spark a conversation about class privilege.

> My boyfriend is struggling to pay for school. He works about 20 to 30 hours a week during the school year and up to 60 hours a week in the summer to make sure he can pay the tuition bill. By talking about him we opened up our eyes to how many people on campus were struggling financially to be here. By talking about other people we realized what privileges we had.

As these examples demonstrate, through their dialogue with their peers, the CSP students reflected on many different ways that they were experienced privilege based on a range of different social identities.

Exploring Oppression

In addition to exploring their privileged identities, students also reflected on their own and other's oppressed identities in their dialogue conversations. The students' quotes presented below are intended to provide an overview of the different ways that students learned about oppressed identities but represent only a small percentage of the many conversations that students had about many different manifestations of oppression. In some instances students described sharing stories about their own personal experiences with oppression. In others, students described witnessing how friends or others close to them experienced oppression. One form of oppression students explored was racism. Lilith, a White student, spoke about a memorable conversation she had with a student of color in the cohort talking about racial stereotypes:

Racial identity came up with Vanessa…. And again that was a cool conversation. She was all, you know, all about it. It was great. She talked to me about her frustration with stereotypes and people's expectations of her and how she really takes pleasure in bashing stereotypes and breaking through the confines of those ideals. That was a fun conversation with her.

In another example, Linda, a student of color, described one of her dialogue conversations where she shared her personal experiences with racism with a white student in the cohort.

I was fully relaxed with Lucy for some reason…. I felt really engaged. We kind of went back and forth with stereotypes and all that stuff. Like when people see Black people in the store, they follow them…. I really went all out with her, cause I felt like I'm part of this about race. It's always about race. Even though people always lie, I feel it's always about race today. So, I was more a part of it, plus I gave her a lot of examples coming from all the experiences that I've had.

Students also spoke about their personal experiences with sexism, sometimes with other students who shared their gender identity and also across different gender identities. Jenn recalled that "Lilith pushed me by asking me what I knew or felt about my own oppression. The more I think about it I am oppressed as a woman." Some women in the cohort described how they found connections with other women by talking about similar experiences and feelings. Reflecting on one of her one-on-one dialogue conversations, Marissa shared that

We also talked a lot about sexism and everything that comes with it, and also in relation to our families because it seemed that is where we experienced a good amount of it. So it was really nice to talk about that identity with someone who felt the same way as me, and I was glad that we made that effort to talk about stuff that no one usually talks about.

Margaret described how one of her dialogue conversations encouraged her to think about her gender in new ways. She wrote

Emma pointed out that gender was a very important identity for her, which was interesting to me because that is the one social identity that I haven't talked about in any of my dialogues as of yet. Emma expressed how much she thinks it

influences her and that women bear a great deal of oppression, which opened the door for me to ask her a lot of clarifying questions. I have never put much thought into my gender identities, because I for the most part only feel indirect effects of being female. Emma really sparked me to think further about my gender identity.

A male student, Devin, described what he learned about sexism by participating in a dialogue conversation with a mixed gender group of peers. He described learning about

the lack of power some females feel in the face of male oppression because of past experiences they have had, and the way that male dominated society has conditioned them to feel…. Simply put, it wasn't something that I readily recognized in my day-to-day life but now do all the time.

In some instances, students talked about the specific ways that oppression manifested in their own lives. For example, Jenn talked about the connections that she and her dialogue partner saw between mental health and sexism.

We both talked about our eating disorders and depression. Many of our triggers to our mental insecurities were the same. We both thought that sexist humor, images from the media, and our relationships with men harmed our self-esteem.

In addition to conversations about racism and sexism, students also talked about other forms of oppression. Margaret described an emotional conversation she had in one of her small group dialogues where group members talked about their experiences with heterosexism and transgender oppression:

It got really emotional for some of our group members, because we all had shared strong stories of personal experience. We were talking about sexuality, but specifically heterosexism and transsexuality [sic], which were definitely things that we didn't really talk about, or I hadn't talked about in previous dialogues at that point. And we all, I definitely think had personal stories to really connect with.

Lilith described how a story she told about ableist assumptions in her own life initiated an engaged conversation about ableism among her peers during one of her small group dialogues in the spring semester. Her description of this experience is included below.

I asked if I could talk about a story I that had to do with a childhood experience involving ableism, namely identifying my deep-rooted physiological impulse to objectify and devalue those who were handicapped because I saw them as almost less than human. This sparked a lively discussion about experiences that the five of us had encountering those with disabilities, whether they were physical, emotional, or learning, and how we are still constantly battling to address and redress the stigma that has been socialized into us from such an early time. What I found most rewarding was how "on board" everyone was when speaking about ableism. Hesitating at first, we soon learned that disability is not something very prominent in our lives and that we all seem to avoid speaking about it unless presented with the opportunity.

The example above highlights that these CSP students were very willing to delve into conversations about social identity topics that challenged them but needed some encouragement, a student telling a personal story in this case, to begin the conversation.

Limited Diversity in Cohort

Six students, including both students of color in the cohort, expressed that the capacity for learning about social identity issues was hindered by the limited diversity in the cohort. Many but not all of the students' concerns focused on inadequate racial/ethnic diversity in the cohort, in which only two students identified as students of color and 16 student identified as White. Reflecting on her dialogue experiences across the academic year, one woman of color, Vanessa, shared concerns about not feeling challenged.

I think that sometimes for a person of color to kind of grow more and learn more, you need someone, a person or color, to challenge you and your ideas and your perceptions. And that's where I find that the cohort is lacking. And that's why I honestly didn't feel interested going into the cohort because I felt like there was nothing for me and I felt like I was very uninvested…. It's not even that people didn't want to get to know me, but I honestly wasn't learning anything.

Linda, another student of color, appeared to feel somewhat conflicted about her experiences talking about race with the White students in the cohort.

I don't have a problem talking to people I've met before or I've known already, or I've known to like Black people. Obviously, I'm not going to talk to racists. If I'm going to talk to someone who doesn't like me being who I am, what's the point of

wasting time? So, I talk to people…from my class that I've known from the first semester now. They're cool. I like everybody. I don't know…Maybe they're just showing it in the class. I don't know. I'm just saying they like me and I like them and I talk to them about it.

Karl, a White student, wondered how conversations about race might have been different if there was more racial diversity among his dialogue partners.

> All four of my dialogues were all White….I know we have these privileges….we walk into a store and chances are the manager is going to be the same color as us, and it's just like those kinds of privileges. And we talked about those a little bit more in depth than with the gender thing. Maybe a different perspective was needed or something. If it had been three people and one of them wasn't White, maybe it would have been…maybe it would have gone further.

Writing about one of her small group dialogues, Lilith, another White student, similarly recalled:

> [I] wondered aloud if the struggle to have novel conversations about our identities had to do with the homogenous nature of our group and the lack of fresh perspectives or new tools for introspection. We talked about these thoughts for a while, wondering if we would have more to speak about if there was more diversity in the group or if we had read more resources on the subject.

These examples speak to the value of having a diverse group of participants in dialogues about race and other social identities. However, they also raise questions about how to support students in exploring social identity issues in settings where many students may share the same, privileged identity. The next section describes the ways that students explored topics related to systems of privilege and oppression.

Exploring Systems of Privilege and Oppression

In addition to exploring social identities and talking about their personal experiences with privilege and oppression, some students also talked about broader systems of oppression at the institutional and cultural levels. While students described talking about many different systems of oppression, sexism and patriarchy were the most

frequently-referenced topics. The examples below not only reference systemic oppression but also include future actions that students planned to take to interrupt sexism. At the conclusion of the fall semester, Marissa recalled that

> I have found that talking about sexism and patriarchy and all of that makes me feel better, and even though it's hard sometimes, I am going to keep pushing myself to talk about it because that's the only way to begin reversing the systems already in place. Additionally, I think the reason it has gotten a little easier for me to talk about these things is because of my learning so much about dialogue and communication this semester – and I want to continue adapting dialogues into my everyday life.

Similarly, Lucy shared that

> We engaged in a dialogue about how we can eliminate our culture's prevalent sexist attitude. On the other hand, we also discussed how it is difficult to have the courage to stand up to a subtle or unintentional sexist comment. We both agreed that although confronting a sexist situation requires immense courage, the person being challenged would most likely listen to our argument against their sexist gesture and change his or her ways.

In one of her one-on-one dialogues, Samantha talked with her dialogue partner about why they both decided to work with different community organizations that support women.

> We found that we were doing somewhat similar service projects, both involving women and the support of women, and through discussing the reasons why we chose our service, we realized that we both had very similar ideas about gender and the way it is played out in society. Marissa seemed very passionate about the "patriarchal society" (as she kept referring to) of our society, and the consequences that this hegemony brings upon the women in our society. She then began discussing the issues that she has with addressing people who are perhaps enforcing sexist ideas, and how she would love to stand up to people and address these issues, but also struggles with the confidence to do so, and remarked that she was afraid to because people didn't seem to understand where she was coming from.

Going Deeper

Many students used the words "deeper" or "depth" when describing their dialogue conversations with their peers. Students talked about experiencing (or not experiencing) depth in two ways. First, students describing feeling a greater level of openness,

authenticity, and vulnerability in their dialogues that allowed them to share more with each other than they typically do in other conversations with classmates and peers. Second, students described being able to explore what they saw to be deeper topics related to social identities in their CSP dialogue conversations. Examples of the ways students described these two different yet interrelated conceptualizations of depth are provided below.

Mary suggested that "dialogue is, compared to a discussion or just regular conversations, a way of getting to the good stuff, like digging deeper down." Jeff was impressed by the depth of his first assigned dialogue conversation, writing, "That was a surprisingly deep and heartfelt conversation for two people who barely know one another." Speaking about the depth she experienced in some of her dialogues, Mary explained:

> It's just a deeper level of understanding.... It's personal, but it's like bonding, you know? You build a connection. You may not walk away being best friends after. You guys don't even have to like each other after. It's just being open-minded, more or less.

A few students described how it was necessary to first establish a safe or comfortable environment before divulging personal stories and feelings at a deeper level. After one of her one-on-one dialogue conversations, Olivia noted, "While the dialogue was not very light, I felt that Louise and I connected on a deep level because I was able to share a very personal moment in a safe, judgment-free zone." Similarly, Lucy observed, "Throughout our dialogue, Marissa and I discovered that we shared many common experiences. However, it was not until the end of the dialogue that we felt comfortable enough with each other to discuss deep issues in our family life."

Some students compared the depth of their CSP dialogue conversations with the kinds of conversations they have with close friends. Reflecting on her dialogue conversations at the end of the fall semester, Emma concluded,

> The friendships I have attained due to these interpersonal dialogue sessions have become a great asset to my Citizen Scholars experience. Overall, I deem the process of getting to know these four individuals on a deeper level (seeing where they are coming from and where they are going) and having the ability to divulge to each other information about ourselves that we would not have said, either due to embarrassment or lack of opportunity, in a larger group discussion has been an awesome way to start continuous conversations and kindle meaningful friendships.

Vanessa also noted a link between one significantly "deep and honest" dialogue conversation and friendships.

> With this dialogue, I believe that the quality of the content is much more important than the quantity of the content. This dialogue was deep and honest. I didn't have to hold back my opinions or have to fear that Karl wouldn't like me. I felt good. This is the kind of place I like to be before I call someone my friend.

The depth of Lilith's dialogue conversations had an impact on the types of interactions she had with her conversation partners in other settings afterward.

> Sitting down and then taking the time to ask each other questions and share our own stories, you know, I really did begin to find this deeper connection with everybody and that was really exciting and meaningful and it then brought further depth to other interactions that I had with them later.

The small-group dialogue conversations during the second semester provided a deeper level of connection than some students had previously experienced in their one-on-one dialogues. In her final paper at the end of the year, Emma concluded, "The last dialogue we were assigned this semester was one of the most impactful conversations I have ever had. It was deep, intimate, and real." Writing about her group dialogue experiences, Margaret explained that

> I think that we were able to take our dialogues to a deeper level when we were able to hear from more people. By the last of my three group dialogues, we had definitely mastered balancing voices, keeping the conversation focused on identities, and so many other dialogic skills.

Vanessa expressed a sense of appreciation for the level of personal storytelling that took place in a full-cohort structured dialogue at the end of the academic year. In her final paper, she wrote, "This dialogue felt like it wrapped up the class for me. I enjoyed hearing stories that were personal and meaningful without reservation. The atmosphere was full of empathy and sincerity. It felt open."

The quotes above illustrate how students understood the experience of depth as it related to the openness, honesty, and vulnerability in their conversations. Related to this feeling of depth, students also described how certain dialogue conversations included deeper topics than others. These deeper topics included social identities, beliefs, and politically-charged issues. Looking back at the first semester in an interview conversation, Olivia explained, "In my last dialogue…we moved on to the deeper topics that, I hadn't necessarily broached in my two sort of introductory ones." Writing about her first assigned dialogue conversation, Jenn shared, "Our identities, which are pretty complex things to explain in words, came out through our ramblings…. Sometimes we strayed to deeper topics where we ended up talking about our beliefs on things, such as affirmative action to childcare."

Four students specifically mentioned noticing that their dialogues in the spring semester were able to reach greater levels of depth, openness, and vulnerability after they had gotten to know their cohort-mates and built a foundation of trust in the fall semester. Mary captured this sentiment in her interview at the end of the academic year. She shared that

In the fall, it was almost like we were just getting to know each other. So, it's hard to completely dive into that deep stuff, because you're like, "I don't know this person really." But, by the spring, we were like, "We really know these people. We understand where they're coming from. I know what I can say in front of them. And even if I don't think that they're going to like it, I know that they're still going to respect me. We are a community here."…. My first one-on-one of this semester was incredible! It was with Samantha, and I had already felt like I knew Samantha like on a friendly basis, and so it made it that much easier to be like, "All right. Let's really talk about deep things here." Things I would talk about with my friends and my parents.

Vanessa shared a similar perspective in her interview at the end of the year.

[In] the first semester, when we had the one-on-ones, it wasn't as close and it wasn't as personal…. It felt very like on the surface…as opposed to like the second semester where we…got more in depth in knowing who each other were…. Going into the dialogues in the second semester, we were able to connect better in understanding why they do what they do, why they say what they say. And obviously I think once you start to kind of get to know someone…you kind of assume good will.

Margaret captured this feeling succinctly in her spring semester final paper, stating "I never expected the dialogue assignments to go as deeply as they did or for people to give me so much of their trust and be as emotionally vulnerable as they were."

While students described dialogues that involved deeper topics, they also expressed frustration when they were not able to delve into these topics to a considerable extent. Maria recalled,

A point of frustration with this last dialogue for me was the inability to gain more insight into the different elements of identity. I feel as though I have touched on several aspects of identity (race, gender, religion, etc.) in all of my dialogues, but I feel as though we can never get deeper than a certain point: an acknowledgment of white privilege, recognizing the difference in experience between a male student and a female student, etc. I'm wondering how to gain more insight into these/ advance the dialogue so that they may be explored in further depth.

Marissa talked about a similar experience of disappointment, explaining

I don't know if she really understood the prompt very well or if she just was unwilling to go there, or for some other reason, but I really wanted to get there and I was just kind of waiting for it to happen and it didn't really happen. It sort

of just kept staying there. It was like nice to talk to her, just I wasn't like, didn't connect to her as well, cause we didn't get to that hard topic.

Where some students expressed frustration that some of their dialogue conversations lacked the depth they sought, other students felt as though it was not possible or desirable to delve into deeper topics in a single, introductory conversation. Olivia stated, "It appeared as though we were supposed to create these deep connections within one sitting, and I knew that that was something that I was incapable of doing…. You can't push boundaries overnight or else you'll have a catastrophe." Karl also addressed the limitations of having only one dialogue conversation with numerous different students in the cohort.

> I found, at least in the beginning…I kept just saying the same thing. And I wasn't frustrated, but I was kind of aware of the fact that I wasn't getting any deeper…. Because it was kind of like giving an opening, like a brief intro to different people, as opposed to if I had the dialogue with the same person expanding, because they'd already known.

Two students expressed that they did not have enough time in some dialogue conversations to engage at a deeper level. Vanessa stated, "I think because of the time constraint we weren't able to deeper and more thorough conversation." Looking back on a conversation she had about different religions in her first one-on-one dialogue, Louise similarly noted, "We mostly kind of stated what we thought and didn't really get any deeper into it than that because we didn't try to like come to common ground, I thought. But again, there was a time constraint in the dialogue."

Avoiding Exploring Social Identity Issues

While students frequently engaged in thoughtful conversations about social identities and systems of oppression and privilege in their out-of-class dialogues, some students also described instances in which they or their dialogue partners avoided

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exploring these topics, particularly in their first few dialogue conversations. Olivia

described not feeling comfortable opening up and sharing information about her identities

in her first dialogue.

> I know I skirted around some things that I probably should have maybe come out and straight up said about my own personal identities…. In the first dialogue, we didn't really do them toward our identities very deeply at all. We were sort of avoiding things that maybe we should have said…. I really don't regret it. I think it was appropriate at that time, because again it was pushing things. I am definitely one of those people who shuts down.

Talking about his experience in his first out-of-class dialogue, Jeff recalled:

> Lilith was forcing the issue on bringing the race, gender issues to the forefront…. I was getting an understanding of it, but I was skirting around it in the first one or two [dialogues] and then she actually forced me to look [at those issues]. I was trying to avoid it at first and then I gave in. And she explained her opinion and I'm like, okay, that's not that far off from mine. It's just different.

Other students described feeling disappointed when their dialogue conversations did not

focus much on social identities.

> My first dialogue wasn't really a "dialogue," at least not in the way that CSP defines one. We talked a lot about our families and our lives currently at UMass, but we didn't talk about our identities once. I was kind of disappointed by that because I felt like we could have spoken on a deeper level.

In her interview at the end of the first semester, Maria remarked:

> We talked about gender. I talked about that in actually every one. But I felt like we never really got to the heart of it or what I imagine is the heart of it. I feel like it was very basic…. We touched on basics of it. I feel like we never really got into it. And that was something that I wish had been more present in my dialogues, but I think to an extent we didn't really know how to get into it.

In summary, the section above described the ways that the CSP students learned

about their own and others' social identities and explored broader social identity issues in

their dialogue conversations. Students described specific dialogue conversations in which

they were able to explore topics related to their social identities at a deeper level, as well

as points at which they or their dialogue partners avoided talking about social identity issues. The next section introduces themes related to the ways that engaging in dialogue impacted students' relationships with their peers in the thirteenth cohort of the CSP.

<u>**Developing Interpersonal Relationships**</u>

The theme of Developing Interpersonal Relationships responds to the third research question: "How do students in the CSP understand the ways that engaging in dialogue about personal and social identities impacts their relationships with peers in their cohort?" Students explained how engaging in dialogic conversations with each other had a substantial impact on their interpersonal relationships with other students in the cohort. These dialogues provided an opportunity for students to identify commonalities with their dialogue partners as well as explore differences. In some instances, students explained how they arrived at new understandings across differences, including social identities. Students frequently commented on the depth of their dialogues, sometimes feeling fulfilled by meaningful or profound exchanges with peers, while other times feeling disappointed by the lack of substance in their conversations. In their dialogues, students encountered differences of opinion, tension, and conflict. At points, students left conversations frustrated with their dialogue partners or with their own choices and actions. A diagram is provided below to provide a visual depiction of the themes presented in this section.

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          │   Relationships     │
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             │
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             │    │ Identifying         │
             │    │ Commonalities       │
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             │    │ Understanding Across│
             │    │ Difference          │
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             │    │ Feeling Frustrated  │
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             │    │ Creating Community  │
             │    │ Within Cohort       │
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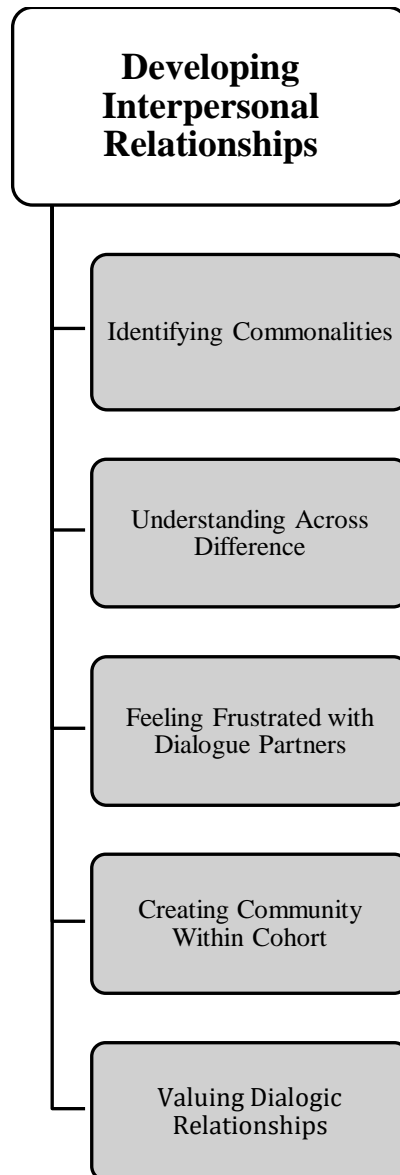
Figure 5: Developing Interpersonal Relationships Theme.

Identifying Commonalities

Many students found meaningful points of connection with their peers in ways they did not expect. Most participants referenced finding commonalities with one or more of their dialogue partners. Emma explained, "We had a lot in common. Neither of us were expecting to have so much in common. That was really weird." In the following

example, Lilith shared how the one-to-one dialogues provided an opportunity to find

commonalities that were not previously apparent to her based on classroom interactions

alone.

> When I think of the dialogues, what pops into my head are those moments that I had in the various dialogues where we were agreeing and smiling and sharing an experience in places that we wouldn't necessarily expect to. Because, with the four people that I spoke to, I never had spent any time with them before outside of class and it was...going into those it was hard for me to think of places where we had stuff in common and where we could really connect beyond like class material. And then sitting down and then taking the time to ask each other questions and share our own stories, you know? I really did begin to find this deeper connection with everybody and that was really exciting and meaningful and it then brought further depth to other interactions that I had with them later. It sort of helped lay a foundation for stronger relationships and you know better understanding of what they were saying for instance in class. So that was really important to me.

In Maria's words, uncovering "striking amounts of similarities from people who had

completely different backgrounds from me or completely different ideas" was "like the

shattering of expectations." In her second interview at the conclusion of the academic

year, Maria elaborated further on this point.

> I stand by being astounded at similarities I found where I didn't expect to…. We don't expect to find similarities with people who maybe have a certain differing view or certain differing belief and those dialogues kind of force you to have those deep conversations with those people, whether you think those similarities are going to come out or not. And, it turns out a lot of times that you're like, "Wow. We think really similarly about this." It's just like one little part varies and that's it. So, I found out, in a lot of ways, our processes are the same. We just come to a different end.

Sharing meaningful stories about their social identities (sometimes invisible identities

that they had not yet disclosed) helped some students build "deeper bonds." Olivia

explained,

> I allowed my dialogue partners…to see a side of me that they would have seldom seen had they known me outside of class…By being able to share the social identities I most closely identify with, I found that it was easier to explore our

common interests…. As a result, I gained some personal information from each partner, allowing me to build their identity based on what they said instead of what I had thought previous to the conversation. The deeper bond later enabled me to feel more comfortable sharing my point of view within the classroom as well as approaching my peers outside the classroom setting.

While students spoke about their surprise in finding connection points with peers from different social identity groups, it was also meaningful for them to talk about significant experiences and frustrations with students who shared one or more of their social identities. Lucy observed that

The best part of the dialogues that I engaged in this semester occurred when I learned about identities, opinions, and experiences that I shared with the other person. For instance, when I engaged in a dialogue with Marissa, I felt comfortable discussing my relationship with my dad because I knew she had undergone similar experiences. By sharing our stories that triggered frustration and angst with our fathers, we were able to connect to each other on a very personal level.

Students bonded by talking about their shared experiences with specific social identities including gender and age, as illustrated in the two examples below.

All through those dialogues, relationships and femininity came up, and you know…it was nice. We could connect over them and we could share experiences. We could share frustrations. And, because those were shared, it was sort of a bonding experience. (Lilith)

I was like so happy to finally have a way to sum up what frustrates me with like my age. And to have her get it and then her and I could build off of that and understand each other and communicate about that feeling and how that affects our daily interactions and everything. Like the service work I do and even listening to how my parents react to my frustrations with school work. They're like, "Just do it. It's not a big deal." And I'm like, "No. It is a big deal." So things like that, it was like her and I could just share experiences with that feeling because it impacts us a lot. (Margaret)

Understanding Across Difference

In addition to identifying similarities and points of connection with their dialogue partners, their conversations also revealed important differences of perspective and

opinion. In some instances, these differences were acknowledged but left unaddressed. At other points, students employed dialogue processes, such as asking clarifying questions and suspending judgments, to arrive at a new, shared understanding of a topic or issue. In the two exchanges described below, both students expressed an appreciation for being able to conversation about a topic about which they had previously encountered judgment or hostility. Marissa's description of one of her one-one-one dialogues below exemplifies how a new understanding was achieved by exploring difference perspectives.

> Some things I was telling her I was a little nervous to tell her because I had previously encountered opposition from a few of my female friends and I was afraid of being judged. I told her everything though and she was completely understanding and non-judgmental. In fact, she later told me some of her own actions she takes against patriarchy that were completely opposite from mine, and she explained why she acted that way. It was wonderful because even though our feminist actions were different and could even be construed as conflicting/contradictory, we both had perfectly valid reasons for those actions. We both understood where the other was coming from, and I discovered a new way of feminism that I hadn't really thought of before, so that was really cool.

As early as their first one-on-one dialogue conversations, some students described how they had gained a new understanding by talking openly about different views. Talking about his first dialogue partner, Jeff explained,

> Her opinions are so diverse, and so rich, and yet so well thought out. And yet they were so polar opposite of me in many ways. And I wanted to really understand where she came from, what she was getting at with these. And it became a point when although we had completely different end results, our rationales were very similar. And we had very similar experiences, just on a different scale or on a different spectrum…. Connecting with her on that level was really, actually very neat.

In an interview at the end of the first semester, Maria reflected on a memorable conversation where she and her dialogue partner talked about their differing religious beliefs.

Louise was like, "I'm Catholic. You're atheist."…. No one had ever called me an atheist before, which is how I identify myself, but no one had ever said it…. She asked me what I thought my beliefs were. And she was like, "Oh, I feel the same way. I just think it's like this." It was a very minor detail. It was just literally the existence of a higher power was the only difference in the beliefs that we had. And I was just like, "That's really cool."…. Literally no one had ever asked me what my beliefs were before in my life…. And that was just so cool that I got to say it and that was a really good exchange. I really loved that. We were both really into it, and it was the first time that I had talked to someone that has a different identifier for their beliefs when it wasn't hostile or it wasn't debating.

Louise, Maria's dialogue partner, also reflected on this same conversation, noting the commonalities that they discovered across their differing spiritual beliefs.

The fact remains I introduce myself as a Catholic. Maria spoke about being Atheist to an extent. I asked her what she meant by that. And as she spoke about her conviction about the connection between all people, I found myself grinning because I realized that we had a lot more in common in our sense of religion than I have in common with many Catholics.

As depicted in the pair of quotes above, students experienced dialogic exchanges where they each independently recognized that their own learning had been achieved by openly engaging with different perspectives. The pair of quotes below also provides an additional example of a dialogue conversation in which Samantha and Mary worked through a disagreement and arrived at a better understanding of each other. In Samantha's description of the encounter, she wrote,

I expressed to Mary that I believed that men and women were no different, and that gender is a socially constructed norm based on specific socialization that begins at birth. Mary believed that biologically men and women are distinctly different. Even though we clearly disagreed on the topic, it seemed as if we had more in common that we thought. We could both relate to wanting to be able to play with the boys when we were younger and not wanting to be treated as "fragile" or "special" compared to the boys as we never felt fragile or special. We also were able to listen to each other's beliefs and opinions in full, and then present our own beliefs and opinions in ways that were not attacking or trying to disprove the other person. We listened carefully, asked clarifying questions, and ended up coming to many similar conclusions although from different perspectives.

Mary remembered the same conversation.

> Samantha and I found ourselves at a disagreement. This was obvious and she straight up said to me, "I disagree with you for so and so reasons." I, in return, repeated what I had heard her say and felt completely comfortable knowing that we were not going to agree. But she understood what I was saying and I totally understood her reasons. It was really great. This was definitely my best dialogue yet.

As noted in the two quotes above, students described how the specific dialogue skills and processes they were developing were useful in arriving at new understandings. Devin reflected on one of his one-on-one dialogue conversations in which he and his dialogue partner asked many questions of each other, ultimately validating each other's feelings despite their different perspectives.

> Of all the dialogues I have done so far, I think this one embraced the fundamentals of dialogue the most. Temperance and I began by delving into topics of race and class in the formation of our identities and we found that we were on the same page in a lot of ways, but we definitely have very different life experiences and therefore different perspectives. I really enjoyed how much the two of us reacted to what each other was saying. Every time Temperance expressed something that was important to her identity, I had a million questions for her and vice versa. Doing this I think really helped us to understand each other's feelings and by the end of it we were both inadvertently saying, "you deserve to feel that way."

Suspending judgments allowed Jenn the space she needed to understand her dialogue partner and "see the situation differently."

> I was able to suspend my judgment that Lilith was too radical and was working towards unnecessary changes. When she fully explained what she was striving for in gender equality I understood her and was able to see the situation differently. For example, I never knew that up until very recently, (within the last year) it was not illegal to discriminate against someone for being transgendered. Once you can get past your own judgments and assumptions you can learn a great deal about something you didn't know there was to learn about.

Students also were able to arrive at new, shared understandings in small-group dialogue settings. Talking about one of her group dialogues, Jenn explained, "It was that

first instance when it was, 'I've always felt this.' 'You've always felt that.' And then, we did become dialogic to try to figure it out." Reflecting on her last assigned dialogue of the year, Samantha shared that

> I left the dialogue feeling much closer to all of them than I had before that, and while we were leaving, we all agreed that it was a great dialogue and we all felt satisfied. We dealt with uncomfortable issues, and we had differing opinions on patriarchy and sexism, but we all listened to each other, explained ourselves and were very clear in our intentions for what we were saying. I think that it was probably my best dialogue to date and I feel that I really gained a lot of insight into both my group members and identities in general.

Feeling Frustrated with Dialogue Partners

Numerous students reported feeling frustrated with one or more of their dialogue partners at different points over the course of the academic year. While I selected the words "feeling frustrated" to title this sub-finding, in some instances confusion or even outright anger would be more appropriate descriptors of the feelings some students experienced. At some points, frustrating dialogue experiences ultimately resulted in important learning for one or more of the students involved in the encounter. However, this learning frequently occurred only upon the student's reflection after the conversation had ended. At other points, the tension or conflict remained unresolved or even unknown to the other dialogue partner(s) involved in the exchange. Temperance described the frustration she felt when she perceived that her dialogue was rushing through the conversation.

> My dialogue partner seemed to want to just get through the questions on the sheet – one, two, three, done. This person didn't seem interested in stretching out answers any more than necessary, and seemed to view the dialogue as simply a school assignment. Although I'm really shy and would take ice cream and my television set over a party on any given Friday night, I do enjoy meaningful conversations with people, and I feel like this person was trying to specifically make it not meaningful.

Lilith described a dialogue conversation that she wanted to engage in but became frustrated and exhausted when should could not understand her dialogue partner.

> Though I was really interested in engaging with him and I wanted to understand more, it got exhausting for me, which was a hard part. I just felt exhausted after a while of trying to piece things together and ask him more questions so I could better understand him. Towards the end I was just like, "What time is it? I want to leave."

Another frustrating experience for some students involved feeling judged or misunderstood. Louise shared that

> Usually, I leave a dialogue feeling closer to the person I dialogued with. This time, I did not. I left feeling confused, frustrated and angry. Parts of our dialogue were very dialogic, particularly when we were talking about religion and race. However, at one point in the dialogue I was talking about my commitment to being an ally to the LGBT community. He asked me several questions which clearly reflected his feelings on the matter. And while I appreciate that other people have very different views than me I did feel judged and angered by his questions.

In some instances in which students felt frustrated, they acknowledged that key elements of dialogue were absent from the conversation. After one small-group dialogue conversation, Marissa recalled, "There was very little time set aside to talk about our own identities. There were not enough dialogic qualities. Two people were silenced. I felt like there was a lot of misunderstanding and judgment going around." Reflecting on one of her small-group dialogues, Margaret explained how the participants (including herself) were not listening to each other.

> People were interrupting each other a lot. I do think people were getting angry with each other and raising their voices. Even I, at some point, was getting so frustrated that I just like told somebody, "No. You're wrong." And I was just like, after the fact I apologized for that. Because I don't think that's really fair for me to say. But, yeah, it was just nobody was really wanting to hear what anyone else had to say. They just wanted to be right…. They would share their opinions and when somebody tried to say, "Well, I think they are opposite," they responded with more frustration and anger than a willingness to listen.

Working with Tension and Conflict

In the examples presented above, the frustration and conflict embedded in dialogue conversations was unresolved. However, students also endeavored to work productively with tension and conflict, at points learning about themselves and others through the experience. Samantha suggested, "Conflict breeds understanding and awareness. Like I said, conflict was a part of our dialogue, and we learned much more from hearing two sides to an argument rather than just one." In her interview at the end of the year, Maria explained that

> [When] I felt like a comment that I might make would result in someone sort of jumping down my throat about it or taking offense to it, when it might just be a miscommunication, I haven't wanted to speak. So, you know, that wasn't necessarily dialogic. But, on the other hand, there's that frustration where if you don't say those things and people don't get uncomfortable, it's not meaningful.

Louise spoke about the value in working through tension, stating

> I think my dialogue with Devin definitely created tension between us, but I think it's important that that tension is there because otherwise we'd never work through it…. So even though we disagreed, Devin and I, I think that's better than...that's a stronger relationship than someone you haven't disagreed with or someone you haven't talked with.

Building Community

Over the course of the academic year, students' participation in multiple dialogue conversations in a variety of different dialogue formats (including one-on-one, small-group, and full-cohort conversations) facilitated the development of more meaningful relationships among many students. The findings presented in this section describe how students' dialogue experiences created a sense of community in the broader cohort, generated meaningful connections in the classroom and served as a starting place for new

individual friendships among students in the cohort. Karl described how the out-of-class

dialogues started a cycle of sharing and relationship building.

> Our conversations caused us to open up to one another in ways that, I can at least guarantee, I wouldn't have otherwise. By getting to know one another, we were able to grow closer and more comfortable as individuals and as a group. In turn, feeling more comfortable encouraged us to continue sharing, and a cycle was formed.

After spending one semester together and engaging in numerous one-on-one

dialogues, some students described the sense of community they felt in the cohort,

knowing that others already knew essential details about their values and backgrounds.

Reflecting on the first class session after winter break, Maria explained

> We've just become very comfortable with how much we know about each other and sort of knowing everybody's background makes it a much more friendly environment…. When we got back to classes today, I sat down and everybody was so happy to see each other even before class started. We were all just sitting there and somebody asked me about how my talking to my dad went…. And the fact that I had dialogued with this person…the fact that they knew that was kind of cool…. Just the idea that they knew that makes it that much more of a community. They know those things…. I just feel like it makes it a much more open community.

Similarly, Lucy stated,

> Through the fall retreat, hikes, shared meals, and weekly dialogues, I feel our class has transformed into a family…. In order to maintain this familial status, it is important to engage in dialogues with one another throughout the course of the semester. My four dialogues brought me much closer to the people with whom I did them. Any preconceived notion that I may have originally had was clarified during the dialogue.

At the end of the year, students reflected about how dialogue contributed to the overall

sense of community in the cohort. Mary explained the way she felt about the cohort

community after the last class meeting of the year, stating

> I walked away from that class being like, "I really love this community and I really love the person I am in this community." And I really think dialogue has

helped that, because we can talk and be able to understand each other on a deeper level that regular discussion just doesn't allow.

On a related note, Vanessa shared that

> The dialogues have helped me understand and get a lot closer to my cohort….We talked about our personal lives and I could see their social identities and snippets of our readings pop up in my head….We questioned one another and ourselves. We comforted and consoled one another. We were real with one another….I enjoyed hearing stories that were personal and meaningful without reservation. The atmosphere was full of empathy and sincerity. It felt open. I'm thankful to have had this dialogue because I see myself in a different light and place in my cohort and CSP. It's made me understand why I joined CSP in the first place.

Looking back across the entire year, one student, Olivia, used the word "family" to describe the kind of relationships she had established with other students in the cohort. She explained that

> While dialogue has made a profound impact on me, I also feel that it has played a large role in the way that the cohort is able to relate at present. Where I saw a learning community in the past semester, I believe I have found a family in the same group this semester. By relating our identities, sharing stories, and building on concepts we explore in class – I have found a challenge and match in every single person in Cohort 13 and I attribute this progress most directly to the individual and group dialogues we participated over the course of the semester.

Some students noticed how their out-of-class dialogue conversations positively impacted their ability to connect with one another in the classroom. Mary said, "I think without the dialogue, I probably wouldn't have connected with people…. It definitely helped make a connection within the classroom. I know, and for other people, you could just tell like who had a dialogue with who afterwards."

In addition to explaining how dialogue helped to create a broader sense of community within the cohort, students also described how their dialogic interactions fostered new individual friendships. Jenn wrote about an unexpected friendship that began to develop through the course of her first one-on-one dialogue conversation,

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stating, "I would consider Temperance a friend now. This morning I thought our 45-minute conversation was going to be painfully awkward. Looking back, I just got to have a relaxed conversation for two hours with a friend." The two quotes below, excerpted from students' fall semester final papers, further illustrate how friendships developed as a result of engaging in one-on-one dialogues outside of class. Mary shared that:

> In all of the dialogues I engaged, I walked away from the experience always wanting to hang out with the person more. The associations you make and exploration of it all definitely imposes a relationship that possesses respect and friendliness. I am serious in saying that within the hour that I sat down with these people, friendships were formed directly out of our conversation.

Emma similarly observed that

> The friendships I have attained due to these interpersonal dialogue sessions have become a great asset to my Citizen Scholars experience. Overall, I deem the process of getting to know these four individuals on a deeper level (seeing where they are coming from and where they are going) and having the ability to divulge to each other information about ourselves that we would not have said, either due to embarrassment or lack of opportunity, in a larger group discussion has been an awesome way to start continuous conversations and kindle meaningful friendships.

Jenn wrote about how her dialogue experiences with other students in her cohort led her to reflect on patterns of communication in her other friendships.

> The more I communicated with members of the cohort through dialogues and just talking, the more I drifted from my old friends because they are not willing to think differently or accept other ideas as valid opinions…. When a member of the cohort asks me "How are you?" it isn't an autopilot question. They really want to know how you are.

After the spring semester ended, Margaret recalled how she had developed a long-term "support system" with another member of the cohort that started in their out-of-class dialogue.

> [We] are a very strong support system for each other because of that one dialogue…. She was doing her summer job hunt and I was just checking in every day and seeing how it was going and how her interviews went and stuff like that.

And I don't see how we could have formed a community at all if it weren't for those dialogues.

Though most students agreed that they felt closer to others in the cohort because of their dialogue experiences, one student shared a different view. In his interview at the end of the first semester, Devin stated

It was a little bit like we were...being forced to get way closer and way more in depth than we, under any other circumstances, almost would have. Like, it was almost intimate. But the people that I did dialogue with, it was almost like I avoided them for the rest of the semester.

However, when I encouraged him to elaborate further, he explained,

I think it was just a weird disconnect. Like our relationship wasn't at the point where we would have known that much about each other. It was kind of like we had this really in-depth conversation and the next time we met it was like, "Well, where are we now?"

Valuing Dialogic Processes

Nearly all of the students described the value they saw in dialogue processes for learning about themselves and others, fostering mutual understanding, and strengthening relationships. In their summary reflections on their overall experiences with dialogue in the CSP, many students described how they had come to see value in dialogue as a distinct form of communication that could serve as useful civic skill for gaining shared understanding across difference and building stronger relationships. Students provided explanations about how and when they began to develop an appreciation for dialogue. At the conclusion of the first semester, Lucy shared that

I now recognize the importance of dialogue. In the beginning of the semester, I could not understand why choosing to engage in dialogue over discussion was so valuable. However, after using dialogical skills in conversations both inside and outside of class, I now appreciate how thoughts can evolve and turn into actions that may lead to a potential solution.

Vanessa also spoke about the appreciation she developed for dialogue, explaining,

"Before CSP, I didn't know what the heck dialogue was to be honest. And it sounds

ridiculous at first when you hear it…. It's just talking, you know? But it actually makes

you become more perceptive." Seeing the value in dialogue, two students specifically

mentioned wanting to have the opportunity to engage in a one-on-one dialogue with

every member of the cohort. One of these students, Samantha, commented:

> I am hoping that by the end of my era as a Citizen Scholar that I will have had the
> opportunity to dialogue at least once with each member of my cohort in an effort
> to personally experience each member. Dialogues are a great way to learn about
> someone, to share thoughts and ideas, and even for getting into important debates
> that will teach us more about ourselves, each other, and the issues at hand.

> Students identified how dialogue is an important skill for being an engaged

member of a community. Margaret described changes she was noticing in herself, stating:

> I naturally try to listen more, and to really listen and react to what people are
> saying. To me, that's the most important part of any dialogue. Dialogue helps me
> understand the importance of understanding people and making connections with
> them, something that I had never really gone out of my way to do before.

Two students specifically mentioned how dialogue processes are useful in gaining a more

complete understanding of other's points of view. Emma explained:

> I see that I have become more open minded to speak to others and learn their
> perspective on a copious amount of challenging topics centered around identity….
> You can learn a plethora of information about a person by questioning why they
> believe what they do and asking thought provoking questions to help to
> understand their point of view. Dialogical skills are a necessary tool in order to be
> an effective community member.

Lilith shared a similar thought, stating:

> The deeper knowledge I garnered from these dialogues deepened my respect for
> my partners and gave me a greater ability to understand their points of views. The
> value of dialogue is undeniable, and I plan to continue to exercise my dialogic
> muscles at every possible opportunity.

Toward the end of the year, one student, Mary, became a vocal champion of dialogue when talking with others about her experiences in the CSP. She shared that while interviewing prospective students for acceptance into the Program, "I was saying over and over to the interviewee's of Cohort 14 how dialogue will be something they will use for the rest of their life, something I have already implemented immediately into mine." Mary further explained, "Whenever I find myself raving about the Citizens' Scholar Program, I am often raving about the art of dialogue we are learning to perfect. I cannot overemphasize the amount of times I have unintentionally used dialogue to help facilitate some type of situation."

Chapter Summary

As illuminated through students' personal reflections in the examples above, learning to dialogue involved observing others, practicing dialogue processes, and for many students, gaining increased confidence integrating dialogic approaches into their interpersonal interactions. To varying degrees, students' dialogue experiences fostered their reflection on their own and others' social identities (both privileges and disadvantages). Many students described ways that they collectively explored how broader systems of oppression and privilege impact their own and others' daily experiences based on their social identities. Finally, students described the ways in which their dialogue conversations helped them establish more meaningful, individual relationships with other students as well as a stronger community within the entire cohort.

The figure below depicts all of the themes and subthemes described in this chapter.

Learning to Dialogue	Learning about Identities Through Dialogue	Developing Interpersonal Relationships
Learning about Dialogue Processes	Exploring Personal Identities	Identifying Commonalities
Working with Dialogue Prompts	Exploring Social Identities • Exploring Privilege • Exploring Oppression • Limited Diversity in Cohort	Understanding across Difference
Observing Others Model Dialogue Processes	Exploring Systems of Privilege and Oppression	Feeling Frustrated with Dialogue Partners
Practicing Dialogue Processes • Asking Questions • Listening • Suspending Judgments and Assumptions • Voicing • Balancing Participation • Self-Awareness of Triggers	Going Deeper	Creating Community Within Cohort
Gaining Confidence and Competence	Avoiding Exploring Social Identity Issues	Valuing Dialogic Relationships

Figure 6: Map of Findings: Learning to Dialogue and Learning from Dialogue.

The next chapter describes the different ways that students extended their learning about dialogue to their community service sites and interactions with other people in their lives including family members, friends, and peers outside of the CSP. The various

outcomes of extending dialogue to new settings is described as well as the challenges and

barriers students encountered when they attempted to employ dialogue processes in a

variety of novel situations.

CHAPTER 5

EXTENDING DIALOGIC PRACTICES TO OTHER SETTINGS AND RELATIONSHIPS

In this chapter, findings are presented that describe how students in the Citizen Scholars Program extended their learning about dialogue to their course-linked community service and interactions with others in their lives. The themes presented in this chapter inform the fourth research question: How do students In the Citizen Scholars Program understand the ways that engaging in dialogue about personal and social identities impacts their interactions and relationships with people outside of the Program, including friends, family, and members of the community they encounter as a part of their community engagement activities? Students vividly recalled different ways that they incorporated key aspects of dialogue into their interpersonal relationships at their community service sites and in their relationships with family members, friends, and other peers. Importantly, in almost every example students provided where they employed dialogue skills in relationships with others at their community service sites, they were interacting with someone who differed from them across at least one social identity, which included race, class, gender, ability, age, and first-language.

The students who participated in this study described how they applied specific dialogue processes and approaches, such as listening and asking clarifying questions to facilitate more meaningful exchanges with others, particularly in conversations across different social identities and perspectives. They also described unique challenges and barriers to engaging in dialogue that they encountered in different contexts. For example, some students found that while they desired to communicate with family members in more dialogic ways, longstanding patterns of arguing or debating were challenging to

transform. Finally, students pointed out specific ways that using dialogue processes improved their relationships in many different parts of their lives.

This chapter is organized into two major themes. The first theme focuses on findings that describe the ways that the CSP students extended dialogue practices to their relationships and interactions at their community service sites. The second theme highlights how students extended dialogue practices to their relationships with family, friends, and peers outside of the CSP. The same three sub-themes are nested within each of the themes: 1) applying dialogue skills, 2) encountering barriers to dialogue, and 3) improving relationships through dialogue.

Extending Dialogue to Community Service Relationships

The 18 students who participated in this study engaged in weekly (or more frequent) community service over the course of the academic year with eight different community partner organizations (Appendix I). These community-based organizations in nearby communities and resource centers on the University of Massachusetts campus provide a variety of different services to diverse populations, including low-income families, children with disabilities, English-language learners, and survivors of sexual assault. In addition to providing direct service to meet immediate needs, many of the organizations engage in political advocacy, community organizing, and coalition-building efforts. As a requirement of the CSP, each student agreed to complete at least 60 hours of community service each semester with the same partner organization. These ongoing, regularly-scheduled service experiences brought CSP students into sustained relationships with people from many different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural, and language backgrounds. The CSP students interacted with people across a wide range of

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ages, including young children, high school students, peer college students, adults, and seniors. In their final papers and interviews, 15 of the 18 students in this study described specific ways they extended dialogic practices to their relationships at their community service sites.

Applying Dialogue Skills

Students applied numerous different dialogue skills and approaches in their interactions with community members and program staff at their community service partner sites. The dialogue skills students most frequently described applying were asking questions and listening, though students often described how they employed multiple different dialogue skills in the same conversation or interaction. Some students provided examples of how they were able to use dialogue skills in facilitating group conversations as a part of their community service.

Asking Questions

Students emphasized how inquiring about others' lives and experiences through asking questions helped them connect with community members at their community partner sites. Reflecting on her service experiences, Margaret wrote

> One of the ways that I tried to become part of this community and to gain the trust of the people I was serving was by employing the dialogue skills that I was learning in class. This meant really listening to people's stories, validating their experiences and their emotions, and asking them questions not only so that I could know them better, but also so I could let them know that I was trying to understand. I noticed the positive impact that this was having on my relationships right away.

In an interview at the end of the year, Margaret provided a more detailed example of how she applied dialogue skills while eating meals with members of the community.

> Community dinner had a lot more people with mental health issues and homelessness and stuff like that…. I just sat down and had dinner with them

pretty much every Thursday night. Instead of just staying behind the counter, I sat down and had conversations with them. And I asked them tons of questions, learned a ton of their life stories, and they responded well to that. It was great for building connections.

While volunteering at an afterschool program with elementary school children, Mary found that the way she asked clarifying questions had a positive impact on her connections with kids.

> There was a time point where this girl approached me and she was just telling me how she had a really bad day. And I was like, "Why did you have a bad day?" "Oh, someone spread a rumor." It mattered a lot to her and I was like, "Well, tell me about it. How did you feel?" And I didn't even realize it until after, but I was definitely doing dialogue right then with this seven year old girl. And she responded really well to it. And she was like, "I felt really hurt and I felt really sad, and now it's really affected my whole day."…. And for a lot of the kids asking clarifying questions has been a really big part for me…. It's definitely brought me closer to the kids.

Describing similar efforts to engage kids in dialogue, Jenn noticed a connection between dialogue and the way kids ask questions. She said,

> It's fun trying to be dialogic with kids because they don't get what you're doing at all…. They're naturally just inquisitive a lot. "Why? Why?" So, you can have dialogues with them because that's kind of how they act anyways.

> Temperance noted the importance of asking questions to better understand the specific ways others wanted assistance.

> When engaging in anti-genocide work, there needs to be constant, equal dialogue between us and the people who our actions are going to affect – "What do you need from us?" "What should our campaigns look like?" "Do our campaigns respect your culture and history?" "How would you like to be involved?" There should be an equal ground between those engaging in this dialogue.

Similarly, Vanessa noticed how asking questions at her service site helped her reflect with others at her advocacy organization about how they approached their organizing efforts.

I find that when I'm at my service site, you're more open to other people, but you're also more open to the conversations that they have….With dialogue you're able to ask questions like why? Why do you guys see it this way? Why are you doing it this way? Or, why are you approaching it this way? Or, why are you organizing this way? Why are you really fighting for what you're fighting for? I think dialogue makes you actively think.

Listening

In addition to asking questions, some students described how listening and hearing others' perspectives had an impact on their interactions at their community service sites. Jeff noticed that listening involves observing others' body language and non-verbal cues. Reflecting on his interactions with children with disabilities at his community service site, he explained that

I've been able to, to really ask more questions, feel comfortable with that, and really just listen and engage a sense of them, without even, without necessarily communicating [verbally] which I thought was interesting…something I've picked up during the dialogues too. A sense of body language and a sense of perceptions, unwritten, unsaid, unspoken perceptions…you can get a great feel for an individual that way.

Later in the same interview, Jeff described a specific, meaningful interaction he had with one of the kids he supported at his community service site, recalling that

It was kind of cold, and she had a basketball, and she was shooting hoops from a little too far away, so she was missing everything. So, I approached her, which I probably wouldn't have otherwise, and I talked with her trying to see what she was trying to do with that? And it turned out that she was really, really trying to make them…. So, I decided that we were going to shoot hoops and I was going to rebound for her and such. And I just listened to her and I brought her in a little bit forward, a little bit more, and then she made the second one. And then we took a step back and by the end she was well beyond where she was air-balling it before and she was making them. And really just listening to her, listening to her speech and how others were treating her and how much she spoke afterwards even…. I think the dialogic skills were…I probably wouldn't have tried to really get to know her at all, or try to understand what she wanted before that in a lot of ways.

While engaged in advocacy work, Maria reflected on the importance of providing others an opportunity to share differing views and feel heard. She stated

Sometimes we advocate for things that people do not agree with and I've run into people who passionately didn't agree with them. I think that dialogic skills have helped me there, because it's "Okay, well, why don't you tell me what you think?" It's not, I'm going to scream back whatever comes into my head. Not that I would necessarily do that anyway, but it's just, okay, let's make sure that they feel heard and then maybe they'll listen to what I have to say.

Some students described the importance of suspending judgment while listening to others in their service roles.

It definitely just like put in check that I need to come in more non-judgmental with the conversations and then from there if I want to really get to know these people, I'm going to have to use dialogic skills in talking to them. And so, when I sat down and talked to people, I made sure to hear what they were saying more than hear what I was saying. (Margaret)

Writing about her role providing support to callers on a gender violence hotline, Marissa shared:

On the few calls that I've had, I've been validating and non-judgmental. A few of them were afraid that I was going to judge them, so they were scared. And [I was] listening, not as much talking…just listening and not assuming things. There was one caller I had last week…something was going on in her life and her friends thought that she had a mental issue going on and she needed to go to the mental hospital. And I was like, "I believe you." She was afraid that I wouldn't believe her, so I wasn't judging her, assuming things or anything. Because that was her experience.

Facilitating Dialogic Conversations

In addition to incorporating dialogue skills into their individual conversations and interactions with others at their service sites, some students actually facilitated or co-facilitated formal or informal group dialogues with peers on campus. Karl explained the ways that asking questions was useful in facilitating group conversations at his service site, a student-run organization that advocated for affordable public higher education and social justice on the campus.

I'm constantly asking people "So, why did you say that?" or "What do you mean?" And trying to clarify by saying, "So, I think what I'm getting is you're

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saying this". Which, I think, is just a natural tendency of mine in a situation where I don't feel like I know enough, but I still see the signs that the conversation needs kind of a facilitator. So, to be that facilitator, I kind of take the step of asking questions for my own benefit, but in a way that will benefit the group as well.

Emma, who worked with the same advocacy organization on campus, co-facilitated a dialogue about race and racism with other college students.

> My core team collectively decided to display a documentary and have a racial dialogue regarding that film, statistics of the UMass campus, and general feelings about race. I was able to use the dialogical skills I have learned in the Citizen Scholars Program to execute an effective dialogue between individuals of all races.

While the example above describes a situation where a CSP student helped to facilitate a conversation that was intentionally structured to be dialogic, Temperance talked about how she incorporated the dialogue skills of asking questions and voicing into her leadership role with her service organization that focused on ending genocide globally.

> It's definitely gotten me better at facilitating, for trying to get more discussions going in the meetings…."What do you think about this? What do you think?" People wouldn't really respond until I offered my opinion first…. Don't ask someone to give something that you aren't willing to give yourself.

Encountering Barriers to Dialogue

While most students identified ways that they were able to apply the dialogue skills they were learning in CSP to their community service engagement, some students encounter barriers to dialogue. A barrier some students described was not having many opportunities to dialogue with others within their role at their community service sites. Susan, who worked in a food pantry, shared:

> I don't actually communicate with people very much at my service site. I bag food mostly, so I'll have like little short conversations with people, like, "Can you pass the bread?" Like, "What did you do this weekend?" I don't really have any deep conversations with people there because of what my service is.

Another barrier a few students described was feeling uncomfortable engaging in dialogue with their site supervisors who worked as program staff at the community organizations. When asked if she had been able to connect what she was learning about dialogue to her service experiences, Mary expressed some discomfort. She explained, "The people who work there are very...they're not very open and...they're my managers. They're my bosses. I don't really want to push anything that...I don't want to ruin a good thing, so I really haven't tried." Jenn similarly reflected on the complexities of engaging in dialogue with her supervisor, stating

> Dialogue with her is interesting because she is my supervisor and there isn't that.... It's not like in class where you guys [the members of the teaching team] come straight out and say, "We're just your facilitators and we're all equal." With her, it's no. She's my manager.

Margaret described feeling uncomfortable engaging in dialogue at her community organization due to her discomfort being in close proximity to one of the clients.

> I didn't really engage in much dialogue at my service site throughout the semester. I think that stemmed more from a discomfort and problem with one individual there. In order for me to dialogue with other people, I would have had to bring myself to the person I didn't want to bring around and I didn't want to do that. So, I didn't have much dialogue [in the] second semester.

Improving Relationships Through Dialogue

As the examples provided above demonstrate, CSP students applied a variety of dialogue skills in their interactions with others at their community service sites. Though some settings were more conducive to dialogue than others, when students were able to employ dialogue skills in their conversations and interactions with community members, there were noticeable impacts on their relationships. These positive impacts included building trust, better understanding others' views, and seeing how others' individual life

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experiences were connected to broader systems of power, privilege, and oppression. These impacts are described below, illustrated by students' quotes.

At the end of the first semester, Mary described how using dialogue skills helped her build more trusting bonds with the children she taught and mentored at an after-school program.

> The kids begin to regard you with trust and compassion, which creates space for a relationship to bloom. In this practice, both parties benefit. I receive it in the opportunity to exercise my dialogue skills, while simultaneously building a bond with the children individually. The children find the benefits in practicing people skills and establishing a personal connection with an adult.

A semester later, in her interview at the end of the year, Mary provided a more detailed account of how dialogue supported her connections with these children.

> Being able to use dialogue has made me closer to some of the kids. They know me on a first name basis, which is incredible. I never thought I would see that day. And they come to me for comfort and concern and problems. I mean, I could tell you it's because I am older – a teacher, as they like to call me – or because they really do feel a connection. For some it's both, and for some it's a legitimate connection. So, it's really nice to be able to communicate with them.

Reflecting on her interactions with children at the same after-school program, Linda noted that through her modeling, some of the children began to use dialogue skills to resolve their own conflicts.

> Now, I communicate with the children using my dialogic skills by asking them clarifying questions, recognizing their feelings, resolving conflict and telling an effective story. At first, it was challenging because these children are under the age of fourteen years old, and it is difficult to get them to cooperate. However, I got to use my skills more often and they are cooperating better. Sometimes they resolve their own conflicts based on what I have practiced with them.

Vanessa talked about the connections she made with her team of other college students at her service site. After co-facilitating a dialogic conversation about race and racism with her peers, Vanessa recalled,

> We were definitely sharing stories and I felt like that was when we actually realized, "This went well, guys." This was actually our first event that went really well and I think working together felt really good, but also we got to know each other more than just, "Hey."

Emma also reflected on her learning at this same dialogue event, writing, "This was the first dialogue I have participated in with individuals of a different race. It definitely pushed my comfort limits, but a safe environment was promoted so I felt as if I could effectively contribute to the conversation."

Engaging in dialogic conversation with the supervisor at Jenn's service site, an afterschool program for children, led her to a more complete understanding of a specific practice with which she did not agree.

> I distinctly remember using dialogue as a tool for change was when I was speaking to my supervisor. I found a large box of tooth brushes in the storage closet and asked her why we had them. Apparently it is a law that the children brush their teeth after snack time. As a pre-dental student I was enraged that she was not following this law. We had an excellent dialogue about it while cleaning out the storage closet. Through our dialogue I learned her view on parent responsibilities, laws governing afterschool activities, and the reality of what running an afterschool program is like. She learned about dental health and how important it is to protect primary teeth. We did not come to an agreement about whether we will make the children brush their teeth in the future but we both learned and considered policies that are in place and if we should change them.

Alongside the training she received at her service-site, a resource center for women, Marissa felt that the dialogue skills she was integrating into her volunteer phone counseling work helped her better communicate about controversial topics. At the end of the first semester, she noticed that

> In my training, learning about how to communicate with callers overlapped with a lot of the things we were learning in CSP about dialogues. In this aspect, I have changed tremendously. I remember at the beginning of the semester I talked about how I wanted to learn how to communicate better with people, especially about controversial topics, and I think learning about dialogues in CSP and learning about hotline calls (open-ended questions, no judgments, etc.) together have impacted me so much.

One student talked about the ways that dialogue helped her to individualize her approach with different people she supported at her service sites. Describing her interactions with an adult English-language learner, Olivia shared,

> Understanding one of her struggles and hearing her express herself allowed me to build a greater context for her background as well as the way to best serve the issues that arise in a way that she feels most comfortable dealing with them.

At the end of the fall semester, Olivia provided a more detailed description of one encounter with this student.

> This particular student was crying…. She was unemployed and she really needed a resume. She's older, so she definitely would have a very difficult time…. She's just learning to read. She struggles with that. I mean, it's literacy. I could just see how difficult it was…. And rather than me being like, "this is what you need," I asked her what she thought she needed and how we could better situate her and meet her needs…. We sat down with the lead instructor and I think we really made some progress and now she's more engaged in the classroom and she's always there. She never misses a class. I think it helped her see that she does have a certain support that she may not have felt previously because she was a new student.

To summarize the findings presented in this section, the CSP students provided specific examples of ways that they were able to apply dialogue skills in their relationships with others at their community service sites. Some students encountered barriers that limited their ability to utilize dialogue skills; however most students described specific ways that their relationships with community members improved when they employed dialogue skills and approaches including asking questions and listening. The next section describes how students extended dialogue to relationships with family members, friends, and peers outside of the CSP.

Extending Dialogue to Relationships with Family, Friends, and Peers

One unexpected group of findings that emerged from the thematic analysis was the extent to which the students translated what they were learning about dialogue in the

CSP to many different relationships entirely outside of the Program. Not only were the students able to find ways to apply dialogue skills in their community service, they also described specific ways that dialogue skills were useful in improving relationships with family members, friends, romantic partners, roommates, classmates, and co-workers.

This theme illustrates the importance of providing opportunities for students to learn about, practice, and reflect on dialogue in a structured format so that they can develop a set of civic communication skills that are help create healthier and more understanding relationships in many different contexts. Structured similarly to the theme above, this theme is divided into three sub-themes: applying dialogue skills, encountering barriers to dialogue, and improving relationships through dialogue. Each sub-theme is described in detail below.

Applying Dialogue Skills

Students' capacity to apply dialogue skills to their relationships with family, friends, and peers outside of the CSP drew upon what they learned by engaging in dialogues about social identity issues with peers in their cohort. Articulating this connection, Olivia explained:

> Despite the fact that I found in-class dialogue skills to be effective, serving as a model for personal use, I discovered that using the application outside of the classroom was even more critical to approaching and working through conflict in my personal life.

Lucy shared, "Practicing dialogue with my cohort has given me the tools to engage in a dialogue with anyone, regardless if the individual has even heard of what a dialogue is."

Similar to their community service sites, the dialogue skills that students most frequently extended to their relationships with family, friends, and peers were active listening and asking clarifying questions. Some students described instances in which

they taught friends what they were learning about dialogue to help improve their relationships with those same friends or to provide support to their friends in improving relationships with others. Specific examples of the different ways CSP students applied dialogue skills in their relationships with family, friends, and peers are described below.

Students described how they were asking questions differently in their daily interactions with others. At the end of the fall semester, Jeff shared, "I began to see dialogic skills creep into my everyday conversations…. I began to say, 'Tell me more,' 'What do you mean by that?' and 'I'd like to learn more' type statements with much more regularity." Margaret explained how conversations with her father had started to improve through her modeling of dialogic processes, including asking clarifying questions.

> I have been able to apply my dialogic skills in situations where I was not engaging in intentional dialogue. I see this frequently in the conversations that I have had with my conservative father, who I once would butt heads with, usually in the forms of yelling matches, talking over each other, and dishing out harsh criticisms of one another. Since learning dialogue, I have noticed more often how I naturally wait my turn to speak, ask him lots of clarifying questions, and make sure he knows that I hear him before reacting with my own opinions. I have noticed that my insistence on doing this forced him to carry out the conversation in similar ways. People have a hard time yelling if you refuse to yell back.

Samantha also found that asking questions and suspending assumptions helped improve her communication with her roommates.

> Sometimes when I am feeling defensive in a conversation or dialogue, I try and turn the conversation back around to the other person so that I am making sure that I am not jumping to conclusions about what they think and believe. I have used this approach various times with my roommates when I find myself getting upset with them as I sense that they are upset with me. Asking questions also shows the other person that you care about where they are coming from and that their opinion matters to you, which in my experience has created more stimulating and respectful debates and discussions.

Linda described how she was developing a new approach to asking a friend

follow-up questions instead of only quickly providing advice or direction.

> When my friend complains to me about something, I'll ask a question back. But before I would be like, "Okay. Go do this." Or, my friend would say, "I need to lose weight. How do you do it?" "Work out with me." I never said like, "Okay. Have you like reduced what you eat, fatty foods? Have you thought about working out?" You know, give ideas or ask questions.

Students also shared how they focused on listening in new ways. Lilith explained

how she aspired to remain present and actively listen when a friend told her they were

transgender. Reflecting on this experience ultimately provided a meaningful learning

opportunity for Lilith.

> I believe I was as present as I have ever been, seeing how crucial it was for me to build mutual understanding. After she had finished telling me about her experience, I observed how difficult it had been to hold my questions. However, by withholding my questions, I was able to stick to a single train of thought, thus continuing a dialogue about her perceptions of what it means to be transgender, in addition to her fears and hopes for the future. The shared process of communication allowed me to face my biggest challenge – learning that I am not always right, particularly regarding the assumptions I had about transgender individuals. Just because I had interpreted her as a male, does not necessarily mean that she always felt that clear-cut boundary.

It was helpful for Olivia to come to an agreement with her mother about some guidelines

for their future conversations that would allow both of them space to voice their opinions.

> When speaking with my mother, I have found that she tends to absolve control of the conversation, making it difficult for my voice to be heard. This happens very frequently, particularly regarding points of conflict, since I find she has a tendency to interrupt or ignore what I have to say. Having seen this play out many times, my mother and I established dialogue rules that would allow for the time and space to be able to both voice what we wanted to say without making it seem as though someone's opinion was less valid. In a sense, I was able to embrace the inevitable conflict that would arrive around discussion about social and economic issues, and look forward to working towards a common solution instead of our traditional "agreeing to disagree."

Through learning more about dialogue, Temperance developed a new appreciation for the

way that her friends asked her probing questions.

> Whenever I talk to some of my friends from home about certain stuff, they ask a
> lot of questions and prod me for more information. It used to make me horribly
> uncomfortable and defensive, and I would get frustrated because I could not think
> why they would want to know that. However, now I keep seeing such behavior as
> dialogical skills, and I'm grateful that my friends care about me enough and am
> interested in what I say enough to exercise their dialogue skills during
> conversations with me.

Noticing the impact that dialogue had on their own conversations, numerous

students described instances in which their talked with their friends and family members

about what they had learning about dialogue in the CSP.

> These dialogues have proven to be so effective in my life that I actually have been
> attempting to teach my friends the ways of dialogue so that we can bounce deep
> matters off of each other to expand our friendship. (Mary)

Similarly, Jenn explained, "With my mom, I say, 'This is what I'm talking about in class,

and it's helped me outside of class, and this would help us talk about things.'"

Two students provided specific examples of how they encouraged their friends to

consider how dialogue might help them improve communication with their significant

others. Over the Thanksgiving break, Margaret introduced a friend to what she was

learning about dialogue processes.

> I explained to her what we were doing with dialogue and I was like, you just have
> to like listen to each other, like legitimately take turns talking, say what you want
> to say, and he's not like allowed to say any of his opinions. He can only ask you
> questions and react to what you're saying, and validate your feelings, and then
> you guys can switch and take turns. It's like dialoging. And like it ended up being
> really affective and their relationship is going great right now…. I used to hate
> even being in the room with both of them, but now that they like make it a point
> to consciously sit down and have these kinds of conversations.

Lilith described a similar situation where she offered support to a friend.

> [My friends] were both so afraid of what was happening in their relationship. Neither of them were actually really being honest about what was happening. And I said, "Well, do you know anything about dialogue?" He said, "Isn't that just having conversation?" And I said, "No. Would you like a lesson?" And so I sat down with him and I explained to him the things that I think are important in dialogue and I said the first thing that's really important is honesty, because dialogue is about sharing. And I explained the difference between convergent and divergent conversation, and I said, "You know? At a certain point, you and your girlfriend are going to need to have a convergent conversation and just make a decision about what you're going to do about the situation. But, before you move that way, you need to open up all the possibilities and make sure that you both fully understand the situation and both talk to each other about what you're feeling, what you're experiencing, and what you're looking for in the future. And you just need to both make sure that you understand thoroughly, both yourselves and, you know, your partner.

In effect, these CSP students had become ambassadors for dialogue, hoping that they could help others improve interpersonal relationships by learning about and adopting more dialogic approaches. Though many students were able to apply dialogue skills to other aspects of their lives outside of the CSP program, they also encountered barriers to engaging in dialogue that are described in the next section.

Encountering Barriers to Dialogue

Students explained that even in relationships with family members, friends, and peers in which they wanted to engage more dialogically, at some points they were not as successful as they had hoped. Students described three distinct barriers: 1) others were not ready or willing to shift longstanding patters of communication to engage more dialogically, 2) others did not share the same passion for talking about social identity issues, 3) they were too busy to set aside the time needed to engage in dialogue.

We turn first to the barrier of others not being ready or willing to shift longstanding patters of communication and engage more dialogically. This was

frustrating to some CSP students, when their efforts to be more dialogic were not met

with success. Marissa spoke clearly to the point, stating,

> I still really can't talk to my dad about a lot of stuff just because he doesn't really
> know how to communicate with people and I think it's really hard to
> communicate with someone if they aren't doing it back.

Lucy shared a similar experience about her efforts to change communication patterns

with her father.

> I now realize that our relationship must be a two-way street; we both must work
> to better understand each other. Therefore, I must patiently try my hardest to
> listen to his words and visual body cues when I am reasoning his perspective. In
> return, I expect my dad to truly listen to my words and realize their significance.
> Though my listening skills have improved this semester, my dad still needs to
> practice listening without becoming distracted by external factors, including his
> cell phone and his patients' medical conditions.

Similarly, Jenn described a frustrating conversation with her mother.

> Going home and trying to do this is nearly impossible with some people and
> totally easy with others. I tried to have a dialogue that slowly, quickly turned into
> a debate about Cuba with my mom. That was a disaster. Not a disaster, not like a
> screaming match, but she's still got these memories of hiding under her desk in
> case we get bombed. That's what's ingrained in her. So, I need people to give it a
> chance, you know? Maybe we do have to talk it out. Maybe you do have to listen
> to me and I will listen to you and we'll figure out what's going on. That was the
> hard part.

Marissa described how she was thinking about what she could do to remain dialogic even

when others are not willing to consider different views dialogically.

> How can I be dialogic and effectively communicate my views to someone who I
> feel doesn't want to hear them and doesn't make an effort to understand? Is there
> a way that I can check myself so that I don't get angry or triggered, to just stay
> calm and continue to be dialogic even if the other person does not choose to do so
> as well?

> Students also described encountering resistance or confusion when they tried to

engage in dialogue with others who did not share the same passion for talking about

social identity issues. Jenn talked about the challenges of engaging her roommate and friends from home in conversations about race and gender.

> I tried to go back [home] after the dialogues and talk to my friends and be like, "What do you think about your being White?" [Her friends replied,] "What is there to think about?", you know? Or I tried to talk to my roommate and she's like very old fashioned. She's female, but she's sexist, you know? So, it's like in her. And her father and her brother are very sexist, and they've always been the men of the house and now her boyfriend's the same way. And I look at it, and I'm like, "Why are you with him?" So, I try to have these conversations, but my friends are just like, "I don't get it."

Another barrier that had an impact on the ability to engage in dialogue was not having enough time. Linda talked about being too busy to devote the time necessary to really engage in dialogue with their friends.

> I tried last semester to talk to my friends, but again on my side, I'm always busy so it was always my fault. Every time we planned to meet, I'm always like, "Okay. I won't make it. Sorry." But now I have more time, yeah, to talk to my friends and actually like listen to their story and share my own story…. There's something about them I still want to learn. There's something about me they still want to learn.

The examples above provide insight into the ways that some CSP students were challenged engaging more dialogically with family members and friends. The next section highlights specific ways that students' relationships improved when they were able to apply dialogue skills in many parts of their lives.

Improving Relationships Through Dialogue

When students attempted to incorporate dialogue processes into conversations with their family members, friends, and peers, there were many instances where there relationships improved and they were better prepared to help mediate conflict. Some students' family members noticed positive changes in their communication styles and approaches. Speaking about dialogue broadly, Margaret concluded that

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Dialoguing has undoubtedly proven to be one of the most valuable skills that I will take out of this program. In my everyday life, I often realize that I have begun to dialogue about different issues without even realizing it. The result of dialogue tends to be a more fulfilling conversation—I feel more satisfied when I leave a dialogue than I do when I leave other conversations.

Many students talked about the ways that dialogue had an impact on their communication with their parents.

"What's most surprising is that I have been able to (on occasion) be dialogical with my own mother, who I usually get into heated arguments with when we talk about political subjects. So I am really proud of that and I really want to keep working on it". (Marissa)

By arriving at a new, shared understanding of each other's feelings, Jenn described a positive change in her relationship with her mother.

I love my mom very much, but we always explain our usually contradicting views of a situation at the same time and get nowhere….One night we had a lengthy dialogue about why I wanted to move out here. We finally understood each other's emotions. I came to understand that being an empty nester will be a traumatic experience for her and she came to understand that I am not moving out because I do not like my parents, but because I want to try being independent. Ever since we had this dialogue the transition process of me moving out has been much smoother.

At the conclusion of the year, Mary reflected on a time when she was able to apply some of what she was learning about dialogue to help mediate a conflict between her mother and sister.

There was a conflicting time between my mother and sister when my sister wanted to go on birth control. To my mother, this was a shock and completely absurd; but to my sister, this was an actual issue and she was feeling neglected by my mother on this topic. I proclaimed myself the go-between, acting as a mediator between the two of them. Acting as this vital role, I decided the best way to approach the difficult situation was to facilitate a dialogue between the two of them. I allowed for my mother to state her side; following that, I would summarize what I had heard her say and allow for her to make adjustments. The same was reciprocated for my sister. There were times when both of them wanted to immediately interrupt the other in the midst of their story, but I halted this reaction and helped bring closure to the situation.

Though Mary's facilitation approach was very structured and did not completely align with some dialogue principles (and could also be considered a moderated debate in some respects), what stands out about this example was Mary's confidence to translate what she was learning in the CSP to a real life situation entirely removed from her college experience.

Not only did students notice changes in the ways they engaged family members in conversation, in some instances, their family members also noticed positive changes in the ways they were communicating. At the end of the first semester, Marissa remarked that

> With my mom, I used to be really, really bad at communicating when I was upset…. I would just walk away or I just couldn't talk. And she told me that she noticed that I'm a lot better at that now. She complimented me on that over break saying, "You're a lot better at communicating now." So, she was proud of me, I guess.

Mary's mother was impressed with Mary's ability to help facilitate the tense conversation between her mother and her sister described above.

> Afterward my mom even thanked me. She was like, "Mary, you were really good at that. Thank you so much for being in the middle of it, and being the voice of reason and sanity." And I was like, "Yeah. Well you guys needed it."…. It was definitely a moment where they needed dialogue. Because they needed to hear each other, but they also needed to fully express themselves without being cut off.

Students not only extended dialogue processes to their interactions with family members but also with their friends and other peers. In an interview, Lucy suggested, "Dialogue just helps you be a better friend, I think…. If I'm a good listener, I'm a better friend." In her final paper, Lucy elaborated on the ways she had applied dialogue skills to engage in deeper conversations with her friends.

> In addition to listening more attentively, I now also find myself asking many clarifying questions to deepen a conversation with anyone with whom I talk. For

instance, a few days ago, my friend told me that, "modern art is a silly idea."…
We engaged in a long dialogue of how modern art originated and I even learned a
few new facts about the modern art movement. By engaging in dialogue rather
than a basic discussion, I urge the person with whom I am speaking and myself to
ponder and develop original thoughts.

Emma also reflected on the ways that dialogue skills impacted her relationships with

friends and acquaintances.

Throughout my political journey that I have undertaken this semester, I have
become more vocal when it comes to political agendas and learned that dialogical
skills are much needed when political views are being discussed. Using the
dialogical skills I have obtained and continue to sharpen, I have been able to
effectively articulate my thoughts and feelings and learn from others' opinions
and views; this has caused me to establish healthier, more profound relationships.

By reflecting on the communication patterns among her friends, Lilith realized she could

make changes to be more dialogic herself.

I also recognized that the dialectical patterns of my friends who were frequently
in conflict to be distinctly debate-like and wholly un-dialogic. For the first time in
my life, I was not only aware of when conversations made me feel uncomfortable
or frustrated, I was also able to identify exactly why. This realization was really
empowering, because it meant that I actually had the ability to change my own
dialectical behavior and draw attention to the problematic contributions of others.

Not only did students talk about ways that they incorporated dialogue processes

into general conversations with their friends, but some students specifically talked about

how their CSP dialogue experiences prepared them to talk with friends about social

identities and forms of oppression. In her final paper at the conclusion of the fall

semester, Marissa shared:

I already see changes in the way I talk to people, and when/if I talk to people. I
am now talking more about issues that bother me, for instance I had an
unintentional dialogue with one of my friends at the dining hall the other day
about sexism. It was so interesting. I don't think I've ever had such a random
dialogue before. We had sort of conflicting views, and though I didn't really agree
with what he was saying, I didn't judge him and I asked him a lot of clarifying
questions, and then explained my side as well. In the end, I could see where he
was coming from and the whole conversation ended really well, and the person

said he felt like I was really open-minded and non-judgmental of his opinions, so that made me feel really good.

Jenn felt better prepared to have a conversation with a friend from home about Catholicism after talking about religion in one of her assigned, one-on-one CSP dialogues.

> When I went home over the break for Christmas, I had this awesome dialogue with my friend. I actually started talking about how "One of my friends is really Catholic…. What does it mean to you?"… I understood more about the Catholic religion through my dialogue with Susan, so now I could bring it outside to my friends and home.

> In addition to family and friends, some CSP students described ways that they had extended dialogue into their relationships with romantic partners and roommates. Mary shared how she incorporated dialogue skills into conversations with her boyfriend, noting

> When a quarrel between my boyfriend and I arises, I enjoy implementing the skills so that we can both share our sides of the argument and know that the other is respecting and listening to what we have to say. This has prevented some of our scuffles from escalating into yelling matches. The impact alone of employing the skills proves to be worthy in that tensions are reduced and feelings become validated.

At the end of the spring semester, Devin described how he had extended what he was learning in the CSP to a navigate differences with his roommates.

> I've learned tools, problem solving strategies and gained communicative experience both in the intentional dialogues and the in-class discussions. At the beginning of the semester, I was having difficulty finding a middle ground with my roommates on how we were going to keep the house clean, and how we were going to cohabitate the same home with such different aspirations for our own college experiences. More than anything else, Tools for Change [the spring semester CSP course] has taught me how to engage in conversations about difficult topics that both parties may not want to talk about at all.

On a related topic, Jenn shared how dialogue helped preserve a friendship with one of her roommates.

It makes life easier. It makes you realize what you're fighting about, what you're trying to figure out. Like, my roommate is extremely passive aggressive about everything and I'll just stop and ask, "Why? Why are you angry at me?"… It has worked. And I think that it kind of saved our friendship too….We still are great friends. We just can't live together. And dialogue has definitely helped us come to terms with that. Because for a while it was one of us telling the other one, "Well, I don't want to live with you." Well, I don't want to live with you." And then, through dialogue it was a more mutual understanding of maybe this just isn't the best thing for us. So, it definitely helped with my roommate.

Finally, one student, Maria, shared a story about how she incorporated dialogue skills into her advocacy and fundraising work over the winter break.

I was canvassing in Boston for Planned Parenthood. So that's really great, but people get worked up about it. I've been yelled at. But I also had this one day….I had six or seven people stop and they would listen to what I had to say and they would ask questions and I would answer them and I would ask them questions and then they would say, "Well thank you. I don't believe in this." They stopped and listened to what I had to say and they had their beliefs, but they listened to what I was saying, asked questions about it. I asked them questions, and it was great. I was so excited about it. I didn't make a dime off it, but it was still valuable. It went beyond the prompts that I had and I just kind of went with what they were asking...what they were interested in. And that was really cool. I felt like dialogue really helped me there.

Maria's story exemplified how one student was able to connect core principles of dialogue into political advocacy work outside of CSP community service experiences. It is this kind of connection that the CSP Teaching Team aspired toward when integrating dialogue more intentionally into the curriculum.

Chapter Summary

In summary, the findings presented in this chapter illustrate the ways that students extended their learning about dialogue to multiple novel settings in their interactions with community members and staff at their community service partner sites as well as relationships with family members, friends, and other peers outside of the CSP. The dialogue processes students employed during their community service included active

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listening and questions with the intention to increase their understanding. While some students described barriers to dialogue that their encountered in some settings and relationships, many students provided detailed examples of the positive impact that dialogue had on their relationships with others at their community service sites as well as their understanding of other's experiences.

In their lives outside of the CSP program, students also began to consciously and unconsciously integrate fundamental aspects of dialogue into their conversations with family members, friends, and other peers. Upon reflection, some students noticed that they were applying dialogue skills in their daily conversations without realizing they were doing so in the moment. Though not all of their efforts were met with success, students described how attempts to engage others more dialogically initiated more open communication with important people in their lives, particularly around topics that had a history of tension or misunderstanding. Some CSP students identified instances in which they endeavored to teach others about the processes and benefits of dialogue that they had been experiencing in the Program. The diagram below provides an overview of all of the themes presented in this chapter.

```
┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
│ Extending Dialogue│          │ Extending Dialogue│
│  to Community     │          │  to Relationships │
│    Service        │          │   with Family,    │
│  Relationships    │          │ Friends, and Peers│
└────┬─────────────┘          └────┬─────────────┘
     │  ┌──────────────┐           │  ┌──────────────┐
     ├──│ Applying     │           ├──│ Applying     │
     │  │ Dialogue Skills│         │  │ Dialogue Skills│
     │  └──────────────┘           │  └──────────────┘
     │  ┌──────────────┐           │  ┌──────────────┐
     ├──│ Encountering │           ├──│ Encountering │
     │  │ Barriers to  │           │  │ Barriers to  │
     │  │ Dialogue     │           │  │ Dialogue     │
     │  └──────────────┘           │  └──────────────┘
     │  ┌──────────────┐           │  ┌──────────────┐
     └──│ Improving    │           └──│ Improving    │
        │ Relationships│              │ Relationships│
        │ Through      │              │ Through      │
        │ Dialogue     │              │ Dialogue     │
        └──────────────┘              └──────────────┘
```
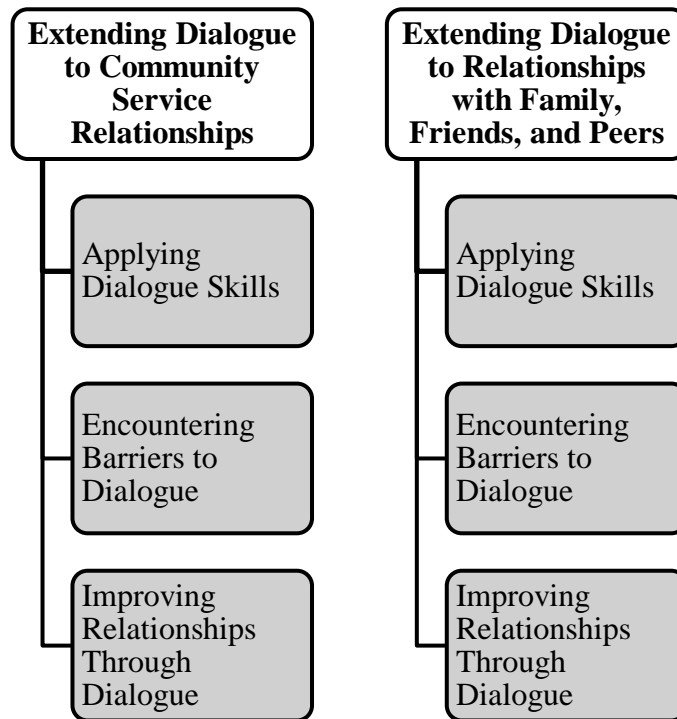
Figure 7: Map of Findings: Extending Dialogue.

In the next chapter, three of the most significant findings from the study are discussed, noting points of connection with the relevant literature. These findings are 1) dialogue mattered, 2) dialogue facilitated students' civic learning, and 3) students' learning about dialogue was supported by a unique, engaged learning process. Implications for service-learning pedagogy and directions for future research are presented.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

<u>Introduction</u>

In a segregated society, in which schools and neighborhoods in the United States are as divided by race and income as they were half a century ago, if not more (Reardon & Bischoff, 2011; Reardon & Owens, 2014), many college students are not accustomed to engaging with others across different social identities and perspectives. And yet, meaningful face-to-face dialogue about our different social identities and the ways those identities are differently located in systems of privilege and oppression is more imperative today than ever. Political rhetoric is becoming increasingly polarized and new technology is relegating many of our conversations to brief text message exchanges and online posts. All of this is occurring in a broader national context in which overt acts of racism, classism, xenophobia, and other forms of oppression persist, initiating activist responses and conservative backlash. Higher education is one site of possibility for supporting students in developing the competencies and confidence necessary to engage in conversations about social identity-based issues.

When intentionally designed to support social justice outcomes, critical service-learning provides an opportunity for college students to reflect on their own and others' social identities and social locations while learning and practicing the civic skills needed to engage meaningfully with others in a diverse democracy. It is essential that students in service-learning courses learn how to talk, listen, and collaborate with community members in ways that acknowledge and explore the impact of social identities, privilege, and oppression on individuals and the communities in which they live. Mitchell (2015)

asserted, "In order to prepare students to engage with and take action on critical concerns facing our communities, we must help them understand how identity informs experience" (para. 2). To facilitate students' learning about their own and others' identities and to provide structured opportunities to practice engaging in meaningful conversations across difference, a thoughtfully-designed curriculum, such as the initiative studied in this dissertation, is needed.

This study aimed to provide a more complete understanding of how students in a multi-semester service-learning program, the Citizen Scholars Program (CSP) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, learned how to dialogue about social identities and broader social identity issues, drawing on key design elements of intergroup dialogue pedagogy (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). The study also explored the impact of these students' dialogue experiences on their relationships with other students in their cohort and on their interactions with members of the community with whom they engaged in their course-linked community service. In the previous two chapters, I presented findings that resulted from thematic analysis of qualitative data collected over the course of one academic year from the 18 students in the 13th CSP cohort. These data included 25 individual interview transcripts, 36 final papers, and 126 reflective memos. I begin this chapter by summarizing the findings presented above. Then, I highlight and discuss in greater detail three of the most significant findings: 1) dialogue profoundly mattered to students, 2) dialogue facilitated students' civic learning, and 3) students' learning to dialogue was supported by an intentionally-designed, engaged learning process. Finally, I present key implications of this study for service-learning pedagogy and implications for future research.

Summary of Findings

Findings are presented in detail and illustrated by students' quotes in the previous two chapters. In Chapter 4, findings are presented that respond to the first three research questions. The first research question asked, "How do students in the CSP learn how to dialogue with others?" Students' learning was supported by the structured dialogue curriculum in the CSP, particularly the scaffolded dialogue prompts (included in Appendices A and B) that helped students focus on talking about social identities in their conversations with their peers outside of the classroom. Students honed dialogue skills and practices through their active experimentation and structured reflection over the course of an entire academic year. In particular, students described becoming more confident with active listening, asking probing questions, suspending judgments and assumptions, and voicing their views and experiences related to their social identities. By practicing and reflecting on dialogue processes, students described how they moved from initial feelings of nervousness and awkwardness at the beginning of the year to developing confidence in their ability to dialogue with their classroom peers.

The second research question asked, "How do the dialogue experiences of students in the CSP inform their understanding of their own and others' social identities, privileges, and disadvantages?" CSP students' thought-provoking conversations with their peers led them to consider, or to reconsider, their own social identities and social locations. They reported learning more about themselves and others through conversations about their privileged identities, their disadvantaged identities, and in some instances the intersections among multiple social identities. Some of the topics addressed included specific forms of privilege: White privilege, male privilege, and able-bodied

privilege. For example, one male student described how participating in dialogue with peers across gender helped him recognize that the way he frequently dominated conversations was tied to his internalized male privilege. In another example, a White student described recognizing that her not talking or thinking about race frequently in her dialogues was connected to her White privilege.

In their conversations about disadvantaged social group memberships, students listened to each other's personal experiences witnessing and experiencing different forms oppression. For example, one student described how she actively listened to one of her dialogue partners talk about racial stereotypes she consistently encountered and what she did to actively break those stereotypes. Some students described finding solidarity with their dialogue partners when they identified similarities in the ways they encountered oppression in their lives. For instance, one student explained how she began to better understand patriarchy and noticed a pattern in how sexism played out similarly in different families after engaging in a series of conversations about gender and sexism with different women in the cohort.

Some students talked about specific manifestations of oppression (e.g., sexism, racism, and homophobia) in their dialogue conversations, in some instances sharing specific ideas about actions they could take to support justice-oriented social change. Importantly, some students, including both students of color in the cohort, described how limited racial diversity within the cohort made it challenging to talk and learn about specific social identity issues with their peers, particularly topics related to race, racism, and White privilege.

By increasing their sociopolitical understanding of themselves and others, students were better able to make sense of their community service experiences. For example, two White students talked about how their White privilege became more salient for them at their service sites where most of the community members were people of color. By reflecting on their community service experiences in dialogues with their peers, students began to see how their social identities impacted their interactions with community members.

Not surprisingly, at the beginning of the first semester, a few students reported avoiding delving into conversation about social identities, fearing they might offend their dialogue partners by asking questions about their social identities. As the year progressed and students continued to engage in repeated dialogue conversations with different peers, they described becoming more comfortable utilizing dialogue processes and challenging themselves and their dialogue partners to delve further into conversations about experiences related to their social identities.

The third research question asked, "How do students in the CSP understand the ways that engaging in dialogue about personal and social identities impacts their interactions and relationships with peers in their cohort?" First, students seemed surprised about finding commonalities with their dialogue partners. Interestingly, commonalities became a point of connection and also a bridge for exploring different identities and viewpoints and working through disagreement together. Students described how their dialogue conversations provided a space in which they were willing to be more vulnerable disclosing their emotions and personal experiences. While most students felt

more connected to their peers during and after their dialogue experiences, there were also instances in which students felt frustrated and seemed to distance themselves.

By engaging in dialogue with their peers, many students felt a stronger sense of community across the entire cohort. Some students pointed out how new friendships and trusting relationships stemmed from sharing personal stories about social identities in their one-on-one and small-group dialogue conversations. Students described how the connections they established in their out-of-class dialogues helped them better understand each other during classroom conversations.

Students pointed out how practicing dialogue provided opportunities to develop new communication skills, reflect on their own social identities, learn about others' experiences with social identities, and explore complex issues in productive ways they did not often experience in their lives on campus and beyond. These outcomes were very meaningful to many of the students; and at the end of the year, some students described their intentions to continue integrating dialogue processes into their broader lives outside of the CSP.

The findings presented in Chapter 5 responded to the fourth research question: "How do students in the CSP understand the ways that engaging in dialogue about personal and social identities impacts their interactions and relationships with people outside of the Program, including friends, family, and members of the community they encounter as a part of their community engagement activities?" In a variety of settings, CSP students applied what they learned about dialogue on campus to their service sites, in which they interacted with low-income families, children with disabilities, English-language learners, and peer college students. The CSP students made efforts to seek out

opportunities for meaningful conversations with community members, entering these conversations with a spirit of curiosity and a desire to learn more about others' lives and experiences. Active listening and asking clarifying questions opened avenues to building more trusting relationships with community members. Some students described challenges they encountered extending dialogue to their community service settings, including not having much direct contact with community members in some service partnerships and feeling wary about crossing power roles to engage in dialogue about social identities with their site supervisors.

Notably, the CSP students extended what they learned about dialogue to their relationships outside of the CSP, including improving communication with family members, friends, and other peers. Students described having more fulfilling conversations, improving longstanding relationships, developing new understanding of others' views and feelings in which communication had previously been strained, and talking about social identity issues with people they previously had not. At points, students encountered challenges attempting to engage in dialogue outside of the CSP that included others' unfamiliarity with dialogue processes, difficulty changing longstanding communication patterns with family members, and not sharing the same knowledge and language about social identity issues and social justice education frameworks.

In summary, the CSP provided ongoing opportunities for a cohort of service-learning students to learn about dialogue, practice engaging in dialogue about social identity issues with their peers, and reflect on these experiences. By participating in this unique dialogue curriculum, students in the 13th CSP cohort reported being better able to talk with their peers about social identity issues they frequently avoided, including their

personal experiences with privilege and oppression. Students established meaningful points of connection with their peers by talking about their social identities, even when they thought they would have little in common with each other. Importantly, in the context of two service-learning courses, students described specific situations in which they extended dialogue processes to their interactions and relationships with community members in their community service placements. In the next section, I highlight three of the most noteworthy findings from this study, noting points of connection with the relevant literature.

Discussion of Findings

Three findings from this study stand out as particularly significant to the field of service-learning and civic engagement. First, learning to dialogue and engaging in dialogue with others about social identity issues profoundly mattered to the CSP students. Second, practicing dialogue within in a structured, reflective curriculum, facilitated students' civic learning, evidenced by the ways they extended dialogue to their community service relationships and integrated dialogue sensibilities into their everyday lives. Finally, students' learning to dialogue (and the subsequent outcomes linked to this learning) was supported by an intentionally-scaffolded engaged learning process. In the sections below, I explain how these findings inform service-learning pedagogy and practice.

Dialogue Mattered

Learning to dialogue across differences and experiencing dialogic moments with their peers had a significant impact on the CSP students. Notably, of their own accord, students talked about the ways that dialogue practices had become essential in building

and improving interpersonal relationships within and beyond the CSP. In our increasingly polarized and segregated society, in which debate is glorified and many people look only to media sources that confirm their preexisting views, it is significant that the CSP students valued dialogue as an alternative to other, more adversarial and fragmented ways of relating with others across different perspectives and identities. In this section, I highlight the ways that students came to appreciate dialogue, offer explanations why engaging in dialogue mattered so much to these students, and suggest why this is important for critical service-learning pedagogy.

When the CSP students were first formally introduced to dialogue early in the fall semester through assigned readings and an interactive workshop, they were noticeably intrigued. However, some students shared that they were not initially certain how dialogue truly differed from or could offer more substance than their typical, everyday conversations. However, as the year progressed, they experienced firsthand how working to integrate dialogic processes into their conversations provided an opportunity to connect with other students more meaningfully than in most of their other encounters on campus, both inside and outside of their classes. Many students found that when they took risks to ask their dialogue partners how their lived experiences were shaped by their social identities and social locations—and shared personal stories related to their own identities—new ground became available upon which they could understand each other and connect. By having meaningful conversations about topics they often avoided, including sexism, ableism, religious beliefs, and White privilege, students expressed that they felt a sense of relief and excitement that it was actually possible to broach these topics with peers in ways that resulted in learning and connection instead of frustration

and silence. This was most salient for students when they were talking with others across different social identities or about topics about which they had felt judged or misunderstood in the past.

Over the course of the year, students came to see dialogue practices as very applicable to their lives, not merely another assignment they needed to complete to earn a good grade in a course. However, engaging in dialogue was not easy for the CSP students. It required time, effort, vulnerability, and patience for them to remain open and engaged in their conversations, instead of falling back into more familiar, fragmented patterns of communication. Students compellingly rose to this challenge, striving to truly listen to others' perspectives, instead of quickly forming their own opinions and responses, posing thoughtful questions to understand others more completely, and taking risks to respond honestly to their peers' inquiries. After most of their out-of-class dialogue conversations, students felt fulfilled and were grateful for the time they invested learning more about each other and themselves. Their conversations frequently exceeded the 45 minutes they were asked to spend together to complete the assignment. In some instances, students' dialogue conversations lasted more than two hours.

Notably, many students expressed joy and exuberance around their experiences engaging in dialogue with their peers as a part of their CSP coursework, a passion and intrinsic investment not often present in students' other course experiences. For most students, the feeling of connection they experienced in their CSP dialogues was absent from most of their other academic pursuits on campus. The theme of reigniting students' passion for learning is echoed in feminist pedagogy. hooks (1994) proposed, "Some version of engaged pedagogy is really the only type of teaching that truly generates

excitement in the classroom, that enables students and professors to feel the joy of learning" (p. 204). Exemplifying the passion students felt for engaging in dialogue, at the end of the year, many students were emphatic that the dialogue assignment should continue through the second-year of the program. Some students even called for the teaching team to provided structured opportunities to ensure that they engaged in at least one intentional dialogue conversation with every other student in the cohort.

Indeed, CSP students often talked about the unique characteristics of the Program that they appreciated, including traveling together with the same cohort across four semesters, learning through active engagement in community settings, and participating in community-building activities, including retreats and evening gatherings. However, students' dialogue encounters ignited a distinct enthusiasm that was evident in the ways they talked and wrote about their experiences. Students expressed a sense of wonderment in the potential of dialogue to uncover unanticipated connections.

One explanation for students' enthusiasm around their dialogue conversations is that dialogue presents an opportunity for students to share meaningful personal stories about their lives. Through inquiring about other's experiences and sharing their own personal stories that related to their social identities, students became more invested in each other's lives. Some CSP students compared their dialogue conversations with classmates in the cohort to meaningful conversations they had with their closest friends. Not only were the CSP students sharing personal stories, they felt that they were truly being heard and seen by others, a result of their dialogue partners being present in their listening and asking thoughtful clarifying questions to understand their experiences and feelings more completely. This experience of the CSP students is supported by research

on the outcomes of personal storytelling in intergroup dialogue that suggests listening to others' stories evokes a range of emotions that lead to feelings of connection with others in dialogue groups, what Keehn (2014) referred to as "connecting through the heart" (p. 335).

A second possible explanation for the CSP students' excitement around dialogue is that they observed the direct positive impact of dialogue in their everyday lives. Experimenting with dialogue practices, such as active listening, suspending assumptions, and asking clarifying questions, not only seemed to improve the quality of students relationships with staff and community members at their community service sites but also with their family members and friends. Impressively, nearly every student described at least one specific example of how dialogue had been beneficial in their relationships at their community service sites. Students used the phrases "opened-up," "better understanding," "brought me closer," and "a legitimate connection" to describe how dialogue was impacting the ways they engaged with both children and adults during their community service interactions. Students were also impressed by the ways that practicing dialogue processes positively impacted their relationships with some family members and friends. Students recognized situations in which they were able to shift longstanding patterns of tension and frustration with parents and siblings by focusing more intentionally on listening, suspending their initial assumptions and judgments, and asking clarifying questions to gain a more complete understanding of their family members' views and feelings. By experiencing firsthand how employing dialogue process led to more fulfilling conversations and improved relationships, students noticed how dialogue mattered in their broader lives on and off campus.

While it is significant that dialogue mattered to students and that they became increasingly invested in honing their dialogic skills, their passion for dialogue fostered an interesting ripple effect. The CSP students were effectively subverting the current dominant cultural practices of engagement and communication that manifest in a particular way for millennial college students. Describing the ways that texting, posting, and chatting online is diminishing face-to-face, interpersonal communication, Turkle (2015) wrote, "It all adds up to a flight from conversation—at least from conversation that is open-ended and spontaneous, conversation in which we play with ideas, in which we allow ourselves to be fully present and vulnerable" (p. 4). Research has shown that college students are "eager for opportunities to talk about issues with a diverse group of people in open and authentic ways" (Kiesa et al., 2007, p. 5). However, many college students do not have opportunities to practice the skills needed to engage each other in face-to-face conversations that explore what many perceive to be more challenging topics about social identities and social issues.

In sum, the CSP students' ascribed significant meaning to their dialogue experiences. In their dialogue conversations, students felt more fully seen and heard, humanized in ways they rarely are in their college experience. Students also saw for themselves how engaging in dialogue across differences opened new pathways for understanding others and establishing meaningful connections in new and preexisting relationships. As students continued to practice dialogue in the CSP, they began to recognize the potential for that extended well beyond the classroom and the campus.

Developing skills and confidence to dialogue across difference is essential in order to fulfill the aspirations of critical service-learning, namely creating more just

relationships within the classroom and community settings (Mitchell, 2008). Dialogue

has the potential to transform students' relationships with others, ultimately for the good

of the community members involved in service-learning partnerships. Preparing students

to engage in dialogue across differences offers a means to shift paternalistic, student-

focused service-learning experiences to more authentic partnerships that acknowledge

community members' unique life stories and explore how their experiences are impacted

by systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

Dialogue Facilitated Students' Civic Learning

A second significant finding from this study was that learning to dialogue about

social identity issues within a service-learning context fostered, reinforced, and

expanded, the CSP students' civic learning. The dialogic skills that the CSP students

developed are necessary for democratic engagement in our diverse, yet segregated,

society. By engaging each other and community partners more dialogically, students

demonstrate their internalization of fundamental civic sensibilities. Students become

more aware of their own agency and more purposeful in building solidarity to work with

others for social justice.

Civic learning includes the "knowledge, skills, values, and the capacity to work

with others on civic and societal challenges" (National Task Force on Civic Learning and

Democratic Engagement, 2012, p. 6). In working collaboratively to create a more just

society, civic learning also requires an awareness of one's social identities and the way

those identities are located within systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

(Checkoway, 2011; Simpson, 2014). Though many different structural and pedagogical

components of the CSP function together to support students' civic learning, the

dissertation findings show that learning to dialogue about social identities within the CSP had a unique and notable impact in two ways: 1) students developed specific dialogic competencies that supported meaningful interactions across difference in their community service engagement and 2) students increased their awareness of their own and others' social identities and social locations. These two outcomes are not independent of each other but, rather, are considerably intertwined. To this point, intergroup dialogue pedagogy, a "critical dialogic" approach upon which the CSP dialogue curriculum was based, supports students in developing dialogic competencies as part of a process to attain the broader educational goals of "consciousness raising, building relationships across difference, and strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice" (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007, p. 9). In the sections below, examples are provided that illustrate how the CSP students developed dialogic competencies and enhanced their understanding of social identities and social locations.

Students Developed Dialogue Competencies

By learning to dialogue and practicing dialogue with their peers in the CSP, students developed specific dialogic competencies that supported their ongoing, civic engagement in their course-linked community service and in their broader lives. Students described specific encounters in which they intentionally focused on relating more dialogically with others, as well as how dialogue processes were becoming infused in their everyday lives, sometimes unconsciously. These processes included active listening, asking clarifying questions, identifying assumptions, suspending judgments, voicing, and balancing participation in conversations.

By repeatedly practicing dialogue competencies with their peers and reflecting on the extent to which they were successful in their attempts to engage dialogically, students were able to apply these competencies in novel ways in their interactions with community members in their community service. It is significant that students were able to extend what they learned about dialogue to their service with a wide range of different community partner organizations that supported different community aspirations and needs. Among the numerous examples students reported, they applied dialogic competencies in an after-school program with young children, an English language-learning program for campus employees, and a student-led advocacy organization on campus. Students' dialogic encounters with community members spanned age, race, class, gender, first-language, and abilities.

In addition to practicing dialogue processes within the CSP, students also began to internalize more dialogic ways of relating to others that permeated many aspects of their lives. They began to internalize and embody dialogic sensibilities that, for some, started to become unconscious habits of mind. This was evidenced by students noticing that their approach to interpersonal conversations and interactions had shifted over the course of the year, even when they were not consciously intending to utilize dialogue processes. For example, students reported that dialogue "is something that I'm almost unconsciously incorporating in my everyday conversation" and "I've totally seen myself utilize aspects of dialogue without thinking about it."

The findings suggest that learning to dialogue also produced more lasting civic sensibilities that extended beyond the end of the semester. This was evident in students' descriptions of the ways that they approached conversations differently with family

members and friends over the winter recess after they had completed the first semester CSP course. In interviews conducted after students' returned from winter break, they described being able to listen more openly to others without jumping to conclusions and ask clarifying questions in an effort to better understand others' feelings and views. Even when students' efforts to engage more dialogically with family and friends at home were not as successful as they had hoped, it was significant that they recognized and valued the new approaches to communication they were practicing in the CSP, ones that could potentially increase understanding and open new channels for connection in these longstanding relationships.

Increased Awareness of Social Identities and Social Locations

In addition to developing a unique set of dialogic competencies, CSP students also increased their awareness of their own and others' social identities and how those identities were located in systems of privilege and oppression. Students reported that they thought about their social identities in new ways as a result of their dialogue conversations. The course-assigned dialogue prompts did not direct them to talk about specific social identities; instead, they were encouraged to engage in dialogue about the identities that were most salient to them as well as identities they rarely thought about. Students reported talking about a wide range of social identity groups including race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, ability, size, and age. The dialogue conversations in the CSP represented the first time many students engaged in focused conversations about, and reflected on, their social identities within systems of privilege and oppression.

The findings suggest that the students' dialogue experiences supported their sociopolitical development. Watts, Williams, and Jagers (2003) explained, [Sociopolitical development] "emphasizes an understanding of the cultural and political forces that shape one's status in society…a process of growth in a person's knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and capacity for action in political and social systems" (p. 185). Studies with high school youth have similarly found that participation in sustained intergroup dialogue contributes to their sociopolitical development (Aldana, 2014).

In the two sections above, I highlighted two significant outcomes related to students' learning to dialogue in the CSP. First, that dialogue profoundly mattered to students. And second, that the students developed a specific set of civic competencies and sensibilities that they were able to apply at their community service partner sites and in their broader lives. In the following section, I shift to highlight and discuss how learning to dialogue took place with a specific, intentionally-crafted pedagogical intervention.

Engaged Learning Process

The CSP students who participated in this study learned how to dialogue about social identity issues by engaging in a unique, purposeful curriculum embedded in a broader service-learning course context. In this section, I begin by recounting what the students themselves found to be important factors in how they learned to dialogue. Then I describe how the CSP teaching team structured and scaffolded the dialogue pedagogy. Throughout, I identify how relevant learning theories inform the CSP dialogue pedagogy.

The CSP students highlighted specific aspects of the dialogue learning process that stood out to them. It is of particular interest that students mentioned these aspects without being directly asked in their interview or paper prompts. In the eyes of the

students, there were three components of the dialogue curriculum that were particularly

beneficial to their learning. First, students noticed that having opportunities to participate

in a sustained series of numerous intentionally-dialogic conversations over the course of

an academic year with different peers provided an opportunity to learn from their

successes and challenges and to apply what they learned in one conversation to future

conversations. One student explained:

> Initially, the assigned dialogues felt a bit awkward especially considering the personal nature of the topics we were discussing. However, as the practice became more routine, I felt as though practicing dialogue made it easier for me to articulate my uncensored thoughts on the matters of identity, aspects of my own personal background, biases, etc.

Second, students recalled how it was helpful to begin learning about dialogue by reading

articles that introduced the foundations of dialogue and participating in two interactive

workshops that helped them gain an understanding of what sets dialogue apart from other

types of conversation. One of the students recalled, "Dissecting dialogue in the manner in

which we did early in the semester made me aware of subtle differences which honestly I

didn't even know existed." Finally, students remarked on the value of having a coach

dedicated to supporting their learning about dialogue, not only providing written

feedback on their reflections but by modeling dialogic practices and offering reminders

about dialogue during class sessions. One student shared, "I learned so much from [our

dialogue coach], even just from his simple tips and ideas to be more mindful and dialogic

when communicating with people."

Students pointed out how many of the key components of the CSP Dialogue

Project supported their learning. However, the aspects of the curriculum that students

described in the dissertation data were only part of a broader pedagogy that was

intentionally designed by the CSP teaching team. The CSP Dialogue Project drew on the theoretical foundations and best practices of intergroup dialogue as well as instructors' personal experience participating in and facilitating intergroup dialogues. While an increased emphasis was placed on learning to dialogue about social identities with the 13th cohort of the CSP, this focus was built upon a longstanding focus on interpersonal communication, storytelling, and social identity exploration in the CSP. The formal CSP Dialogue Project, comprised of the dialogue workshops and experiential assignments that students were asked to complete, was nested within a broader curricular framework that already supported the underlying values of dialogue.

The year-long CSP Dialogue Project was an engaged learning process that involved four primary pedagogical components: sustained practice with peers, structured reflection, coaching and modeling, and competency building. Students' learning to dialogue did not occur in a vacuum but was held together through a purposefully-designed container (Isaacs, 1999). This container included providing students with a foundational introduction to dialogue knowledge and skills (through assigned readings and interactive workshops), a set of intentional prompts to guide their conversations, and a scaffolded sequence for their conversations (moving from one-on-one dialogues to small group dialogues). Another factor that was essential to students' learning to dialogue was that they repeated this learning process with different peers through a series of seven required conversations outside of class time over the course of an entire academic year, in addition to opportunities for dialogue during class sessions. The process of learning to dialogue in the CSP is illustrated in the diagram below in which the primary pedagogical

components of the learning process are indicated by the small circles. What follows is an

explanation of each individual component on the engaged learning process.
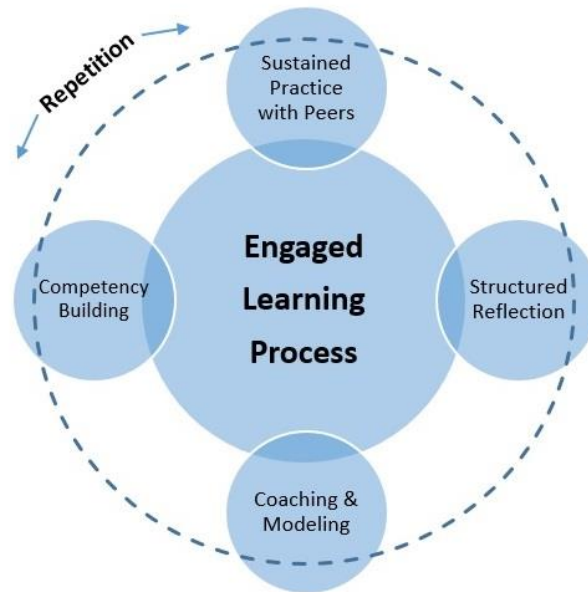
Figure 8: Engaged Learning Process

<u>Sustained Practice with Peers</u>

In the CSP, students did not learn about dialogue only by reading about it and

discussing the principles of dialogic communication abstractly. Instead, students were

immersed in active, structured, and sustained opportunities to practice engaging in

dialogue through experiential activities in the classroom (including role playing and

focused listening activities) and a series of seven mutually-facilitated conversations with

their peers scheduled outside of class meetings that spanned an entire academic year.

Students were provided with a framework within which they actively experimented with

different dialogue processes, namely conversation guides that included a list of suggested

dialogue prompts (Appendices A and B). These dialogue prompts were divided into four

sequential categories: Check In, Reflections on Previous Dialogues, Open Dialogue, and Dialogue about the Dialogue.

Structured Reflection

As is well-documented in the experiential learning and service-learning literature, structured, ongoing reflection on one's actions and experiences is vital to students' learning about themselves and others (Eyler, 2002; Hatcher, Bringle, & Muthiah, 2004; Kolb, 1984). The CSP students were provided with opportunities to reflect on their dialogue experiences on their own as well as with others. Students reflected individually when they wrote their dialogue reflection after each conversation. Prompts students responded to in their reflections included, "In what ways were you challenged in this dialogue?" and "Through participating in this dialogue, what did you learn about your own social identities?" The CSP students were asked to reflect together with their dialogue partners face-to-face at the conclusion of each conversation. The prompts in the final section of the dialogue conversation guide (labeled "dialogue about the dialogue") included, "How well did we apply the guidelines for dialogue?" and "What did we do well and what do we want to do better next time?"

Coaching and Modeling

Students' learning to dialogue was supported through ongoing coaching and modeling by members of the teaching team, including the course instructors, the Dialogue Coach, and the undergraduate teaching assistants. A trained dialogic facilitator was not present to guide students' dialogue conversations outside of class. However, the Dialogue Coach provided individualized feedback to each student in response to the written reflections students wrote about each of their seven required dialogue

conversations. Intentionally, the bulk of this feedback posed questions to encourage students' reflection on their social identities, celebrated students' feelings of excitement and connection with peers, appreciated the individual risks students were taking, and encouraged students to persist when they experienced challenges and frustration. During class sessions, members of the teaching team attempted to model dialogue processes in their facilitation of large- and small-group conversations.

Competency-building

Through continued practice and experimentation, students began to gain increased comfort and confidence utilizing specific dialogue competencies in their conversations, including active listening, asking probing questions, attempting to suspend their judgments, and voicing feelings and personal stories central to their social identities. As the students honed these (and other) dialogue competencies, they were often willing to take greater risks than they did at the beginning of the year and were less inclined to settle for conversations that did not thoughtfully explore topics related to social identities. On the whole, their continuing development of dialogue competencies manifested in their increased confidence to employ those competencies. In this way, students' learning process over the course of the year took the shape of a spiral. In each subsequent conversation, students began at a different starting place, drawing upon the new skills and processes they were continuing to hone.

Points of Connection with Relevant Theories

Not surprisingly, students' descriptions of how they learned to dialogue in the CSP mirror core elements of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2009). The CSP pedagogy stressed several components

that map closely onto Kolb's model of experiential learning in which four modes of learning encompass a cyclical learning process. These modes are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. According to Kolb, learners can enter the cycle at any of the different modes, but learning is most effective when learners engage with all four modes.

Kolb (1984) explained that in the concrete experience mode, learners "must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences" (p. 30). The CSP Dialogue Project provided students with the direct experience of engaging in semi-structured dialogue conversations with their peers outside of class as well as in their structured dialogues in class. Students described how they purposefully strived to become more aware of and to suspend their preexisting biases and assumptions.

In the reflective observation mode, Kolb (1984) explained that learners "reflect on and observe their experiences from multiple perspectives" (p. 30). By participating in one-on-one and small group conversations with different peers, the CSP students had opportunities to reflect on their own experiences in relation to others' experiences. After each of their seven required dialogue conversations, the students engaged in a more formal reflection process, writing memos based on a series of prompts that encouraged them to think about what aspects of their conversations (including their own thoughts and behaviors) were dialogic and in what ways their conversations could have been more dialogic. Many students reflected on their own and others' social identities, finding commonalities across shared experiences and arriving at new understandings across differences. Some students critically reflected on their own privilege and identified the

ways that their own lived experiences were impacted by broader institutional systems of power, privilege and oppression.

Kolb's (1984) model also suggests that the mode of abstract conceptualization involves creating "concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories" (p. 30). Many CSP students described how they had come to conceptualize dialogue in new ways over the course of the year, drawing not only on the definitions and frameworks presented to them early in the fall semester but upon their personal experiences with dialogue in interaction with others. Each student conceptualized dialogue slightly differently with some focusing more on rational processes and structures and others highlighting the emotional and relational aspects of dialogue.

Finally, in the active experimentation mode, Kolb (1984) explained that learners "must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems" (p. 42). Almost all of the CSP students exemplified engagement with this mode of learning when they experimented with extending their learning about dialogue to novel settings. Most students tested and revised their new understandings of dialogic communication in many different types of relationships and various aspects of their lives.

The dialogue pedagogy introduced in the CSP was thoughtfully designed by the course instructors to optimally facilitate the desired student outcomes of learning how to dialogue across differences and social locations. As detailed above, the CSP dialogue pedagogy closely mirrors the four modes of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, a landmark theory in the fields of experiential education and service-learning. By aligning with a prominent theatrical framework the CSP instructors were well positioned to support students' learning and development of dialogic skills.

From a different perspective, Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory sheds light on the processes by which the CSP students learned to dialogue and began to consciously and unconsciously integrate dialogue processes into their lives. A transformative approach to teaching and learning proposes that, through a combination of experience, critical reflection, and dialogue, people can experience a lasting shift in the ways they understand the world. Taylor (2009) explained that "dialogue becomes the medium for critical reflection to be put into action, where experience is reflected on, assumptions and beliefs are questioned, and habits of mind are ultimately transformed" (p. 9). While it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which the CSP students' habits of mind and heart were transformed within the scope of this study, it was evidenced in the findings that the opportunity to engage in frequent dialogic conversation provided a structure for students to reflect on their experiences and skill sets, particularly in relation to questions concerning social identities and conflicting perspectives.

Conceptual Relationships of Significant Findings

To summarize the major findings presented in this chapter, there were two significant outcomes of learning to dialogue about social identities in the CSP. First, dialogue really mattered to the CSP students. This mattering was linked to students' meaningful experiences engaging in dialogue with their peers in their cohort as well as with members of the community in their CSP community service and others in their broader lives. Second, engaging in dialogue about social identities in the CSP facilitated students' civic learning. Students developed a unique set of dialogic competencies, while increasing their awareness of their own and others' social identities and social locations. These two significant outcomes were supported by the intentionally-designed engaged

learning process that included sustained practice with peers, structured reflection, coaching and modeling, and competency building. The diagram below illustrates the relationship among all of the significant findings presented in this chapter.
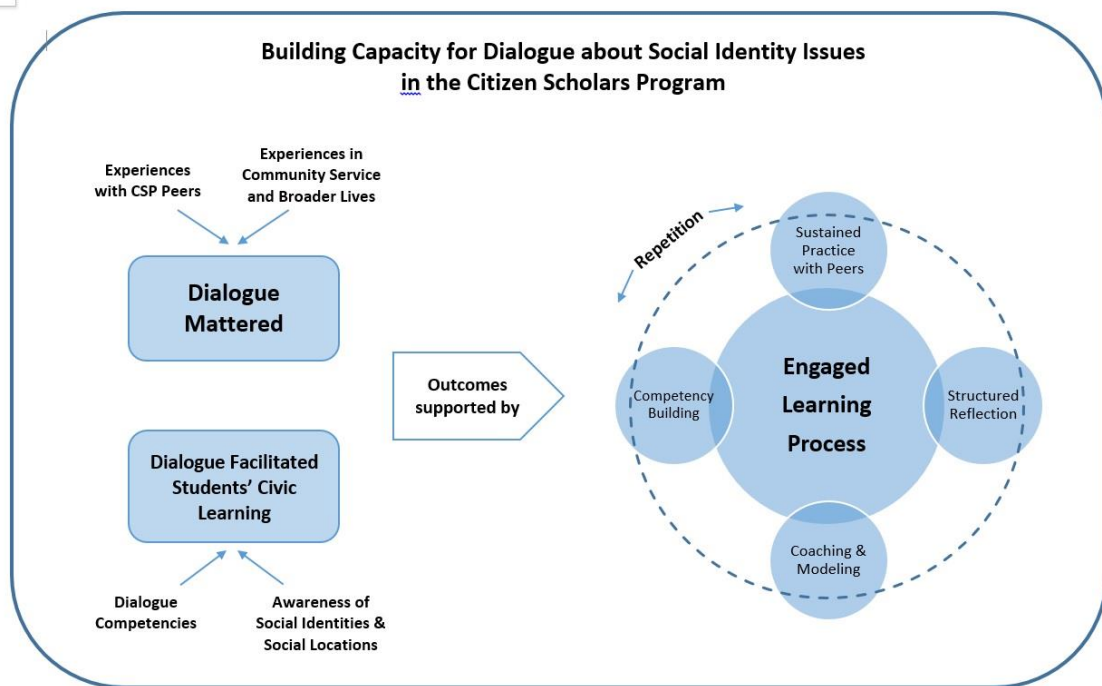
Figure 9: Building Capacity for Dialogue About Social Identity Issues in the CSP

Implications for Service-Learning Pedagogy

The purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences of a small cohort of 18 students who engaged in dialogue about social identities in one unique service-learning program, the Citizens Scholars Program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. As the findings presented above illustrate, by learning to dialogue and practicing dialogue with their peers in a structured, sustained curriculum, these students increased their awareness of their own and others' social identities, developed competencies useful in created shared understanding others across difference, and extended dialogue processes into their relationships with community members in

their community service partner sites. This case study highlights the significant potential of incorporating dialogue across difference into service-learning as part of a broader approach of focusing on social justice outcomes. Though the service-learning program that served as the site for this research may differ from other service-learning programs in significant ways, these students' stories and experiences provide insights that may be useful to the broader field of service learning and civic engagement. Below, I offer specific strategies and considerations for incorporating dialogue across difference into service-learning pedagogy.

While it is exciting to imagine the potential for implementing a dialogue curriculum similar to the one described in this dissertation in a variety of different service-learning courses, supporting students in learning how to dialogue about social identity issues cannot be accomplished simply by adding on a new course assignment, requiring a few new readings about dialogue, and replicating a set of dialogue prompts. Burbules (1993) indicated, "Dialogue is not something we do or use; it is a relation into which we enter" (p. xiii). A more nuanced understanding of dialogue (and intergroup dialogue practices more specifically) is necessary to model dialogue processes in our teaching and facilitation of class conversations as well as coach students through their experiences learning to dialogue. Given the uniqueness of every service-learning course, having a foundational understanding of intergroup dialogue—and ideally firsthand experience participating in structured dialogue across difference—will provide practitioners with the capacity to make informed choices in individualizing a dialogue pedagogy that best aligns with their specific course goals, community partners, and campus context. All this being said, it is my hope that service-learning practitioners will

embrace the challenge of learning about dialogue and engaging in dialogue themselves as they integrate dialogue pedagogy into their teaching and facilitation.

Though service-learning courses vary considerably in course structure, course content, and intended learning outcomes, the six implications for practice described below may be of value to practitioners in their efforts to support students in developing dialogic competencies and a more dialogic mindset that are of particular importance when students are engaging across many types of difference and in which identities are differently located in systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

Provide Opportunities for Students to Dialogue in Different Settings and Groups of Different Sizes

The CSP Dialogue Project provided a structure for students to engage in five one-on-one dialogue conversations, two small-group dialogues with 3-6 classmates, and larger instructor-facilitated dialogues during class meetings with the full cohort of 18 students. By structuring these different configurations for dialogue, students had the opportunity to reflect on how their comfort and ability to apply dialogue processes varied in different settings and in differently-sized groups. Since students practiced dialogue with many different groups of peers, they had the opportunity to see patterns emerge across the different conversations. Most students described a range of different experiences in their different dialogue conversations. While some conversations flowed easily and naturally, others were challenging for a variety of reasons. Often, students' continued reflection about a difficult conversation (or a specific aspect of a conversation that was challenging) led to them learning something about themselves that they might not have, following one of their more agreeable encounters. Further, engaging in dialogue with multiple classmates, illuminates the different kinds of skills required for engaging in

dialogue with different types of people in other aspects of students' lives. While engaging in dialogues with many different groups has benefits, it is also important to consider that sustained dialogue with the same group of people, as structured in the Four Stage Model of Intergroup Dialogue (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013), allows for students to carry their learning and relationships forward from one conversation to the next, exploring increasingly complex topics in greater depth, without needing to start from scratch each time.

Consider Different Facilitation Models

In the CSP Dialogue Project, most of the students' dialogue encounters were not guided by trained facilitators. Instead, students held the responsibility to mutually-facilitate the conversation among the participants (only two participants in many instances) with the support of a written guide that provided a series of conversation prompts. Through their efforts to incorporate elements of dialogue into conversations on their own (without a dedicated facilitator), students had an opportunity to practice dialogue in ways that are more similar to other real-life settings that are similarly un-facilitated encounters. This structure is a departure from The Four-Stage Model of Intergroup Dialogue (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013) and other dialogue models with college students where facilitation by trained (co)facilitators is a core element of the pedagogy. Without a doubt, in the absence of a trained facilitator, students could more easily avoid engaging in challenging conversations about social identity issues, and a balance of voices could not be encouraged and moderated. However, by taking on the full responsibility of guiding the process and determining the content in many of their dialogue conversations, students are prepared to incorporate aspects of dialogue into the

un-facilitated interactions and relationships that in their daily lives. Practitioners may want to explore models that provide opportunities for students to participate in dialogues with trained facilitators as well as opportunities to mutually-facilitate dialogue themselves.

Connect Dialogue Topics with Course Content and Materials

Service-learning instructors seeking to incorporate dialogues about social identities and social identity issues into their pedagogy should make explicit connections between the dialogue topics and prompts and the course content (e.g., required readings or video viewing assignments). For students to engage in meaningful conversations about social identity issues, they first need to be familiar with frameworks and definitions that support this exploration. Dialogue prompts need to align with specific topics and ideas that are highlighted in course materials and class discussions. For example, when students are reading about how privilege and oppression operates in service relationships, specific dialogue prompts can encourage students to talk with each other about their own privileges and experiences with oppression, recalling stories and examples from their own lives.

Design Dialogue Experiences that Explore a Range of Personal and Social Identities

To support students in building the trust necessary for engaging in dialogues about social identity issues, it is helpful to provide students with opportunities to talk about their personal identities (including personal interests and life experiences) in addition to their social identities. This process of identifying commonalities and differences based on personal identities helps establish a pattern for building bridges and exploring differences based on social identities. However, it is important to encourage

students not to focus exclusively on their personal identities and points of connection, which may feel more comfortable than delving into conversations about social identity issues. This can be accomplished by intentionally sequencing dialogue prompts to build from an exploration of personal identities to conversations about social identities, and ultimately how systems of power, privilege, and oppression operate. In addition to including a place for student to talk about their personal identities in dialogue conversations, also design dialogue prompts to explore multiple social identities and the intersections among identities. Depending on each unique service-learning context, including the social identities of the students in the course and the identity issues salient for specific community partner organizations, it may be important to foreground certain social identities in the design of dialogue prompts and activities. In the CSP Dialogue Assignments, students' learning was supported by encouraging them to talk with their dialogue partners about not only the social identities that were most salient for them (those they frequently talked about in their initial dialogues early in the academic year) but also about those identities that they frequently did not think about and wanted to learn more about.

Individualize Dialogue Activities and Supporting Materials
for Each Class or Cohort

Intergroup dialogue practitioners propose that its success "depends on the availability and participation of people from diverse backgrounds" (Aldana, 2014, p. 140). However, the diversity of each unique service-learning course will vary across many different social identity groups. It is important for service-learning practitioners to consider how the specific identities of the students within a class or cohort (and potentially the limited diversity within the group) may impact dialogue about difference.

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Class readings and in-class activities should be intentionally designed to provide students with knowledge and awareness about their own and others' social identity groups, customized to represent the unique identities in each class. In regards to the racial diversity in the CSP cohort in the current study, the majority of students identified as White. Some White students shared that they struggled engaging in dialogue about race with other White students, not knowing what to talk about, which aligns with other research on White silence in racial dialogues (DiAngelo, 2012). Students of color in the cohort were frustrated when many of the White students with whom they dialogued avoided talking about race. Because of their own racial privilege, many of these White students had not previously engaged in any substantial reflection about their own racial identity. Based on what we learned during the year this study was conducted, the CSP instructors added new readings to the syllabus to help students reflect on their own unique racial identity development and how whiteness functions within service-learning. Students were asked to read Mitchell, Donahue, and Young-Law's (2012) article, "Service-Learning as a Pedagogy of Whiteness" and Renn's (2012) chapter, "Creating and Re-Creating Race: The Emergence of Racial Identity as a Critical Element in Psychological, Sociological, and Ecological Perspectives on Human Development," as well as one additional chapter from Wijeyesinghe and Jackson's (2012) *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development* that most closely aligned with their own racial identity. After students completed these readings, the instructors facilitated small-group conversations as an opportunity for students to reflect together on their individual learning about their specific racial identities and the impact of whiteness on the cohort.

Engage Students in Dialogue About Their Experiences in the Community

In addition to providing structured opportunities for students to engage in broader dialogue about social identities and systems of power, privilege, and oppression, practitioners should encourage students to engage in dialogic conversations about their community engagement experiences and how these experiences connect with their own and others' social identities and the larger social systems at play. In many respects, the CSP Dialogue Assignment functioned in isolation alongside numerous other focus areas that could have been more intentionally integrated. Students were engaged in many different forms of reflection separately. In addition to reflecting on required course materials in papers and in-class conversations, students wrote separate sets of reflection memos about their service experiences, their dialogue experiences, and (only in the spring semester) their mindfulness/contemplative practice experiences. While students made connections among these different experiences to varying degrees, reflections could have been better structured to reduce redundancy and focus on the intersections across the different types of learning experiences students engaged with.

Summary of Implications

The findings from this study illuminated a number of important implications for critical service-learning pedagogy, particularly for service-learning instructors who seek to prepare students for dialogue across differences in their courses. This study underscores the importance of crafting a context-specific pedagogical design for supporting students in learning about and practicing dialogue about social identity issues. However, while many factors will vary considerably, including community partners, course content, and the social identities of the students and instructor(s), to be effective,

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practitioners are advised to first develop a robust personal understanding of the

foundational concepts guiding intergroup dialogue. In the next section, suggestions and

implications for future research are presented.

<div align="center">**Directions for Future Research**</div>

Through the process of designing and implementing this research project, I have

identified numerous opportunities for related future research that could expand upon the

findings presented in this study. These suggestions are described below.

- **Explore** how students' attempts to apply dialogue skills in community service settings impacts community members. Cruz and Giles (2000) posed an important question in the title of an article they co-wrote: "Where's the community in service-learning research?" Instead of focusing only on students' learning and their outcomes of incorporating dialogue into service-learning, future research should foreground the outcomes of community members and staff at community partner organizations who participate in dialogue with college students as a part of service-learning partnerships. One approach would be to utilize participatory action research strategies to involve community members in multiple phases of the research project, including the initial design, data collection, and data analysis.

- **Compare** different dialogue facilitation models. In the CSP, students' dialogue conversations were mutually facilitated by the students themselves. It would be beneficial to have an understanding of how students' learning to dialogue in a service-learning context may differ if conversations are guided by trained peer or faculty facilitators.

- **Focus** on how students' experiences engaging in dialogue in community service contexts differ based on their social identities and social locations. It would be valuable to have a better understanding of the ways students' experiences extending dialogue processes to community service settings differ depending on the extent to which their salient social identities are similar or dissimilar to community members in their service sites. For example, how do the experiences of students of color differ from White students in a community service setting in which the majority of community members are people of color?

- **Employ** a mixed-methods design. Incorporating survey data in tandem with qualitative data could provide additional insight about how students change over time while learning to dialogue across difference and extend dialogue processes to community service settings. Existing standardized scales utilized in other intergroup dialogue research (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Nagda, Kim, & Truelove, 2004) and service-learning research (Bringle, Philips, & Hudson, 2004;

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Eyler & Giles, 1999) could be used in their current forms or adapted as a part of a mixed-methods design, or original, context-specific scales could be developed.

- **Assess** the longitudinal outcomes of learning to dialogue in service-learning. To gain a more complete understanding of how, and to what extent, students continue to incorporate their learning about dialogue into their conversations, interactions, and relationships with others. Future research could assess the longitudinal impact of participating in the CSP Dialogue Project, one year or more after students completed the program.

While by no means exhaustive, the topics listed above identify important directions for future research on incorporating aspects of intergroup dialogue into service-learning pedagogy. This dissertation research represents one of the first studies to explore the potential of connecting these two pedagogies. As such, there is ample opportunity and a considerable need for continuing research in this area.

Concluding Remarks

For more than a decade before beginning this research project, I had been captivated by critical service-learning and intergroup dialogue as unique pedagogies that have the potential to support students in developing the knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to engage in justice-oriented social change in their communities and in their interpersonal relationships. My first learning about these pedagogies was not derived from my own direct participation in them but through other practitioners' writing and presentations. I immediately noticed something different about the way that practitioners spoke and wrote about critical service-learning and intergroup dialogue. They did not shy away from naming the historical legacies and current realities of racism, sexism, classism, and all forms of oppression that not only divide us but do so at the extreme cost of the oppressed and the unearned advantage of the privileged. They proposed a path for individual and collective action, a means through which stereotypes and assumptions

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could be named and unlearned, an opening for voice instead of silence, and the capacity for creating shared meaning and renewed relationships across difference. My learning continued, when, as a graduate student, I participated in intergroup dialogue and service-learning experiences and recognized and began to embody the transformative potential I had read about in my own thoughts, words, and actions. Coming full circle, I have had opportunities to teach service-learning courses and to co-facilitate sustained intergroup dialogues, reflecting on these experiences through the lens of a practitioner as well as a participant.

Through my personal process of learning and engagement with critical service-learning and intergroup dialogue, I began to see possibilities for integrating elements of both pedagogies to better support the intended outcomes. Where critical service-learning practitioners were calling for a shift in the field to place an explicit emphasis on creating more just relationships in both the community and classroom and engaging students in analyzing the systemic oppression that functions to create underserved communities, intergroup dialogue offered practical solutions to support students in achieving these outcomes. My mentors, scholar-practitioners and experts in service-learning and intergroup dialogue, shared this notion that dialogue processes could be thoughtfully integrated into a service-learning effort.

Though not without limitations and areas for continued revision and development, the findings from this study reveal that there is considerable potential in incorporating aspects of intergroup dialogue into service-learning to better align with both social justice outcomes and more just processes of relating with others. It presents an opportunity not only to identify new shared meaning across difference but to gain a more complete

understanding of ourselves. In an interview conversation at the end of the academic year,

I asked one of the student participants if her understanding of dialogue had changed over

the course of the year. She replied:

> There's exposure to issues that are really deep within you. They make up who you are. They are who you are. They're ideas that you're exposing. And in these moments, you're allowed to disagree. You're allowed to ask questions. You're allowed to agree. You're allowed to go further. And dialogue ultimately encourages you to learn who you are on a deeper perspective, on a deeper scale.

While oppressive structures of dominance and subordination are embedded within our

society and also embodied within each of us, I am inspired by this student's words and

take heart that when we engage in critical self-reflection, explore our shared humanity

through dialogue with others, and act courageously, change is possible.

APPENDIX A

THE DIALOGUE PROJECT ASSIGNMENT - FALL 2011

The Good Society

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS THOROUGHLY.

We ask you to engage, over the course of the semester, in individual, one-on-one dialogues with at least four other members of your cohort, at least three of <u>whom you don't know well</u>. This project will extend into the second and possibly the third and fourth terms of the program. Each dialogue should address personal identity in some way (that is, of the many different dimensions of identity that we have discussed, which of these come into play for you and how in your day-to-day life at UMass and in your service?). We provide some guidelines and some prompts below.

The objectives of the exercise are to:

1) continue to build the CSP community through greater knowledge of self and other

2) prepare ourselves for service through greater knowledge of self and other

3) build trust within the CSP community

4) practice and develop dialogical skills (including perspective-taking, active listening, thoughtful questioning, and suspending judgment)

5) become more confident engaging in difficult conversations and working with conflict and discomfort

6) learn to talk openly about and across cultural differences

7) explore the roles that identity may play in our service

8) deepen our reflection on our own identity and the identities of others

9) become more effective at making meaningful connections with others – an essential skill in effective community organizing and social change work

What you need to do:

Arrange your conversations to take place outside of class. Each conversation should last <u>at least</u> 45 minutes (most of you will take longer) and should take place in a venue conducive to careful and active listening. That is, make an effort to avoid Rao's or the Hatch or other places with lots of ambient noise or other distractions. Please arrange to

have three of your four conversations with people in the cohort whom you do not know well. Please do not wait until the last minute to schedule these meetings. Like you, everyone else in the program has a packed schedule and not much flex time. If you can arrange it, and if you desire to do so, you may schedule one of your dialogues with a member of the teaching team.

We note that you have already begun this work of deepening your communication with each other at the retreat, in our dialogue workshop, and in some of our small group discussions. Nonetheless, we ask that you review carefully the principles of dialogue before you begin and that from time to time you pause in your dialogue to assess together how well you are adhering to these guidelines.

We acknowledge that because these dialogues are un-facilitated and because we have not done a lot of formal preparation for this work, that there will be a certain amount of messiness inherent to the effort. This is OK. As with our service, awkward moments and moments of discomfort are to be expected and are an important part of our learning. You have sufficient preparation to continue this work. Approach the work in the spirit of exploration, community-building, and good will. Push yourselves when you can and step back when you need to. Remember that attentive listening involves not just listening closely and taking turns but also posing interesting and interested questions.

Schedule:
In order to stay on track and to space out your dialogues across the remainder of the semester, we'd like you to complete your dialogues by the dates listed below.

- First dialogue: by **Tuesday, September 27**

- Second dialogue: by **Thursday, October 13**

- Third dialogue: by **Tuesday, November 1**

- Fourth dialogue: by **Tuesday, November 2**

Prompts (to help get you started):

Check-In (approximately 5-10 minutes)
We recommend that you warm up by checking in with each other. For example, you might ask each other, "How are you doing and what's going on in your life right now?" Here are a couple of additional warm up questions.

1) Share a story about the most joyful experience that you have had at UMass.

2) Share a story about the must joyful experience that you have had as a volunteer.

3) Share a story about the enlightening experience you have had at UMass – a time where you really learned something new or unexpected.

(If applicable) Reflections on Previous Dialogue(s) (approximately 5-10 minutes): If you have already engaged in one or more dialogues, spend some time talking about your previous dialogue experience(s). Some questions you may want to ask each other include the prompts from the Five Minute Papers that you have previously written:

1) What did you do well in your previous dialogue(s), and what would you like to do better or differently this time?

2) What was the most challenging part of the exercise for you?

3) What did you take away from the dialogue(s) that you thought more about?

4) Have your previous dialogues helped you in any way to understand how identity plays out on campus or in our service?

Open Dialogue (approximately 30-35 minutes)

Next, you can move on to the more precise prompts. Please note that you do not have to stick to all of these prompts. They are guidelines to help you get started. A good dialogue should have a lot of give and take. It should involve the sharing of stories. There should be lots of questions, and there should be a natural flow to things. If you find yourself quickly rushing through the list below, you need to slow down and back up. We encourage you to let your dialogue flow, but keep in mind the objectives set out above. You want the bulk of your conversation to touch on issues of identity, so if you find yourself drifting into discussions of sports, technology, the national debt, or food, you need to be mindful and bring yourselves back.

1) **Which aspects of your identity have most shaped your experience as a student on the UMass campus? How and why?**

2) **Which aspects of your identity do you think will most shape your service experience? How and why?**

(Do not limit yourself to the obvious for the above two questions. For example, Keene has diabetes and while he would not readily identify himself as "a diabetic," that is, disease and health are not central to how he thinks about who he is. Diabetes, nonetheless, shapes several aspects of his daily routine requiring a certain regimen of exercise, diet, and medication.)

3) **Is there an aspect of your identity that you regard as especially important but that did not come into play in the above questions?**

(For example, Keene thinks that his identity as a parent is central to how he thinks about himself and his life; yet, this part of his identity does not come into play in obvious ways when talking about his teaching or his service).

4) **Which aspects of your identity convey privilege? How? Which aspects of your identity are targets of oppression? How?**

5) **I get frustrated when people assume _____ about me.**

6) **Something that I would like people to know about me is _____.**

7) **Something that I would like to understand better about myself is _____.**

8) **Perhaps the most challenging thing for me about being at UMass has been _____.**

9) **One thing that I really want to get out of the CSP is _____.**

We note that talking about identity may not be easy. For many of us, college is a time when we begin to question long-held beliefs about who we are and what we believe, and sometimes our own uncertainty makes it difficult to talk about it. Sometimes these conversations can make us uncomfortable, but we lack the words to describe that discomfort. As was the case with our political autobiographies, we ask you to think of this as an opportunity for reflection and exploration, but you need not share anything that you are not ready to share. Remember that identity is made up of many dimensions that go well beyond the obvious categories of race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, occupation (or major) and age. For example, Keene has been involved with running most of his life (as an athlete and coach) and even though he doesn't run nearly as much as he used to, he still strongly identifies as a runner. All of us carry multiple identities. Some of these are personal (based on biography, experience, and personal history) and some of these are social (based on more formal distinctions recognized by society). We'll be exploring the difference between the two in the second course of the program. For the moment, it is sufficient for you to try to recognize that who we are involves many dimensions and that these different dimensions of identity intersect in complex ways. This exercise aims to expose some of this complexity.

Dialogue about the Dialogue (approximately 10 minutes):
When you are ready to wrap up your dialogue, we encourage you to spend some time reflecting together on the dialogue process. Here are some suggestions for prompts:

1) How well did we apply the guidelines for dialogue?

2) What did we do well, and what do we want to do better next time?

3) What was the most challenging part of the exercise?

4) What am I taking away from the dialogue that I want to think more about?

5) Did this discussion help me in any way to understand how identity plays out on campus or in our service?

6) What emotions were present before, during, and after the dialogue?

7) Did you feel emotionally triggered by anything that your dialogue partner shared? Why?

8) Did you feel emotionally triggered by anything that you shared? Why?

Five Minute Papers: We will be asking you for a brief report on each conversation, just a couple of paragraphs, in which you reflect on your experience. We ask you to submit these summaries within 48 hours of completing each dialogue when the conversation is still fresh in your mind and to send them to us (do not post on SPARK). Please email a copy to each member of the teaching team as soon as you have finished (email addresses are listed below as well as in the syllabus). Each individual should write his or her own summary. In it, also please note the name of your partner and the date and location of your dialogue.

If you get stuck or have questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with any member of the teaching team.

APPENDIX B

THE DIALOGUE PROJECT ASSIGNMENT - SPRING 2012

Tools for Change

Over the course of this semester, we ask you to engage in three self-facilitated dialogues with other members of your cohort. Do your best to schedule these dialogues with others who you do not know well and did not dialogue with last semester. Your first dialogue will be one-on-one (as in the Fall). Your second and third dialogues will be in small groups of 3-6. At least one of these group dialogues needs to be in a group larger than four.

The objectives of the exercise are to:

1) continue to build the CSP community through greater knowledge of ourselves and others

2) prepare ourselves for service through greater knowledge of ourselves and others.

3) build trust within the CSP community

4) practice and develop dialogic skills (including perspective-taking, active listening, thoughtful questioning, and suspending judgment)

5) become more confident engaging in difficult conversations and working with conflict and discomfort

6) learn to talk openly about and across cultural differences

7) explore the roles that identity may play in our service

8) deepen our reflection on our own identity and the identities of others

9) become more effective at making meaningful connections with others – an essential skill in effective community organizing and social change work

What you need to do:

Arrange your conversations to take place outside of class. Each conversation should last at least 45 minutes (most of you will take longer) and should take place in a venue conducive to careful and active listening. Make an effort to avoid the Dining Commons or other places with lots of distractions. Please do not wait until the last minute to schedule these meetings (especially your group dialogues).

We acknowledge that, because these dialogues are un-facilitated, there will be a certain amount of messiness inherent to the effort. This is OK. Awkward moments and moments of discomfort are to be expected and are an important part of our learning. You have sufficient preparation to continue this work. Approach your dialogues with a spirit of exploration, community-building, and good will. Push yourself when you can and step back when you need to. ***Remember that attentive listening involves not just listening closely and taking turns but also posing clarifying questions that lead to a more complete understanding. Also, dialogue involves voicing your thoughts, opinions, and feelings, not withholding them. Challenge yourself to talk about the dynamics you see playing out in your pair or group.***

Schedule:
Please complete your dialogues and submit your reflections by the dates listed below.

- First dialogue reflection due on **Tuesday, February 7 (one-on-one)**

- Second dialogue reflection due on **Tuesday, February 28 (group of 3 or 4)**

- Third dialogue reflection due on **Tuesday, March 27 (group of 3 or 4)**

Prompts (to help get you started):

Check-In (approximately 5-10 minutes)
We recommend that you warm up by checking in with each other. For example, you might ask each other, "How are you doing and what's going on in your life right now?"

Reflections on Previous Dialogues (approximately 5-10 minutes): Spend some time talking about your previous dialogue experiences. Some questions you may want to ask each other include:

1) What did you do well in your previous dialogue(s), and what would you like to do better or differently this time?

2) What has been the most challenging aspect of dialogue for you?

3) What did you take away from the dialogues that you have thought more about?

4) What do you need from yourself and from your partner today in order to engage in dialogue?

Open Dialogue (approximately 30-35 minutes)

Please note that you do not have to stick to all of these prompts. They are guidelines to help you get started. A good dialogue should have a lot of give and take. It should involve the sharing of stories. There should be lots of questions, and there should be a

natural flow to things. If you find yourself quickly rushing through the list below, you need to slow down and back up.

We note that talking about our social identities, privileges, and disadvantages can be uncomfortable; however, engaging in meaningful conversations about these topics provides an incredible opportunity for increased self-awareness, growth, and learning, as well as the strengthening of our relationships with others. ***This semester, please do your best to focus your dialogues on talking about your social identities (including race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, abilities/disabilities, and age).*** We ask you to think of this as an opportunity for reflection and exploration and to lean into discomfort; however, you need not share anything that you are not ready to share.

1) Which of your multiple social identities have most shaped your life experiences? How? Why?

2) Which of your multiple social identities have most shaped your service experience? How? Why?

3) How has your socialization (by your family, friends, schools, religion, the media, etc.) impacted the way that you view your own and other's social identities?

4) Which aspects of your identity convey privilege? How, when, and where?

5) Which aspects of your identity are targets of oppression? How, when, and where?

6) I get frustrated when people assume _____ about me.

7) Something that I would like people to know about me is _____.

8) Something that I would like to understand better about myself is _____.

Dialogue about the Dialogue (approximately 10 minutes):
Reflecting on the process of the dialogue and talking honestly about the nature of the conversation is a very important part of these conversations. Here are some prompts to help guide your reflection:

1) What about this conversation was dialogic? What was not?

2) What did we do well, and what do we want to do better next time?

3) When did we withhold in this dialogue? What did we not say that we wish we had?

4) What am I taking away from the dialogue that I want to think more about?

5) Did this discussion help me in any way to understand how identity plays out in our service?

6) What emotions were present before, during, and after the dialogue?

Dialogue Reflection Papers: We will be asking you to write a short reflection paper (1-2 double-spaced pages) about each of your dialogue conversations. Specific prompts will be provided by Dave for each of your three dialogues. In your papers please include the name of your dialogue partner(s) and the date and location of your dialogue. Please write each summary within 48 hours of completing the dialogue when the conversation is still fresh in your mind. Please post your dialogue reflection papers on SPARK and also bring a hard copy to class on the day they are due.

APPENDIX C

CITIZEN SCHOLARS PROGRAM LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Permission to Use Student Work

To help us and others learn more about the Citizen Scholars Program, the program will share examples of student work that demonstrate interesting perspectives or experiences related to program participation. Examples of student work may be featured on program or university web sites that are accessible without permission or in publications or presentations written by the Citizen Scholars Program staff.

Your choice regarding your work, registered below, is completely voluntary and will not affect your grade or status in this program.

I grant permission for the work checked below to be used in any future Citizen Scholars Program articles, publications, or web sites, with the understanding that my name will not be used in connection with this work without obtaining my explicit permission. In addition, my work will not be used in a manner in which I could be identified without my name being given. I understand that even if I grant permission here, if for any reason I do not want to share a particular piece of work, I can insert, "Do Not Share," as the header on each page of the document or notify my instructor at any time before the end of the course or program, and the piece of work will be removed from the archives.

	Yes	**No**
• Journal assignments	___	___
• Research papers or reports	___	___
• Other writing assignments	___	___
• Portfolios	___	___
• Course evaluations	___	___

Printed Name:_____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Please sign one copy and keep the other for your records.

Return the signed copy to Chris Felton, Program Manager, Citizen Scholars Program, at the address listed below.

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

University of Massachusetts Amherst – College of Education

_____

Principal Investigator: David S. Neely
Faculty Sponsor: Gary Malaney
Study Title: Dialogue, Community, and Action: Exploring Students' Understanding of Incorporating Intentional Dialogue into a Cohort-based, Service-Learning Program

_____

1.   WHAT IS THIS FORM? This form is called a Consent Form. It will provide you with information about the study so you can make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign two copies of this form: one for the researcher and one for your records.

2.   WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of this study is to gain a more complete understanding of the experiences of undergraduate college students who participate in intentional dialogue activities as a part of a multi-semester, academic service-learning program (The Citizen Scholars Program).

3.   WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to meet with the interviewer, Dave Neely, for two individual interview conversations that will last approximately one hour each. The first interview will be scheduled at the end of the fall semester (December 2011), and the second interview will be scheduled at the end of the spring semester (April 2012). In the interviews, you will be asked questions about your experiences engaging in dialogue activities as a part of the Citizen Scholars Program. The interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder and later transcribed into a written format. After the interviews, I may send you selections from the research findings or a draft of a written report based on your and others' interviews. You will be asked if you would like to voluntarily read and comment on the findings in order to ensure that they accurately depict your thoughts and understandings. This process is referred to as member checking.

4.   WHERE WILL THE INTERVIEW TAKE PLACE, AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? The interview conversation will be conducted in a semi-private or public setting, such as a group study room in the library or a café/cafeteria. Your participation will take approximately one hour in each of the two interviews.

5.   WHAT ARE MY BENEFITS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY? The benefits of participating in this study are the opportunities to have your opinions heard and your experiences documented to potentially improve the experience of future students enrolled in this or similar courses.

6.   WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF BEING IN THIS STUDY? The researcher believes that there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible

inconvenience may be the time it takes to participate in the interview conversations. My aim is for you to be comfortable at all times. If at any time, you feel that you do not want to answer a question, you don't have to. You are also welcome to discuss any concerns you have with me along the way, and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

7.	HOW WILL MY PERSONAL INFORMATION BE PROTECTED? In order to ensure your confidentiality, I will not use your real name in this study. Each participant will select with the researcher a code name (pseudonym), which will be used throughout the study and in any future publications or presentations. In addition, all field notes, digital audio files, and transcriptions will be stored in a secure location in the researcher's home. The data collected in this study will be used toward the completion of a doctoral dissertation study that will be made publicly available upon completion. The findings may also be presented at meetings or conferences and/or published in an article, journal, or book. You will not be personally identified in any publications or presentations.

8.	WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY? You will not receive any payment for participating in this study.

9.	WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS? Take as long as you like before you decide whether or not to participate. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study at any time. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me (Dave Neely, phone: 646-262-6541, email: dneely@educ.umass.edu) or the faculty sponsor (Gary Malaney, phone: 413-545-1390, email: malaney@educ.umass.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst College of Education Institutional Review Board (IRB). The phone number for the IRB is 413-545-1056. Or you can write to the IRB at: University of Massachusetts Amherst, College of Education, Room 252 Hills House South, Amherst, MA 01003.

10.	CAN I STOP BEING IN THE STUDY? You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you agree to be in the study but later change your mind, you may drop out at any time. There are no penalties or consequences of any kind if you decide that you no longer want to participate.

PARTICIPANT STATEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CONSENT
I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. The general purposes and particulars of the study as well as possible hazards and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time.

 I consent to being audio recorded ( ). I do not consent to being audio recorded ( )

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____
Participant's name (printed): _____

FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW GUIDE - JANUARY 2012

<u>**Opening**</u>

- Thank participant in advance for sharing their time and stories.

- Inform the participant that the interview will last 50 minutes to an hour.

- Provide the participant with a copy of the informed consent form and allow her or him as much time as needed to read the consent form.

- Answer any questions that the participant may have about the study or consent form.

- Remind the participant that the conversation will be audio recorded so that the interview can be transcribed and their words/stories can be captured accurately.

- Ask the student if she or he would like to continue participating in the study and remind the student that there is no penalty for discontinuing at any time.

- Ask the participant to sign the consent form and provide the participant with a copy of the form.

- Ask the participant for a pseudonym that she or he would like to use throughout the study and in any publications/presentations of the data.

<u>**Demographic Questions**</u>

- What is your year of study (i.e., freshman)?

- How old are you?

- How do you define your gender?

- How do you define your race, ethnicity, and nationality?

- Have you declared a major? What are you studying/interested in studying?

<u>**Open-Ended Questions**</u>
A. General Understanding of Dialog

- Have you participated in any type of intentional dialogue before beginning the Citizen Scholars Program?
  - What made the experience dialogic?

  - Where? When? Who facilitated the conversation?

- To you, what makes dialogue different from other types of conversations?

  - How do you know when you're a part of a dialogue?

  - How do you define dialogue?

B. Self-Facilitated Dialogue Conversations

- Tell me about your most memorable experience so far from your one-on-one dialogue conversations this semester?

  - PROBE: What made this experience memorable for you?

- Has anything surprised you about the dialogues?

- Can you think of any specific examples during the dialogues when you had an Ah-ha moment (or where a light bulb went off)?

  - What happened?

- What has been most challenging for you in your one-on-one dialogue conversations?

- What have you learned about yourself through the dialogue conversations?

  - What, if anything, have you learned about your social identities, and your related privileges and disadvantages?

- What have you learned about others in your dialogues?

  - What, if anything, have you learned about others' social identities, and the related privileges and disadvantages?
  -
- Can you describe a point in your dialogues where there was disagreement or conflict based on a difference between you and your dialogue partner?

  - How did you feel?

  - Were you able to share your feelings?

      o PROBE: If participant can't think of an example, why do you think that there weren't any conflicts of disagreements?

C. Dialogue Skills and Attributes

- What kinds of skills or attributes do you think are needed to engage in dialogue?

- Which of these skills or attributes have been successful using in your dialogues?

- Are there skills or attributes that you would like to focus on or improve on in future dialogues?

     o Which dialogue skills are most challenging for you?

D. Dialogue in the Citizen Scholars Program

- How, if at all, have your one-on-one dialogue experiences impacted your communication and interaction with the others in your CSP cohort as a whole?

     o Can you give a SPECIFIC example?

- When, if at all, have you seen aspects of dialogue in CSP class meetings?

     o In small group conversations?

     o In full class conversations?

E. Dialogue with Community Members and Community Service Partners

- How, if at all, have the one-on-one dialogue experiences with your peers impacted your communication and interaction with the members of the community you engage with at your community partner site?

     o Can you give a SPECIFIC example?

F. Extending Dialogue To Other Setting

- Have you been able to engage in dialogue or apply dialogic skills in other aspects of your life?

     o With friends, roommates, and housemates?

     o With family members?

     o In other courses at UMass?

   o In extracurricular activities (clubs or teams)?

G. Closing

- Is there anything else that we haven't already covered that you would like to share about your experiences with dialogue in CSP?

- THANK YOU for sharing your time and your stories with me!

SECOND ROUND INTERVIEW GUIDE - MAY 2012

<u>**Greeting/Introduction**</u>

- Thank participant in advance for sharing her or his time and stories.

- Let the participant know that the interview will last approximately 45 minutes.

- Share a copy of the consent form with the participant and remind him or her that he or she signed the form in January. Inform the participant that it is not necessary for her or him to sign the form again; however she or he may keep another copy. Ask if she or he have any questions.

- Remind the participant that the conversation will be audio recorded so that the interview can be transcribed and his or her words/stories can be captured accurately.

A. <u>**Warm-up and Engagement**</u>

- Reflecting back on your experiences with dialogue in the Citizen Scholars Program across the full year (including the fall semester), what stands out to you the most?

  - o PROBE: Why? What made this experience memorable for you? How so?

- Based on your experiences with dialogue in the **SPRING** semester (your first one-on-one dialogue, your 2 small group dialogues, the full-class dialogue about Gloria Anzaldúa and Bridges)

  - o PROBE: What did you learn/take-away from the **small-group dialogues**?

  - o PROBE: What did you learn/take-way from the **full-class dialogue**?

- How, if at all, has your understanding of dialogue changed since the beginning of the **SPRING** semester?

  - o PROBE: Can you give a specific example?

- What has been your **most rewarding** experience with dialogue this **SPRING** semester?

- What has been your **most challenging** experience with dialogue this **SPRING** semester?

B. Talking About Difference and Identities

- How was it for you to talk about social identities and types of difference in your dialogues?

- Which social identities were the easiest for you to talk about?

  - PROBE: Why? Can you give an example?

- Which social identities were the most challenging for you to talk about?

  - PROBE: Why? Can you give an example?

- Were there any identities that you wanted to dialogue about that you didn't?

  - PROBE: If yes, why not?

- What, if anything, have you learned about **YOUR OWN** social identities (race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, abilities/disabilities, age) through your dialogues?

  - PROBE: Can you describe a specific example or story you heard that led to this learning.

- What, if anything, have you learned about **OTHERS'** social identities?

C. Dialogue Processes

- What, to you, makes dialogue different from other kinds of conversations?

  - PROBE: How do you know when you're a part of a dialogue (and when you're not)?

- What do you need from yourself and others to participate effectively in dialogue?

- **Can you describe a point in your dialogues where there was disagreement or difference of perspectives that was significant for you? How so?**

    - o PROBE: What led to this disagreement or tension? What happened?

    - o PROBE: Were you able to share your views or feelings? What did you learn from that interaction?

    - o PROBE: (If participant can't think of an example), Why do you think that there wasn't any tension or conflict?

D. **Dialogue within the Citizen Scholars Program**

- What impact has dialogue had on your relationships with peers in the cohort?

    - o PROBE: Can you give a SPECIFIC example?

- When, if at all, have you seen aspects of dialogue in CSP class meetings?

    - o PROBE: In full class conversations? In small group conversations?

E. **Dialogue at Community Partner Site**

- How, if at all, has what you've learned about dialogue had an impact on the ways that you communicate or interact with people at your community partner site?

    - o Can you give a SPECIFIC example?

F. **Extending Dialogue To Other Settings**

- Do you think dialogue helped you to connect with other people in your life that you might not otherwise have connected with?

- Have you been able to engage in dialogue or apply dialogic skills in other aspects of your life?

- o   With friends, roommates, and housemates at UMass?

- o   In other courses at UMass?

- o   In your extracurricular activities (organizations, clubs, or teams)?

- o   With your family members or friends outside of UMass?

G. <u>Closing</u>

- How, if at all, do you see yourself utilizing what you have learned about dialogue in the future (in all aspects of your life – not only CSP)?

- Is there anything else that we haven't already talked about that you would like to share about your experiences with dialogue in CSP?

- THANK YOU for sharing your time and your stories with me!

OBSERVATION GUIDE

Date: _____   Time: _____

Conversation Topic: _____

Asking a clarifying question to an individual	Paraphrasing/referencing another person's contribution ("I heard X say")
▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____	▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____
Posing a question to the group	**Naming a dynamic in the conversation process (e.g., conflict, tension)**
▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____	▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____
Acknowledging an emotion or non-verbal	**Interrupting/speaking over**
▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____	▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____ ▪ _____

EXCERPT FROM CODE BOOK - DIALOGUE SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Code	Code Name	Definition	Example
Dialogue Skills and Competencies [SKILL] - 12 Codes			
SKILL1	Practicing and becoming more comfortable	References to practicing dialogue skills/competencies or becoming more comfortable with dialogue over time	**09-FallFinalPaper:** "However, after taking this course and practicing the dialogical skill of asking clarifying questions, I am more confident in asking questions. I often find myself asking the person with whom I am speaking more questions than he or she asks me. By asking questions, I am able to deepen the conversation and learn new facts about a person."
SKILL2	Asking questions	References to the presence or importance of asking questions in a dialogue	**03-FallFinalPaper:** "All four of the dialogues that I did went very differently. The highlights for me were learning about people in ways that I never really get the chance to learn about people, which is to say that the dialogue assignments created an open environment where it was OK to ask questions you might not otherwise ask in a regular conversation with somebody."
SKILL3	Clarifying	References to clarifying a dialogue partner's meaning, perspective, or feelings. [**Frequently double-coded with SKILL2 "Asking Questions"**]	**11-FallFinalPaper:** "We had sort of conflicting views, and though I didn't really agree with what he was saying, I didn't judge him, and I asked him a lot of clarifying questions and then explained my side as well."
SKILL4	Eye contact and body language (non-verbal communication)	References to the presence or importance of paying attention to eye contact and body language in a dialogue	**10-FallFinalPaper:** "Another little thing dialoguing helped me deal with was eye contact while speaking and listening. I tend to not be able to look at someone when I am talking, and I think that is very unprofessional. I know I feel uncomfortable when

			people do not look at me when they are talking to me. Experimenting with eye contact and body language during the dialogues has made it easier for me to have difficult conversations with all sorts of people on all different topics."
SKILL5	Listening	References to listening (including active listening) in a dialogue	**02-Interview1:** "Yeah. But when I had a conversation, dialogue with her, she like opened up like so, I don't know, for some reason...maybe the way I was responding, maybe the way like she felt like I was actually listening, which I was listening to her, she opened really well, and she got emotional too. Like she was telling me her story, and she started crying."
SKILL6	Patience	References to the presence or importance of patience in a dialogue	**18-FallFinalPaper:** "Throughout the semester, I feel I have grown a lot with dialogues. The dialogues has helped [me] to become more patient when [I] have a conversation or any exchanges between me and anyone. Through dialogues, I've learned that my weaknesses lie with being impatient and withdrawing myself when I find something offensive."
SKILL7	Perspective-taking	References to the presence or importance of perspective-taking in a dialogue	**17-FallFinalPaper:** "However, my dialogue with Name7 really helped me to understand why dialogue is so important. In the two hours we spent dialoguing, I was able to really see things in a different light and get a brief glimpse into her world."
SKILL8	Sharing air time and awareness of others	References to the presence or importance of balancing/sharing air	**04-Interview2:** "In the group dialogue, the first one, it was horrible. No one...I didn't know when to speak. I didn't want to

			time and being aware of others in a dialogue	interrupt people, and I wanted to get my fair share, like fair say in there. And it was...it was really hard to make sure there was an equal balance of voices because there was one person who talked a lot, and I mean I wanted to hear what they had to say, but, after a point it's like, 'Okay. We have to...let's hear what other people have to say as well.'"
SKILL9	Slowing down/pausing	References to the presence or importance of slowing down the pace or pausing (silence) in a dialogue	**12-FallFinalPaper:** "It usually takes me a while to process things. I find dialogues difficult because it takes me a while to process what others are saying. I feel like silence is not something that was really valued in my dialogues. I never did ask for time to process though, so it may be on me. However, I really think I need to take time to process what other people are saying. I will make sure to take the time in future dialogues."
SKILL10	Suspending judgment	References to the presence or importance of suspending judgment in a dialogue	**08-Interview1:** "And I think that's really important, and a really good part of dialogue was, you know, you can reveal these things about yourself and then you get a chance to explain what it means to you before you get judged."
SKILL11	Voicing/Expressing	References to the presence or importance of speaking up or sharing an opinion/perspective/ feeling in a dialogue	**08-Interview2:** "These kinds of conversation, these kinds of topics are ones that I would have with like my really close friends sometimes, but certainly not with like a bunch of people that I met, you know, a few months ago. But, I've found that it's been really useful to kind of, just like put those things out there sometimes, be like, 'Look. Like, here's what's up. This is how it is.' And it's gone a long way, so

			sort of getting comfortable with that."
SKILL12	Working with disagreement/conflict	References to working with or through disagreement or conflict in a dialogue	**03-FallFinalPaper:** "My fourth dialogue was with Name12, and it was the first that I had with somebody where we found ourselves in tense disagreement over a topic. Nobody's feelings got hurt, but we definitely fleshed out an argument in a way that I don't think I would have done with any of my friends."

* "A priori" codes (theory-driven codes)

APPENDIX I

LIST OF COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Organization	Location	Description
Amherst Survival Center	Amherst, MA	A volunteer-based organization offering a variety of services to help meet people's basic needs, including a food pantry, hot meals, clothing, health care, and companionship
Capacidad	Amherst, MA	Afterschool program for elementary school children from mostly low-income families
Center for Education Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) at UMass Amherst	Amherst, MA	Student-run agency that focuses on student advocacy on campus and lobbying for public higher education interests at the statewide level
Community Journalism	Springfield, MA	A faculty-supervised, UMass Amherst initiative focused on increasing college opportunities for students at an underserved, urban high school, by engaging them in reporting and writing
Everywoman's Center (Center for Women and Community) at UMass Amherst	Amherst, MA	Provides a range of services to members of the UMass Amherst community as well as people living in surrounding communities. Services include community education about sexual violence, counseling, and a rape crisis hotline
Labor/Management Workplace Education Program (LMWEP) at UMass Amherst	Amherst, MA	An on-campus program offering training and education opportunities for frontline workers on campus including English for Speakers of Other Languages classes.
Students Taking Action Now in Darfur (STAND)	Amherst, MA (national organization)	The UMass Amherst campus branch of an international, student-led organization focused on ending genocide globally
Whole Children	Hadley, MA	An organization offering recreation, performing arts, and other programs for children with a range of abilities

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