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Editorial

Friends,

Since quite some time, we had been thinking of bringing out a ‘special issue’ and had been discussing what topic to take up which would interest all our readers. Earlier, we had organised Seminars and brought out the proceedings as ‘special issues’ on—Human Rights and Education, Swami Vivekanand and his Relevance to Teacher Education. A panel discussion on the topic ‘Rationale of Two-year B.ED. programme’, when it was a much debated issue, was organised in early 2006 and the views shared by eminent educationists were published in our April 2006 issue. Our sincere efforts have always been to keep our readers informed and updated.

Then, one fine day, at a Seminar organised in the Department of Education, University of Delhi, Dr. Vikas Beniwal, Assistant Professor in the Department, asked if we would bring out a Special Issue on Dialogue. Well, it was a topic which merited serious thought. And we gave out a call, in our Oct. 2019, for the special issue on this topic.

Dialogue in education is an important topic in the syllabus of B.Ed., as also an important concept which is understood in many ways as also misunderstood in many ways, even in the academic circles. We tend to use the term ‘Dialogue’ loosely—which includes talks, discussions, debates, conversations—in its ambit.

Dialogue is used in many circumstances, occasions, places, which we will taste when we will go through the Articles on Dialogue. The Articles have been mainly written by the students of B.Ed. of the Department of Education, University of Delhi, under the expert guidance of Dr. Vikas Beniwal. Ms Pinky Yadav, an M.Ed. student also helped and interacted with the students of B.Ed. ,constantly mentoring them , which is quite apparent in the content and quality of the Articles.

Alongwith the conceptual analysis articles of B.Ed. students, we wanted to incorporate in the second part actual classroom dialogues which teachers indulge in while explaining a concept or a theory – which is the most important aspect in the teaching-learning situation. The students are led into the subject by question-answer method. The teacher explains a concept by building upon the existing knowledge of the students by asking questions and seeking responses from them. The formation of questions is an extremely

important task—which are sometimes to check their previous knowledge and sometimes to evaluate their understanding and sometimes to lead them to the concept. We planned and made effort to have some such ‘actual class-room dialogues’ which take place in classrooms . For this purpose, teachers were approached and urged to provide us with some such dialogues and participate in this issue.

These actual ‘class-room dialogues’ form the second part of this issue, and we are happy that we got some articles which we publish here.

In the third part , we wanted to reproduce some famous dialogues—Plato’s Dialogue, Dialogue from Upanishads—the dialogue between Yama and Nachiketa, Dialogues of J. Krishnamurti where he talks to the students and some other dialogues, which we had collected aplenty, but everywhere there were copyright issues, which due to paucity of time and resources we could not pursue. And then this pandemic broke out, and the lockdown conditions slowed down the whole process.

But we have been able to bring out this special issue.

Our special thanks to Dr. Vikas Beniwal and his able team to make this special issue possible.

Dr. S. P. Pathak
Editor

Dr. Sushil Dhiman
Associate Editor

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Explorations in Dialogue: An Introduction

Dr. Vikas Baniwal

Looking at ‘dialogue’ etymologically, Crapanzano (1990, p. 276) explains that ‘dialogue’ comes from the Greek word ‘*dialogos*’, where ‘Dia’ is a preposition that means *through, between, across, by & of*. ‘Dia’ does not mean two, as in two separate entities; rather, ‘dia’ suggests a passing through as in diagnosis thoroughly or completely. *Logos* comes from ‘*legein*’ that means the word or to speak. Thus, dialogue may mean ‘*through words*’, ‘*across words*’, ‘*between words*’, ‘*across speech*’, or ‘*through speech*’. Dialogue is “the ‘meaning of the word’, created by ‘passing through’, as in the use of language as a symbolic tool and conversation as a medium” (Jenlink & Banathy, 2005, p. 5). Here, that which takes place between the persons involved in a dialogue takes priority over persons themselves.

There are many conceptions of dialogue and scholars have attempted to categorize theories of dialogue in various ways depending on the context of theorizing. For example, the concept of dialogue was quite prominent in communication studies, thus, from a communication theory-based perspective, Walton & Krabbe (1995, p. 66) classified dialogue based on the aims of dialogic engagements i.e. consensus, negotiation, persuasion, agreement to disagree, and conscientization. These classifications may seem reductive, but they have been significant in developing a broader framework to situate thinkers who have reflected upon dialogue.

Philosophically, the classifications are broader, such as Cissna & Anderson (1994) identified four conceptions of dialogue based on the ideas of various thinkers. First is the conception of dialogue rooted in the ideas of “Buber and similarly minded philosophers, theologians, and psychotherapists who conceive of dialogue as a form of human meeting or relationship” (Cissna & Anderson, 1994, p. 10). The second is “based on the work of conversation analysts, ethno-methodologists, and others use dialogue to refer to the intricacies of human conversation” (*ibid.*), who focus on the ways in which conversations take place. The third conception is based on the ideas of Bakhtin, where dialogue is understood “primarily as a cultural form of human knowing” that is essentially between people through shared symbols and signs. Finally, the “fourth conception of dialogue can be traced to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophy of textual understanding and interpretation”, (Cissna & Anderson, 1994, p. 10) in which every text can be considered to be in dialogue with its times and/ or other previous texts.

Another such classification is that of (Burbules, 2000, p. 252) who differentiates between dialogues based on the perspectives in which they can be located. He proposes six categories, 1. Liberal views of dialogue towards deliberative democracy; 2. Feminist views that see dialogue as depicting “more open, receptive, inclusive spirit of women’s values” against “competitive, adversarial approach to public or private disagreements and the stereotypical

norms of masculine behavior" (Burbules, 2000, p. 253); 3. Platonic views of dialogue, which "stress the role of communicative interchange as a proving ground for inquiries into truth" (*ibid.*); 4. Hermeneutic views of dialogue, which emphasize the development of an intersubjective understanding based on relational, mutual questioning and answering; 5. Freirean dialogue as a practice of critical inquiry towards liberation and emancipation of the oppressed; and 6. Post-liberal views of dialogue, like of Jürgen Habermas, where communicative dialogue is seen as "the non-foundational foundation for epistemological, political, and moral adjudication" (Burbules, 2000, p. 255).

Similarly, Peters & Besley (2019, p. 1) provide the following schema to understand the various forms that dialogue has taken in Western Philosophy:

The Classical Era

1. Socratic – dialogos as elenchus
2. Plato – dialogue as dialectical argumentation

The Modern Era

3. Søren Kierkegaard to Martin Buber: religious dialogue as communion
 - a. Ludwig Feuerbach, Stirner, Hermann Cohen
 - b. Ferdinand Ebner, Eugen Rosenstock and Franz Rosenzweig
 4. Martin Heidegger to Hans-Georg Gadamer: philosophical hermeneutics
 5. Neo-Kantian – rational reconstructionism
 - a. Jurgen Habermas – communicative action
 - b. Karl-Otto Apel – discourse ethics
 6. Hegelian and Neo-Marxist dialectics
 - a. Hegel – dialectics as world history
 - b. Paulo Freire – *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
 7. Mikhail Bakhtin and the Bakhtin circle (Voloshinov) – dialogism and the 'dialogical imagination'
 8. David Bohm – dialogue as 'the awakening of consciousness'
 9. Michael Oakshott – dialogue as conversation and the medium of liberal learning
 10. Richard Rorty – dialogue as conversation (detranscendentalized and minimal conversational ethics)
-

There are a number of variations amongst these classifications, for example, the classification by Walton & Krabbe (1995, p. 66) enlists the processes that occur between two parties, whereas the classification by Cissna & Anderson (1994) is rooted in their characterization of thinkers as theologian, ethno methodologist, and the like. However, such a characterization may be refuted by the thinkers themselves, for example, Buber considers himself to be a Philosophical Anthropologist rather than a theologian or a philosopher. The classification by Burbules (2000) is a mix of perspectives and thinkers' views on dialogue, which makes one wonder whether Platonic or Freireian dialogue is not liberal or feminist since they have been presented as different categories of dialogue. The classification by Peters & Besley (2019, p. 1) seems more exhaustive and provides space to individual thinkers along with identifying their tradition. However, to a nuanced eye, there may seem many issues in clubbing Kierkegaard with Buber or Heidegger with Gadamer, nevertheless, such a classification does enable a more exhaustive picture of the landscape of dialogue.

In the backdrop of these perspectives, the following papers present an exploration of future teachers into this landscape of dialogue from different vantage points, such as:

1. The explorations are not aimed at understanding various theories of dialogue but to understand conceptually what dialogue could be and the implications of this understanding to the various aspects of human life.
2. Such an attempt is important because without answering the basic questions, such as what is the meaning of dialogue; what are the prerequisites and characteristics of dialogue; how is dialogue different from monologue, debate, discussion, conversation, and other related terms, we cannot hope to satisfactorily answer more complicated questions such as, can there be dialogue in hierarchical relations; is dialogue necessarily democratic and peaceful; can institutions be dialogic; can there be dialogue in public.
3. The approach to do these analyses is inspired from the analytical tradition where the exploration does not begin with any particular theory or thinker, rather it begins with reflections of various examples, instances, common-sense usage, and multiple meanings of the term dialogue. This is followed by an attempt to delineate the various features, characteristics, or conditions of dialogue. This process is inspired by the three types of conceptual analyses, namely, Generic Type, Differentiation Type, and Conditions Type, delineated by Soltis (1968).
4. The authors are students of B.Ed. course, where they are being introduced to Basic Concepts in Education, therefore, their analyses are directed towards application. After understanding the concept and taking up a position, the authors have attempted to find its educational implications. They have attempted to articulate how their understanding of the concept would translate into classroom practices and what would its advantages be.

The authors did not begin with any theoretical previous knowledge, but they referred to some selected perspectives after the second revision of their draft in order to situate their analysis. These write-ups are a result of their initiation into the process of conceptual analysis instead of a scholarly attempt to theorize dialogue.

Thus, the attempts of the authors to conceptually understand dialogue have no common starting point, and they differ in their examples, style, and conclusions. For example, Sudhir Kumar Yadav's write-up assumes that dialogue is intentional whereas Parveen Kaur's write-up suggests that dialogues may or may not be intentional. Parveen Kaur and Sudhir Kumar Yadav both take dialogue to be conversational only, whereas Priyanka Sheoran's analysis considers dialogue with animals and in silence a real possibility. For Priyanka Sheoran dialogue is rooted in the experience of otherness vis-à-vis self. However, for Sudhir Kumar Yadav since dialogue is conversational and it can only take place between people- two or more, therefore, one cannot have a dialogue with oneself. Thus, the pre-requisites that Sudhir Kumar Yadav identifies are independent thinking, decision-making capacity, free will, self-consciousness, and reflectiveness. These prerequisites lead to dialogue to have a higher degree of commitment than discussion, debate etc.; to be rational and logical; without any

fear and coercion; and leading to learning. His position is partly shared but argued differently by Parveen Kaur.

For Khushbu Jangid, Dialogue only takes place in a ‘conscious state of mind’. A conscious state of mind entails that a) there are voluntary thoughts and their expression; b) there is a state of wakefulness, c) that one is awake or alert to one’s surroundings, and d) that there is a shared knowledge of the same language between participants. From these prerequisites, the features that evolve of a dialogue are: a) both participants should respond to notions, b) there is a broadening of horizons, c) there can be no hierarchies, and d) dialogue with nature (including plants and animals) or any non-human entity is interpreted as dialogue with oneself. Both Khushbu Jangid & Sudhir Kumar Yadav take the position that one cannot have dialogue with oneself but argue for it quite differently.

The subjective nature of a dialogue is highlighted by both Priyanka Sheoran and Ishita Solanki where dialogue is possible only when there is a notion of the self. Moreover, they also argue that a third-person (observer’s) claim that dialogue has happened is not reliable for the observer’s own views and ideas of dialogue would dominate on the interpretation of any engagement as being dialogic or not. Further, they both argue that dialogue can’t be ensured. Even with similar positions, their arguments are quite varied. Further, Priyanka Sheoran argues that being ‘conscious’ and ‘receptive’ are necessary to realize that dialogue has happened.

Parveen Kaur’s position is that dialogue being a special kind of conversation, needs to be at the centre of the teaching-learning process. Her position, similar to Sudhir Kumar Yadav, is that dialogue takes place between humans and that some shared understanding of logic and argumentation is necessary along with some basic facts. However, she places co-construction of knowledge at the centre of any dialogue. Further, similar to Priyanka Sheoran and Ishita Solanki, Parveen Kaur posits that dialogue can’t be ensured but their ways of arguing about the same are unique.

With such a diversity of positions, these papers constitute a montage instead of building on each other or even sharing common assumption. Such a presentation also has pedagogical value, which has been discussed in the concluding reflective article by Pinky Yadav. These papers, thus, may not seem to contain much that can be added to the perspectives in the area of dialogue, but they definitely add to the nuanced understanding of various aspects of dialogue. These papers highlight the importance of classroom discussions and insights, and most importantly the need to provide students a space to explore and build upon the ideas and concepts. Further, this collection of papers may enable students to understand the role and importance of the analytical method by understanding how they may begin from their subjective experiences. Further, this volume may be used as a pedagogical resource by teachers to promote independent thinking amongst students.

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The Essence of Dialogue

Priyanka Sheoran

Abstract

Dialogue is mostly defined as a conversation taking place between two individuals, parties etc. aimed at a resolution of some kind, or as a literary technique used by writers. However, there are examples where people claim to have had a dialogue with nature, God and inanimate objects. Such claims do not seem to be consistent with the ‘definitions’ of dialogue, but also cannot be rejected entirely. Instead, they may be used to develop a better understanding of the term. This paper seeks to develop an ‘essential’ understanding of dialogue by analyzing it as a concept, drawing upon such and other varied examples and considering the use of language in all such claims. Dialogue in this paper is looked at from the perspective of both a noun and a verb. Dialogue, thus understood, is a realization on the part of the self, upon interaction with the ‘other’ based on a recognition of its ‘otherness’. This means that ‘reception’ lies at the heart of dialogue and a conscious self may have a dialogue even with an inanimate object or imaginary beings. Some features of a dialogue, identified in this paper are- that it involves two entities for its existence, but only one for its realization; there is a relationship between the two entities based on some difference or ‘otherness’ of the other with respect to the self, and therefore an inherent unity between the two; and receptivity or openness on the part of a conscious self is crucial for a dialogue to take place. Implications of this understanding of dialogue on classroom practices is also discussed, where it is shown that a dialogue may take place not only between the two living entities in a classroom- teacher and student, but also between them and other material sources such as books, and the very environment of a classroom. The nature of the relationship between the teacher and students is also discussed, that may provide greater opportunities for a dialogue to take place.

Keywords: Pre-requisites of dialogue, realization, self-other relation, educational dialogue

There are instances where we intuitively feel that a dialogue has happened; there is commonsensical knowledge of using it as a ‘term’ in drama or theatre; there are examples of philosophical texts being called dialogical, such as Plato’s (2010); and there are some who claim to have engaged in a dialogue with nature, God or even inanimate objects for that matter. This paper attempts to analyse dialogue as a concept; to develop an ‘essential’ understanding of the term dialogue- its meaning, assumption(s), prerequisite(s), and characteristics.

In almost all the instances of having a dialogue, one mentions having it ‘with’ someone. Even in instances where it is said to happen with God, imaginary beings, nature or inanimate objects, there seems to be an understanding of the existence of some ‘other’ with whom/which one has this dialogue. Even in literature, passages depicting a conversation between ‘two’ characters are called dialogues, whereas, monologue is used to describe the speech of a single individual. A consideration of some prevalent ‘definitions’ of dialogue also seems to point to the idea that a dialogue inherently involves ‘two’. These ‘definitions’ can also help in pointing towards what a general understanding of this term is and has been over time.

Dialogue is derived from the Old French- ‘dialogue’ via Latin from Greek ‘*dialogos*’, that can be roughly translated as ‘converse with’. Breaking up the word gives us- ‘dia’- through, and ‘*legein*’- speak. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it both as a noun and a verb- a ‘thing’ and a ‘process’. It describes dialogue as- “a conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play or film”, “a discussion between two or more people or groups, especially one directed towards exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem”. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dialogue>) describes it as being used first in the 13th century as a literary term to denote the conversation between two characters in a play. The use of dialogue for drama also seems to imply that it is used as a means of disclosing the story-line of the play through the speech of characters, for the audience ‘to know’.

The examples and ‘definitions’ of dialogue discussed above show that it is something that involves two entities and some kind of meaning-making, or knowledge in the end. Even in examples of having it with God or imaginary beings, if it doesn’t involve actual existence, then at least a possibility or the assumption of the existence of the ‘other’ is there.

However, the question that still remains is how does one explain the ‘dialoguing with oneself’ that some people claim, where it is described as an independent individual experience, that is, it is claimed that there is only one entity involved instead of two as discussed and mentioned above. We can’t discard it just for the sake of keeping our two-entity definition consistent and assuming this particular example to be a departure from that; nor can we simply try to fit it into our general understanding forcefully. Let us try to analyse it independently to see for what it is.

This leads to two observations:

1. First is concerned with the way someone states the claim of being in a dialogue: One says that he/she had a dialogue ‘with’ her/himself. The use of ‘with’ shows the essence of a dialogue that one has in mind while talking about it. So, even when the body of the individual is singular, there is something that is assumed to be ‘not-singular’ and has the capacity for duality and these two parts, then, dialogue with each other. So, when one says he/she has it ‘with’ him/herself, this might be indicative of an assumption of some other self, or another opinion or another point of view or another “something”.
2. The second observation to which this example leads is regarding the justification of the claim of being engaged in a dialogue. Looking at examples, we find that if ‘A’ and ‘B’ are in a situation that appears to an observer ‘O’ as being dialogical; ‘A’ and ‘B’ might have completely different experiences of the same situation. It shows how dialogue is an individual experience even though examples show the requirement of two entities- and this is not a contradiction. It means that the very fact one can say

that he/she had a dialogue with her/himself, means that it is something centred around an individual's claims/ experiences. But the fact it is 'with' someone or oneself shows the dependent existence of it.

This leads to an understanding of dialogue as something that requires two entities for its existence – maybe even an 'imagined other' in some cases – and necessarily just one for its realization. Even though one can have a dialogue with inanimate objects, it is the conscious self of the individual that engages in it, not the object that is not capable of this realization. This also means that only a conscious being capable of this realization can have a dialogue. But what is this realization? What does it involve? The dictionaries define it both as a noun and a verb. Having understood the 'noun' it is, that is, a realization on the part of a conscious self, let us try to explore the 'verb'- that is, the process that leads to this realization. For this, consideration and exploration of the nature of the entities that are involved in it, may prove useful.

We have analysed how a dialogue requires the existence/assumption of two entities, and only oneself to realize it. We also know that this entity must have a notion of the self- i.e. self-conscious, to realize whether what happened was a dialogue or not, which also means that if there is no notion of 'self' in animals, they cannot have a dialogue. Considering the word 'with' which is used alongside the use of 'dialogue', we realize that it means something more than a mere requirement of two entities. The use of 'with' also denotes 'vis-à-vis', participation or involvement of some kind which then may or may not lead to a dialogue (for example, I had a dialogue 'with' her; I did not have a dialogue 'with' her). So, for this 'with' or 'vis-à-vis' to happen, there needs to be a ground on which one can establish a notion of the 'self' based on which the other is recognized as being 'not-that' or 'not-self'. This is so because for one to even accept and recognize the otherness of the other, one does so by taking the self as the base; had this not been the case, then others exist all the time but it is only upon recognition of an-other that the self comes to establish the two-entity formula or situation.

There are various possibilities of the engagement or relationship between the 'self' and the 'other'. In order to understand this relationship, it might be helpful if one goes back to the examples of having it with nature or objects to see why in these examples and not the ones that claim a dialogue between two humans, people find it strange or impossible to have a dialogue with non-humans, like objects or nature. Consideration of the assumptions that people have about dialogue that makes them reject such claims, may help us in understanding the essence of dialogue from a different perspective.

The assumption that seems to underlie a rejection of such claims of a dialogue with nature or objects, is that a generally perceived notion of the process of dialogue is 'talking'. So is the case with dramatic dialogues- largely they involve 'talking'. Even Platonic dialogues (Plato,

2010), in being described as a conversation between persons, correspond to this widespread assumption of dialogue as talking. Even the dictionaries describe ‘talking’ being synonymous with ‘dialoguing’; and a popular phrase “dialogue of the deaf” implies that if any party is indifferent to the “talking assumed dialogue” of another entity, then a dialogue cannot take place.

Let us now consider ‘talking’ to see the possibility of dialogue with non-material or imaginary entities. If we consider talking as involving speaking- output/ giving at one end and listening- reception/ input at the other end, then, this is generally true in the case of 2 individuals ‘talking’ with each other. However, considering the claims of having a dialogue with imaginary beings, non-living objects, god etc, some reject the possibility of such ‘giving’ and ‘taking’ with imaginary beings, or non-living objects, god etc.

However, one can take-in gestures, words, movement of leaves, or even just the existence of an ‘other’ without these objects/people giving anything consciously in order to be taken in. Similarly, one may or may not take in something that is indeed given consciously. This means that ‘taking in’ involves a conscious process but ‘giving’ does not, it may even be simply assumed by an Individual. This self may be called as ‘dialogue-realizing entity’. For example, a painting may not be giving anything consciously, but an individual may look at it and recognize it as something meaningful. And it is this subjectivity that may lead to the possibility of a dialogue with inanimate objects or nature, but only if one can ‘take in’ or when one is receptive. Thus, it is a ‘reception’ that seems to lie at the heart of dialogue as the act of reception exists, but, the act of giving may simply be assumed.

Only in a relationship emerging out of recognition by the ‘self’ does the ‘other’ come to exist. This otherness then needs to come out of the self for a self to realize a dialogue. It is so because if one doesn’t realize and recognize this other as being not-‘thyself’, that is, as being different from oneself, then there cannot be any taking-in. However, this doesn’t seem to happen all the time because we see how most of the time the ‘otherness’ is simply ‘another’ and is not a ‘recognized’ otherness. It simply exists out there, and only in moments when this is realized in a ‘vis-à-vis’, ‘with’ or ‘relation-al’ sense, it comes to exist. And this seems to be the reason why people don’t claim a dialogue every second of their lives.

It is also due to this that an observer cannot determine with surety if a dialogue happened or not, but can definitely and only interpret any interaction as dialogical or not and these interpretations would be based on the assumptions that one has of dialogue, its essence, and process. Nevertheless, we have seen how it is only ‘with’ the other that one experiences a dialogue, even though it is experienced individually. This ‘other’ is determined vis-à-vis the self of the ‘dialogue-realizing entity’.

This idea of the realization of the self and how the other is construed in relation to the notion of the self can lead to an understanding of the idea of unity inherent in this perceived dichotomy of the self and the other. The unity that exists upon a consideration of the self and the other, can also be understood in terms of the ‘I-Thou’ relationship that Buber (2002) talks about in his discussion on ‘dialogue’.

With this idea of a ‘relational otherness’, one realizes that a dialogue can only be possible upon the establishment of such a vis-à-vis relation. We also realize that this recognition of the other as relational or relative to oneself comes out as a result of some open-ness and receptivity at the end of the self; because only then an acceptance of the other can take place. Also, this other has an element of being not-the-self, and it is this that makes reception possible as one cannot receive anything if there is no difference between the two. And yet, as seen in the I-thou relationship above, under this difference lies an inherent unity- that is, both the self and the one that is ‘not’ the self, represent two aspects of a singular being/existence.

In fulfilling me ‘dialogue’ as a concept thus, by taking various examples as above and trying to develop an essential understanding of it, we come to identify some of its features as:

1. It is something that involves ‘two’ entities for its existence, where one of the entities may simply be assumed in some cases.
2. Only a ‘conscious’ entity can realize if a dialogue happened or not. That is to say, ‘reception’ on the part of the conscious self lies at the heart of dialogue.
3. The relationship between the self and the other is based on an inherent unity, but a ‘difference’ between the two- that is, one being the ‘self’ and the other being ‘not-the-self’ is also crucial.

A dialogue having the above as its essential features, therefore, has some important implications in the classroom. This analysis shows that a dialogue can happen not only between two living entities- the teacher and the students but is also possible between the teacher/student and books and other material sources that are used in the classroom that may include the very structure of the classroom itself. It also brings to our understanding that a teacher cannot always ensure that dialogue is happening or not. A teacher can only be him/herself ‘open’ and ‘receptive’ and encourage the same in his/her students by providing them with opportunities to be so. This ‘openness’, ‘receptivity’ that might lead to a dialogue, seems to have some connection with the nature of the relationship that the two entities- students and teachers, in this case, share. We saw how this relationship is based on the recognition of both a difference and unity. This ‘difference’ seems to come naturally to the given situation, where the student and the teacher are both considered to be different from each other. In such a case, for a relationship to be established, some connection needs to be there that could help both the student and the teacher to identify and recognize each other based on some common ground.

Many beginner teachers come to believe that somehow by being friends with their students or by behaving in ways similar to their students, they would be able to have a dialogue with them. However, as shown above, no dialogue can happen between two entities that do not have any recognized ‘difference’ in the first place, and the ‘unity’ is something that comes out as a result of the recognition of this difference. And therefore, the ‘difference’ between the teachers and the students must not be considered as something unwanted, but only as a step towards dialogue.

Though the analysis can be further extended to include more questions, however, at present, the above-discussed analysis of dialogue is needed to be concluded with the hope that it would lead to clearer reflections in order to better inform classroom practices and personal actions.

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Understanding Dialogue as Impact

Ishita Solanki

Abstract

In this paper, an attempt to understand the concept “dialogue” is being made. Dialogue is a distinct and desired form of conversation. This paper analyses and identifies the characteristics that differentiate dialogue from any other form of conversation. To do so, the paper analyses the process of a conversation and its various aspects. These are content, intent, impact and nature of the impact. The paper argues that any conversation has the possibility of translating into a dialogue, if it has a positive meaningful impact, which is personally defined, on at least one of its conversant. The paper also refers to some established ideas of dialogue such as Buber, Freire and Socrates. The paper ends with touching upon the implications for such a conceptualization of dialogue in education.

Keywords: Education, Conversation, Discussion, Debate,

Dialogue has emerged as an important educational concept to be translated into practice. It is commonly agreed that educators and/or students of education must understand what dialogue is and that, since, like education, it is normative, one must engage in dialogue. However, there are multiple ways in which people interpret the concept of dialogue, which leads to some ambiguity in understanding what it means. The ambiguity perhaps gets added on due to different connotations that the word “dialogue” is used in common parlance.

Thus, it is imperative to think deeply about dialogue and try to understand it better and fully. Trying to get a sense of the word “dialogue” (in the discourse of education) from its common usage, it can perhaps be said that some special kinds of conversations are called dialogues. In other words, dialogues are conversations with some special features, and to understand what dialogue is, these special features need to be identified.

Another reason to think of dialogue as a subset of conversation would be the etymology of the word, since Dialogue comes from Old French *dialoge*, via Latin, from Greek *dialogos*, from *dialegesthai* ‘converse with’, from *dia* ‘through’ + *legein* ‘to speak’. So, dialogue roughly translates to “through speaking”, which hints at conversation. Even though the meaning of some words changes dramatically with time and has nothing to do with what the word originally meant (example: the word “fantastic”: it used to mean something that is conceived by imagination, but now it means something that is wonderful or delightful), most words retain at least a sense of their original meaning. “Dialogue”, even though used in a range of undertones, retains a sense of its origins.

To figure out what makes a conversation a dialogue, some deliberation on conversation is required. A conversation seems to have certain features which are immediately observable, for instance, a conversation has to have at least two participants (or entities, see articles by Priyanka Sheoran & Parveen Kaur in this volume). However, not all conversations are the

same. If a conversant is not open to understand the other's perspective and is only intending to argue, then, it may be understood as conflict. If they argue rationally with each other to convince and persuade each other, then it may be called a debate. If participants are sharing and talking about something in general with some openness then it may be understood as discussion.

For something to be called a conversation, there is a need for a shared language. This is because, without a shared language, there will be no exchange of ideas/information in an interaction at all. Therefore, such an interaction can not be characterized as a conversation. There can be other characteristics of conversation that can be brought up, many other types of conversations can be thought of, and many minute details can be talked about, but none of these, however, are required here. We have the required minimum about "conversation" to move on to the next part of the analysis of dialogue.

Now that we have defined a discussion and a debate, let us try to identify characteristics that make any conversation a dialogue. To do so, an exhaustive look into the process of conversation is required.

There are various facets of a conversation. They are the *raison d'etre*, the content and the impact of the conversation. The *raison d'etre*, or the reason for being of a conversation, is quite simply why the conversation happened at all. Thinking about the *raison d'etre* from the intent perspective, one can think of two kinds of conversations: a conversation could be intentional, that is, it was brought into existence by someone intentionally, or it could be unintentional, that is, no individual intended for it to happen, but it happened anyway. The assumption now is that either kind of conversation has a *raison d'etre*, irrespective of intentionality. For example, consider a group of students who have come together to discuss the need for them to have a Students' Body. The reason behind this discussion presumably would be that the students are having some issues that they would like addressed, but their institution does not have a system for it. Hence, the students are trying to discuss it among themselves to spread awareness about the need and the pros and cons of forming a students' body and to possibly reach a conclusion about whether they are going to form one or not. In this case, the conversation was intentional, and its reason for existence was that students felt a need for it, and went ahead and had it. A conversation about the weather between two strangers in the Metro because they made a prolonged eye contact, may be called unintentional, but its *raison d'etre* would be that they felt awkward, and felt the need to say something, due to which the conversation came into existence. The distinction between intentionality and *raison d'etre* is important because it will come up later in the discussion about whether one can engage in dialogue intentionally or not.

Moving on to the content of the conversation: the meaning of the content of the conversation is quite self-explanatory; it is the ideas and words and/or actions which are exchanged in a conversation, which includes spoken words, implied sentiments, mannerisms, and the like.

The third facet of the conversation was ‘impact’. This impact can be of various kinds. We will explore it with the help of examples. Consider the first example: a father and son had a conversation, wherein the father was trying to convince his son about the benefits of waking up early in the morning. The father managed to convince the son by means of the conversation. As a result, the son started waking up early in the morning regularly, became healthier and started achieving more in various spheres of his life. In this example, there has been a perceptible *impact* in the life of the son as a direct consequence of the conversation. Consider another example: the state governments of two states of India had been on an opposing stance about water sharing between the two. To reach an agreement, they formed committees and held a meeting. A solution was devised, and it was agreed that a dam shall be constructed, which would solve both the states’ problems.

Now, as a result of the conversation in the meeting, a dam was being constructed. This was an example of a tangible; physical difference being made as a consequence of the conversation. This physical difference would also go on to affect the lives of many people concerned with the project. All of this constitutes the *impact* of this conversation. Now, consider the conversation between two people, regarding the size of the universe. This conversation, say, leads to an awareness of the enormity of the universe to both the participants, which, in turn, leads to the arrival of a variety of strong and new feelings of awe in both the individuals. So, the impact of this conversation was the advent of the feelings in the individuals. There are some conversations which do not fulfil their intent. They don’t end up ‘achieving’ anything. However, they too have an impact, namely, the response of the individuals elicited by the conversation. The response could be anything from anger to euphoria to indifference. The assumption here is that every conversation, even if it does nothing else, elicits some kind of response from its participants, and this response forms a part of the impact of the conversation. To sum up, the impact of any conversation includes the immediate effects of the conversation on the world.

Note that the impact of a conversation can be intended, unintended, or both. In the first example discussed above, we called the change in the life of the son the impact of the conversation. This was the intended (by the father) impact. Also, say, the conversation ended up making the father really proud of himself and the son. This was kind of a “side effect” or an unintended impact of the conversation. It should be noted that all such “side effects” also form part of the impact if they were immediate.

Now, to try to define dialogue, we will analyse instances in which people feel like they have had dialogue in the framework of the intent, content and impact that has been created.

Consider the following: a 16-year-old boy, who has been struggling with his sexuality for a while, and has come to the conclusion that he is gay, has decided to come out to his parents. Suppose that the parents take the confession very positively and readily accept the son's sexuality. In this case, the conversation that the son would have with his parents would perhaps be categorized as dialogical (for both the son and the parents) by most people, however, It is worth our while to think about why it would be so. What is it about this conversation that it has been called dialogical? Imagine the effects of this dialogue on the son and the parents. The son would probably feel a load off his chest and would sort of look at the dialogue as a gateway to a new life without hiding anything. The conversation would probably have significant emotional involvement for the son.

Similarly, for the parents, the revelation by their son would have various implications. Again, this would perhaps entail significant emotional involvement. Now, what makes this conversation dialogue is perhaps this emotional involvement, coupled with the implications of the dialogue on the participants' lives. Note that all of this comes under the impact of the conversation, as discussed above.

Now consider another conversation that would be readily called a dialogue. Suppose that a feminist who holds certain ideas finds himself debating a sexist. They are both articulating well, and are convinced of their respective stands. The feminist, suppose, when the debate gets over, reflects on the ideas debated upon. He comes to realize that the counterpoints that his opponent offered were quite ridiculous and that he himself gained a much better understanding of feminism by articulating. Thus, the dialogue helped him reinforce his previously held ideas, and perhaps rid him of some under-confidence or unsurely he might have had earlier regarding this. This is the impact which perhaps helps him categorize the debate as a dialogue.

Again, consider another debate. A non-vegetarian is coaxing her vegetarian friend into eating non-vegetarian food, completely disregarding the friend's preference. This starts a debate between the two regarding what kind of food is better in various aspects. The non-vegetarian friend realizes that there is a lot that she doesn't know about food and where and how it comes from. The inhumane aspects of the meat industry, as brought up in the debate, deeply bother her, and as a result of the debate, there is a disequilibrium in the opinions held by her. To the people who would ask her what has suddenly triggered newfound awareness, and what transpired that she went from being a hardcore non-vegetarian to maybe a vegetarian, or at least an aware non-vegetarian; she would probably say that she had a dialogue with her friend which changed her perspective.

Now, trying to gauge what separates dialogue from an ordinary conversation, on the basis of examples taken above, it is clear that the difference has to do with the impact of the conversation. In other words, it is the impact that the conversation has on the individual

(which can be determined by the way an individual responds to the said conversation), which decides whether the conversation is dialogical or not. Impact perhaps determines the status of being a dialogue for a conversation because, when it comes to people (or groups of them), the impact tends to be a combined effect of the intent and the content of the conversation.

On the other hand, both the intent or the content, in themselves, are perhaps poor indicators of the type of conversation. This is because, the intent of conversation isn't enough when it comes to conversations among individuals; as a conversation can go in a significantly different way than intended, thereby rendering the intent meaningless. Besides, there can be a number of conversations with similar intent, and it is not necessary that they would all be dialogical. For instance, in the first example of dialogue discussed earlier, the intent of the son was that he was going to tell a secret that he had been living with to his parents. If the secret in question had been, say, that he once stayed up all night to watch a TV show, then the conversation would go in a very different vein, and would hardly be categorized as dialogical.

Now, think of an academically dissatisfied student of Physics attending a career fair in which a person introduces her to the field of, say, philosophy; and makes her realize that she can make a career out of it. This might lead the student to feel that she has been given a fresh breath of life, and this conversation would be dialogical to her. The same conversation, say, with a student studying law who is content with it, would not mean much. So, similar to intent, the importance of the content is also properly gauged by the responses that it elicits. So, the impact of the conversation on an individual is the most telling aspect of the conversation, as it includes the essence of the intent/raison d'être and the content of the conversation as well.

Now, the kinds of impacts of conversation in which I am interested while attempting to define dialogue with respect to individuals, are the ones which hold great personal meaning for them. These impacts can come in the form of reinforcement of ideas held very dearly by the individual; creation of disequilibrium in the thoughts and values held by the individual; the descent of a plethora of feelings on the individual; a marked change in the fulfillment of an individual and so on. Looking closer at such responses, and other similar ones, one can say that the existence of these would require an appreciable amount of involvement of the individual's emotional faculties. This is because these involve relatively strong feelings, and people are sensitive about strong feelings. So, the commonality in all these responses and other similar ones is that they hold great personal meaning or significance for the individual. This is the one necessary condition for the occurrence of a dialogue. In other words, if a conversation is to be called a dialogue, it necessarily would have had a meaningful or significant impact on the individual.

One can think of certain conversations which would have had a significant impact on an individual, but would not be called dialogue. For instance, if a mother beats up a little child over something insignificant, it will definitely be significant for the child, but perhaps not dialogical. This discomfort over categorizing a conversation with a normatively “negative” impact on the individual leads us to the positive connotation attached to the word “dialogue”. Another thing that this example leads us to, is the realization that a significant or meaningful impact on the individual doesn’t imply a dialogue, meaning that even though, as discussed earlier, it is a necessary condition for a dialogue, it is not a sufficient condition.

Then, the question arises, what other conditions are required for dialogue to take place? To try to answer that, some aspects of dialogue must be understood. In this analysis, we have essentially linked dialogue and emotions. Therefore, just like an onlooker can not say with complete certainty whether a person on the street is angry or elated or sad, an onlooker can not say with certainty whether the conversation a person is having is a dialogue for him/her. Now, if the status of a conversation being a dialogue is a personal “feeling” or decision, then, the other conditions for a conversation to be a dialogue would be personal too. In other words, what else a conversation has to be apart from having a meaningful positive impact on the individual, is not something universal, but personal.

So, what would be dialogue for a person depends on how the person answers certain questions like, Do there need to be some special qualities in individuals for them to engage in dialogue? Do the topics have to be special? Can a Prime Minister’s address to an entire nation be dialogical? If aliens come, and they manage to communicate with the entire humanity at the same time, can it be dialogical? Can only one person have a dialogue with oneself? If two people are involved in a conversation, but only one of them is really participating, can it be a dialogue? Can a dream be a dialogue? Can there be dialogue in a dream? Can one have a dialogue with imaginary beings? With God? With trees? Pets? With someone who speaks a different language? If someone, during a conversation, says something, but the recipient understands something completely different, can it be dialogical? Is looking at a piece of art/something of great beauty dialogical?

Quite clearly, different people will have different answers to these questions, which explore the minutiae of dialogue. This means that the concept of dialogue has a broad, normative meaning in general, but the precise meaning differs for different people.

So far, we have tried to define dialogue by considering conversations in daily life which would generally be called dialogue. However, dialogue has been defined by many educators and philosophers. Now, it should be explored how this definition fits into the other most popular ones.

For Freire (2005), the aim of education is to raise the consciousness of the oppressed masses. He introduces dialogue as a means of imparting education. For him, a dialogue is somewhat relational, in that in dialogue, arguments based solely on authority won't hold. More importantly, however, Freire takes dialogue to be a means to bring about "conscientization". Words and phrases like "revolutionary" and "unveiling of reality" are often used along with dialogue. He lays down some conditions for dialogue to take place. For instance, he cites a love for humanity, a love for life, being humble, critical thinking etc. as being necessary for dialogue to take place. Bringing our attention to what the essence of Freirean dialogue is, however, we come back to the concept of impact.

Since, for Freire, a dialogue is a way of educating the masses, thereby raising consciousness and eventually changing the oppressive structure of the society, clearly, Freire is talking of impact. The difference between Freirean impact and the impact which characterized the definition of dialogue that was developed in this paper is that the former talks on the impact on the individual (conscientization) and hence, the impact on the society (breaking of oppressive structure); while the latter only talks of the significant positive impact on the individual who claims to have had a dialogue.

Socratic dialogue typically refers to special kinds of discussions. In the Socratic method, usually, questions are employed to argue one's point. One party asks questions which are such that the answers to them slowly take the other party closer to the first party's argument. These questions usually problematize the ideas of the other party. In my view, what makes these dialogues different from usual discussions is that asking questions to explain something is more effective than to simply argue for it using statements. Questions make the second party able to see more clearly and effectively how the argument of the other is different from their own. So, in that sense, Socratic dialogue is more impactful for the individual than other discussions. However, the Socratic dialogue is generally considered to have a rational impact rather than an emotional one.

Buberian (2002) dialogue is relational. For Buber (2002), 'genuine' dialogue is when the participants are completely open to each other and enter into a mutual relationship. Essentially, 'genuine' dialogue can take place only when the entities share an 'I-Thou' relationship, rather than an 'I-It' relationship. It is clear how this conception of dialogue contains within it the 'impact' point of view. Most conversations take place without this intention of forming a relationship with the other. Buber himself argues that many conversations with the other are not conversations with the other at all; they are conversations with oneself. He calls them 'monologues'. Some conversations are technical in nature. These conversations take place so that the participants gain information about something or discuss something in detail. These, however, are not genuine dialogues. The rareness of genuine dialogue and its emotional implications make it positively impactful.

These conceptions of dialogue, are argued to have major implications for education, by educationists and philosophers such as Buber(2002), Freire (2005), Krishnamurti (2003), and others. But here, before talking about implications in education, one must think whether dialogue can be intentional, or merely a possibility of dialogue can be created. If dialogue is considered as something that is meaningful and impactful for an individual, it is very desirable to try to engage students in dialogue. Doing so would take learning to a higher level, by making it positively impactful for students in whatever way. One can take Socratic dialogue and converse with students in such a way that their ideas are problematized, and they think critically about everything. One can follow Buber and treat students as people in themselves rather than reducing them only to entities that are supposed to be taught and prepared for exams. Similarly, one can take any conception of dialogue and try to create situations and opportunities for it to take place.

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The Requisites of a Dialogue

Parveen Kaur

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to conceptually analyse dialogue, its prerequisites, possibilities and further highlight its importance in education and in any teaching-learning process. The paper begins by analyzing the popular usage of the word in different contexts and drawing out the commonalities from them to find the essential meaning of dialogue. Dialogue is largely a means to some end. Further, in the context of education dialogue is a form of conversation that leads to construction of knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge, Intent, The requisites of a dialogue, Language, Self-dialogue.

We often hear in our B.Ed. program that there should be a dialogue between a student and a teacher. The reason we want to understand dialogue is that it is apparently a special kind of conversation style that ideally needs to be central to the teaching-learning process. So, for a prospective teacher, it is important to understand what a dialogue is that he/she needs to engage in.

To begin, let me take up the etymological meaning of ‘dialogue’. ‘*Dia*’ in dialogue means through and speech is meant by ‘*logue*’. So the word dialogue will mean a speech through something, maybe a topic, or an issue. But we still get to hear the use of the term dialogue in different contexts, for different kinds of conversations. We use the word ‘dialogue’ generally as used for movies. Sometimes we also hear that the bureaucrats of the two countries are having a dialogue. Another, quite popular use of this word is for ‘philosophical dialogues’. This suggests either the nature of all these conversations is same or since they are used in different contexts and in a different sense, they are different. If such a difference exists, then we need to understand what makes all these conversations a dialogue, despite the differences. When we say that the bureaucrats are having a dialogue, mostly we find that they are actually talking about some issue or trying to find a solution to some problem. Agreement on one view may or may not happen, but it is intended. It is not important that the two parties agree to each other’s views, but they might want to find a middle path or a negotiation which can be settled for the time being. Some sort of agreement or negotiation is usually the end product, if not, more and more rounds of dialogue happen until we reach the desired solution. Dialogue here can be looked upon as a means to arrive at the desired solution.

Moving on, movies are a form of story-telling. Though not every storytelling requires dialogue but when they are used it is mostly done to tell the story in movies. Though there are dialogues that are funny, inspiring, tragic and many more that may or may not be related to the plot at all. But these dialogue, serve a purpose, be it creating humor, evoking the emotions of the viewers, or something else. Hence, one may say that in any movie, dialogues are largely used as a means to some end.

The commonly agreed theoretical dialogues, such as Platonic dialogues, are contextually more closely related to education. In such dialogues, one party tries to find out answers from the other. The other person, in order to answer the question or in order to find the answer himself/ herself, asks some more questions or builds upon the knowledge that both parties already have. New knowledge is created gradually as they keep on refining their thoughts and ideas. In these dialogues, there are usually two participants, having a formal (between a student and teacher) or an informal relationship in a language mutually understood. One of these participants often claims to have knowledge and the other (usually Socrates) questions the claim of the first participant and often they construct new knowledge. So, we can say that there is an intention of finding answers to some questions. But if the aim of every dialogue is construction of knowledge, can we say that every conversation or interaction that leads to construction of knowledge is dialogue?

People might start a conversation without a specific intention, but end up thinking critically and learn something. A conversation may be a flow of linked statements that might not construct knowledge but are conversed just for fun, e.g., a joke. But a conversation (exchange of thoughts) having a form of encouragement (agreeing to the statements of the other party) may also lead to the construction of knowledge. It may not necessarily give answers but the parties involved learn in the process. For example, one party has a view about something but the other does not. When the other party gets to know about the first one's view they might think and find out that it is right, and they agree to it. So through that conversation, they become aware or co-construct knowledge. However, this construction is incidental as it is without any specific intent, either for the process of dialogue or for the product.

However, the presence of an intent, does not necessitate that either the process or the product is predefined. The result of dialogue may be agreement, disagreement or negotiation as it is contingent upon the process of dialogue. Kazepides (2010) writes that "dialogue cannot have a predetermined destination... the aim cannot be to win an argument but to advance understanding and human well-being...". (p. 92)

However, which activities are involved in a dialogue is an important question. One may ask about the prerequisites of a dialogue? Inferring from the discussion above, for a dialogue, there must be 'someone' to engage in a dialogue with. At least one person (human) must be there to question and think about the issue. If there is more than one person, they may all engage in asking questions, thinking, responding, and trying to further their understanding on logical grounds. However, if there is only one person, then can he/she have a dialogue with him/herself? If this person is able to ask questions, think about different perspectives and tries to reach an answer, then, it might be possible for one to have a dialogue with himself/herself.

One may ask why the parties involved have to be human? Can animals or inanimate objects have a dialogue within themselves or with a human? Because animals or inanimate objects do not have a language that humans understand, and they have very limited expression, they cannot have a dialogue with them. Without understanding what the other person wants to express, one might not think further or add their own views. However, these objects and animals could be a starting point to initiate a dialogue in humans. They might make humans think about something that may not have struck them otherwise. But we can never tell if they have dialogue amongst themselves, simply because we do not understand their language. But another point to highlight here is that animals or objects do not have the capability to think logically and coherently like humans. It is the unique ability of humans to think, organize and express their thoughts in a logical and coherent manner with the use of language. Kazepides (2010, p.95) agrees, saying,

“In acquiring language we also acquire a plethora of rules of logic – all of them embedded in ordinary languages – such as the rule of non-contradiction, not begging the question, being consistent, and the like... It would be impossible to imagine a language without such rules, violating them cannot be considered an option but only a failure to satisfy the fundamental demands of reason”.

However, should both the participants have an intent to have a dialogue? Sometimes, animals or plants or painting etc. may also initiate a process of self-dialogue. However, these may be considered as kinds of self-dialogue where the person is open or spontaneously able to have a dialogue and the other participant’s (object or natural entity) intentions are not relevant.

However, sometimes humans may also trigger/initiate a self-dialogue in each-other. This initiation translates into a dialogue, only when one continues to think, question and cross question the various positions logically. The story of Angulimala’, is an example of the same, where what Buddha told the dacoit was not a dialogue, but the initiation of a logical stream of thoughts that made him realize his wrong-doings. It may be considered to be an initiation of a self-dialogue.

Thus, dialogue requires the ability to think and express logically using a language that is understandable by the parties involved. It also involves having a common understanding of some universal truths and facts upon which the dialogue could be based; Kazepides (2010) calls these ordinary certainties.

Kazepides (2010) quotes Hans-Georg Gadamer in saying that,

“it is a process of two people understanding each other. Thus, it is a characteristic of every true conversation that each opens himself to the other person, truly accepts his point of view as worthy of consideration and gets inside the other” (p. 92).

While engaging in a conversation that can later lead to a dialogue, one needs to respect others’ emotions and beliefs (about the concerned topic, religion, etc.). They need the

courage to share their thoughts, open and fair mind to let the other person put forth his/her point and thoughtfulness to consider others' point of view. Therefore, there must be some values, such as justice, honesty, and respect for all human beings, cooperation rather than competition, care for others, courage, fair-mindedness, open-mindedness, thoughtfulness and moral sensitivity, within the people involved in the dialogue. Kazepides (2010) understands these qualities as virtues which are "manifestations of our authentic commitments to a way of being in the world and to our vision of a life worth living; hence they have a motivational or inspirational force that propositional learning usually lacks" (p. 97). For a dialogue to happen, the above-mentioned virtues and attitudes must be present in the personalities of the parties involved, lack of which might act as a hindrance.

If two or more people have a dialogue then the idea should be to learn from each other. While defending one's own argument, a person may end up learning something, maybe a new way of thinking, from the other. This is also a part of dialogue. It doesn't mean that they intentionally and necessarily want to converge their thoughts or reach a conclusion. One may not begin with a plan to have a dialogue, and it might just happen and the parties may not even realize it till the very end. For even while learning from others, one can hold on to his/her own position or perspective.

Dialogue cannot be ensured due to the lack of these virtues in some people. This is the duty of a teacher and is expected from him/her, that s/he make students capable of it. For this, a teacher must know the difference between a monologue and dialogue in education. Kazepides (2010) writes,

"Education is not a preparation for anything; its aims are inherent with itself. Unlike training and like dialogue, education has no aims; the appropriate questions to ask about dialogue are what they mean, what values they summarize, what is their place within society – not what they aim at or for... it is through dialogic teaching that we can put children on their lifelong path to self-education" (p.111).

So, a problem-solving, a talk where the knowledge base is enriched, without worrying about the conclusion is a dialogue. It is a process that may only be intended and it leads to knowledge construction. This process is important for an inquiry-based classroom, where a teacher or a student initiates a dialogue with the help of a question or inquiry and proceeds logically to look for an answer or better understanding. They think about it together, communicate, inquire more, reason and refine the knowledge they had previously. Thinking from different perspectives, identifying the pros and cons, finding solutions and moving ahead in a coherent and logical manner, all are the requisites of a dialogue.

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Fundamentals of a Dialogue

Khushbu Jangid

Abstract

In this paper, an attempt is being made to conceptually analyse dialogue in its entirety. A dialogue begins with highlighting the need for this analysis and proceeds to list the components essential for a dialogue. A dialogue truly occurs when there is a complete understanding of the other, which is an ideal state we aim at. Further, there is a discussion on the expanse of dialogue and the associated limitations where the exchange ceases to be a dialogue. Finally, dialogue is distinguished from certain terms confused with dialogue in everyday speech.

Keywords: Language, Conversation, Other, Conscious

The need for a conceptual analysis of dialogue arises from the fact that apparently, we engage in one all the time while we are in a conscious state of mind. I say ‘a conscious state of mind’ because that is the only state in which we voluntarily construct thoughts and express them. This construction of thoughts is due to wakefulness, or merely being awake or alert to one’s surroundings as well as oneself, and when one responds to it, it is due to one being sentient. These aspects are linked to being conscious and form the basic prerequisite for engaging in a dialogue. An unconscious or subconscious state of mind is neither waking nor sentient, hence we cannot talk of dialogue happening in that state.

A dialogical exchange can be in the form of words, signs, or gestures to the other party from one, where, the only condition for it is that of shared knowledge between the two, at least, of the same language. This shared knowledge is gained from the “language games”, which are essentially the varied usages of language. According to Kazepides (2010, p.100), “we do not acquire language games after critical study and examination”. We learn them on an everyday basis when we begin to internalize the external world through real and concrete examples. There is also an expectation attached to the notion of dialogue, which is a response from another entity that is captured by us. Only when there is a response can we say that dialogue has happened. This response can be an obvious expression of agreement, disagreement, or an acknowledgement, which may or may not be observable to anyone other than the participants of the dialogue. However, there is an exception to this expectation in cases where one speaks of having a dialogue with an author while reading a book, or with the lyricist while listening to a song, or with the podcaster while listening to a podcast. Although the nature of interaction in these cases is very limited, they broaden the horizons of the ways in which we can form a conception of dialogue as an integral part of our lives. This broadening of horizons is, probably, the essential difference between a dialogue and an interaction.

For dialogue to take place, we need two entities at a time. Considering by default, that one of them is ourselves, the other entity can be another person or ourselves. Gadamer, while talking about the characteristics of a conversation, says that it–

“is a process of two people understanding each other. Thus, it is a characteristic of every true conversation that each opens himself to the other person, truly accepts his point of view as worthy of consideration and gets inside the other.” (1979, p.347)

A complete understanding of the other will result in an ideal form of dialogue which cannot be achieved in real life due to the subjectivity in every person’s knowledge and hence of the two involved in the dialogical process. However, Kazipedes highlights the importance of such ideals in our lives by saying that the world will be impoverished in their absence, and we will be lost without any idea about the course of our thoughts and actions.

But when we talk about having a dialogue with ourselves, it means that we may have two or more opinions within us and one of those can be at a dialogue with another, which we generally call as thinking. Here, the “other” as the alternative voice may or may not disappear and both the entities engaging in dialogue may or may not be fused into one. Thus, a dialogue with oneself is not an independent act, as the “self” in ourselves is not something given to us, it is formed by having various forces acting upon it from the ongoing on the outside. All the aspects of dialogue are present in such a situation: language games, a broadening of horizons, and the presence of multiple entities or positions.

Having said that, the question arises whether we can have a dialogue with someone or something other than a person, say, nature. Nature here includes trees, sea, and other inanimate natural components. While having a dialogue with “nature”, we do not get a response to our initiation. We interpret non-existent responses from other entities most of the time, to mean something. Since this interpretation is from our own imagination, this form of dialogue is essentially being carried out with oneself, and there is no dialogue happening with nature.

So can we then have a dialogue with animals? If we pet a dog, and it wags its tail, then is that a dialogue? Since, both the entities engaged in this very dialogue speak different languages and do not make sense to one another, hence, it cannot be called a dialogue. Therefore, we cannot have a dialogue with animals.

What else can’t be a dialogue? A monologue is not a dialogue. The address of a monologue to an individual or a group of individuals is done without the expectation of a response. The only intent is to get one’s own point across to the group, for example, a teacher lecturing a group of students in a classroom. This is a monologue being given by the teacher. Here, a hierarchy is at play where the teacher is at the apex and the students are underneath him/her. Such an authoritarian regime is not conducive to an occurrence of dialogue because dialogue carries a sense of openness, free-will, and dynamism. So if a student chooses to respond to whatever the teacher is delivering to the classroom, then it becomes a two-way thing and a

dialogue is established between them. When this resonates in the classroom setting, and there are instances of dialogue in its every nook and corner, it points at the banishment of the hierarchies and it transforms into a successful classroom.

So far we know that dialogue is an exchange between two entities at a time in the form of words, signs, or gestures, the understanding of which is shared between the two, and there is a response from the other entity. Also, these two entities are equals in every sense.

There are scenarios which seem very similar to dialogue, yet lack qualities which are integral to the sense of dialogue. Arguments, debates, and discussions are some of them. If there is a disagreement over a certain topic, there may be an “argument”, which may or may not end with a common agreement. If this happens in a more formal setting, then it is called a “debate”, which is usually carried out between two people at opposite positions on a certain topic. The nature of such exchanges is rather rigid, where the focus is on convincing the other party of one’s own point of view and challenging the other’s point of view. Unlike in a dialogue, which demands one to be more open to what the other has to offer. But a ‘discussion’, wherein there is no agreement or disagreement as such, just the exchange of ideas, only when there is an openness associated with, can be dialogue.

A conversation, however, cannot always be a dialogue. According to Kazepides (2010), “the character of a conversation varies according to context, topic, or persons involved, while dialogue always has a serious, challenging, and demanding character.” So an essential characteristic of dialogue is that it proceeds with direction and reason. This gives it a sense of rationality, which again links to a feature of the conscious mind. But then how is dialogue different from a scientific inquiry, since the inquiry also has pre-arranged objectives? Kazipedes differentiates dialogue from a genuine scientific inquiry saying that it is determined by its own rhythmic flow and the language games inherent in the participants, and is not defined by predetermined notions. Dialogue does not need coaches or leaders to impose their viewpoints in the process, because the sense of understanding the other person’s point of view gets blurred here. There is supposed to be an open-endedness to dialogue and space for the voice of both the entities.

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The Nature of Conversation in Dialogue

Sudhir Kumar Yadav

Abstract:

The paper aims at understanding the nature of conversation involved in a dialogue. It tries to look into the features which characterize a particular conversation as dialogue. The paper begins by analyzing the entities that could be considered as the participants of the dialogue. Then it goes to look into the nature of relationship between the participants and their attitude. The conversation between Yama and Nachiketa; and that between Socrates and Glaucon are being analysed in brief to understand the qualities of conversation that makes it dialogue. Furthermore, Martin Buber's views on dialogue have been referred to substantiate the main argument of the paper.

Keywords: Conversation, Discussion, Debate, Enquiry, Reason, Mutuality, Freedom.

Dialogue is etymologically made up of two terms, which are '*dia*' meaning 'through' and '*logos*' meaning 'speech or reason'. It gained prominence with Plato's writings in which Socrates is depicted as being in deep conversations with various scholars of his time. Over a period of time, several scholars and thinkers have engaged with "dialogue", of whom, Mikhail Bakhtin, Paulo Freire, Martin Buber, and David Bohm are the prominent thinkers who have reflected on the term in the twentieth century. However, in order to understand the significance of this term, we first need to understand what dialogue is and what it is not? What is its nature and what is not?

Let's suppose dialogue is a conversation between two or more people or parties. In this presupposition, it is implicit that the conversation should be mutually understood. Here, "mutually understood" means that the parties involved in dialogue should understand the language of the conversation as well as the content and the context of the conversation. Even though animals also communicate either with themselves or with humans, these conversations can't be taken into consideration for dialogue. A conversation with animals can't be called a dialogue as animals don't have a common language to that of humans or a language that humans understand. So, it suggests that the parties involved in a dialogue are living beings and that they are only human beings. Furthermore, machines like robots can also get into conversations with themselves or with humans, but such conversations are programmed. There is no independent thinking and decision-making in machines and animals, as is typically ascribed to humans, which can also be called as someone who is self-conscious and reflective. Humans also have the ability to exercise their own will. Thus, it is possible for one to say that a particular conversation is a dialogue only when the participants have all the above-mentioned qualities.

Then, the next question that can be raised is that can we call all conversations between humans as dialogue? Or, if only particular types of conversations are called dialogue, then how are they distinct from other forms of conversations? How are they different from

discussion or debate? (These differences have been explicated in Sheoran, Solanki and Kaur's write-ups in this volume). The answers to these questions may help us to understand the nature of dialogue.

The degree of commitment of the participants in a dialogue is higher than that of discussion. Dialogue is specific and enquiry based. However, discussion might not be enquiry based and is casual in nature. But there is a possibility that a discussion might eventually turn into a dialogue. Further, a debate is more about arguing with each other with opposite viewpoints. The participants are more concerned about presenting and defending their own views rather than taking opposite views. On the contrary, in a dialogue, it is important that the participants are committed to the issue and take the opposing views also into consideration.

Now, let's turn to the question of the relationship between the participants of dialogue. Is it possible that two people or parties in an unequal power relation can have dialogue? Let's say, there is a space which makes both the people or parties to present their points logically with reason. If the conversation is mediated through logic and reason, then it can be called a dialogical conversation. But if the power hierarchy influences the conversation, it can't be called dialogue as the powerful one can impose their opinions on others.

In Katha Upanishad, the Yama- Nachiketa conversation can be called a dialogue. The former is much more powerful vis-à-vis the latter. However, their conversation is mediated through logic and reason. Yama gets convinced by Nachiketa's logic to explain the mystery of death and afterlife. Though the former tried to dissuade the latter from asking this question by different worldly offers, the former doesn't use his power to prevent the latter from asking this question. Finally, he has to explain it. When his explanation begins, Nachiketa listens carefully without creating unnecessary interruptions like posing too many questions. Thus, we can say that more often the use of power and unnecessary interruptions in a conversation block it from becoming a dialogue.

In the "Allegory of the Cave", the conversation between Socrates and Glaucon also takes the form of dialogue. When Socrates starts to explain to Glaucon about freedom (from ignorance) and the pain involved in the process of getting this freedom, the latter poses questions to the former and challenges his views. He disagrees with him at several points. He then inquires more to him. But Socrates explains all his queries logically by giving examples and situations.

Therefore, for dialogue to take place, participants should be able to participate in the conversation without fear or vice; and they should both learn from each other. Similarly, a teacher and student can make the conversation in the classroom a dialogical one by participating in the conversation without any fear or vice. From this, both of them can learn from each other.

Martin Buber when talking about dialogue and education, emphasizes the need for a dialogue in education. He says that there are some preconditions for a dialogue to happen. One should acknowledge the uniqueness of every human being and nobody should pretend to be someone who they are not. Further, people should be open to each other to know and to be known. For this, they need to trust each other's unique relationship. Besides, one shouldn't impose truth on others. In the relationship, both sides are full partners and there should be mutuality between them.

Buber emphasizes freedom as a precondition of dialogue. He says that freedom allows full participation. Not only this but also it encourages creativity which contributes significantly to the dialogical process as it enlightens the participants with new things. Therefore, we can say that another necessary condition for dialogue to take place, is to go beyond the limits of one's own knowledge and learning.

In our presupposition, we presumed the participation of two or more people or parties necessary for a dialogue to take place. This implies that one cannot have a dialogue with oneself. We can agree with this inference because in a self conversation (or self-talk) one cannot go beyond the limits of one's own knowledge and learning. This is because everyone has their own unique experiences which shape their knowledge and learning. Thus, to add to their own experiences, they need to interact with other's experiences also.

Thus, we can say that dialogue is a specific way of conversation with others in a relationship of mutuality which leads to new learning. The conversation isn't mediated through power hierarchy but through logic and reason. The participants don't have any fear or vice in their conversation.

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Learning from Platonic Dialogues

Deepali Mahendru & Tanweer Alam

Abstract :

This paper seeks to look into the various aspects of dialogue with special reference to Plato. Apart from the conceptual analysis, there is a modest attempt to deliberate on the possibilities of dialogue with other people, animals, and with oneself. It also highlights how dialogue is not merely the examination of logical acumen but of persons participating in it and how it demands certain virtues for its enactment. It further deals with the various forms in which Plato presented dialogue such as Maieutic and Elenchus.

Keywords: Self-dialogue, Conversation, Communication, Monologue, Inquiry, Reflection

In our daily conversations, the word dialogue is used very casually. There have been instances, where people said to me, “we need to dialogue about it” and when we did, it was not different from any daily conversation but it was certainly directed towards a specific topic. I wonder, what is it that makes a dialogue different from other conversations or any communications and whether any differences exist amongst them all. We first need to explore, what is understood by dialogue? Is it some exchange of feelings that happens between individuals, individuals and animals, or between animals only?

When I reach home, I whistle to call my cat, and she comes running to me wherever she is sitting or whatever she is doing. She sits by my side, and when I vent out my frustration and share my day with her, she responds by looking at me and rubbing her face on me. This is how she understands me when I talk to her. Now, coming to how I understand her, she comes to me and makes different sounds when she is hungry, when she is feeling sleepy she comes and sits in my lap, when she wants to be loved, she keeps her face under my palm and asks me to pet her. This is how we let each other know our feelings. We definitely communicate with each other but is this communication different from what I do with other people? The answer would be yes, because there is an absence of a common verbal language, we communicate with gestures and by understanding each other's body language. This is definitely a conversation but not a dialogue because conversation is sharing of ideas, thoughts and feelings (Cambridge dictionary). Let us take another example of a conversation.

Person A: I will vote for BJP in the coming elections.

Person B : I will vote for AAP in the coming elections.

Person A: I have been voting for BJP since the day I enrolled myself as a voter.

Person B: AAP is the current party in power, I will vote for it.

In this example, there is a presence of a theme, two parties are involved, both parties are explicitly stating their contrary positions. Here, these people are communicating with each other but there is no logical argument present in their words, they are merely sharing their

thoughts about both the parties. It is an example of a conversation that is taking place between two individuals. So, concluding from the example of communication with my cat and of two persons mentioned above, we can say that a conversation might or might not be directed by any specific topic, it may be formal or informal in nature and it may or may not be based on logical reasoning and arguments. (For a detailed argument in this regard, see Priyanka Sheoran's paper in this volume).

So, it could be inferred that my communication with my cat is, in fact, an example of a conversation, but we still have to find out whether it is dialogue or not. For the same, let us take an excerpt from *Plato's Dialogues: Alcibiades and Socrates* (on justice)

ALCIBIADES:	Let's say I do, if you like, so I can find out what you're going to say.
SOCRATES :	Right then; you plan, as I say, to come forward and advise the Athenians sometime soon. Suppose I stopped you as you were about to take the podium and asked, "Alcibiades, what are the Athenians proposing to discuss? You're getting up to advise them because it's something you know better than they do, aren't you?" What would you reply?
ALCIBIADES:	Yes, I suppose I would say it was something that I know better than they do.
SOCRATES :	So it's on matters you know about that you're a good adviser.
ALCIBIADES:	Of course.
SOCRATES :	Now the only things you know are what you've learned from others or found out for yourself; isn't that right?
ALCIBIADES:	What else could I know?
SOCRATES :	Could you ever have learned or found out anything without wanting to learn it or work it out for yourself?
ALCIBIADES:	No, I couldn't have.
SOCRATES :	Is that right? Would you have wanted to learn or work out something that you thought you understood?
ALCIBIADES:	Of course not.
SOCRATES :	So there was a time when you didn't think you knew what you now understand.
ALCIBIADES:	There must have been.
SOCRATES :	But I've got a pretty good idea what you've learned. Tell me if I've missed anything: as far as I remember, you learned writing and lyre-playing and wrestling, but you didn't want to learn aulos-playing. These are the subjects that you understand—unless perhaps you've been learning something while I wasn't looking; but I don't think you have been, either by night or by day, on your excursions from home.
ALCIBIADES:	No, those are the only lessons I took.

SOCRATES :	Well then, is it when the Athenians are discussing how to spell a word correctly that you'll stand up to advise them?
ALCIBIADES:	Good God, I'd never do that!
SOCRATES :	Then is it when they're discussing the notes on the lyre?
ALCIBIADES:	No, never.
SOCRATES :	But surely they're not in the habit of discussing wrestling in the Assembly.
ALCIBIADES:	Certainly not.

(Plato, 1997, p.560)

Philosophers who came before Socrates were claiming about their knowledge, but Socrates came with his pronouncement that he does not know, he professed his ignorance rather than his knowledge. With this humility he began to examine himself and others. The depiction of his engagement with others is recognized as the paragon of dialogue. Here, Alcibiades and Socrates are two people involved who are explaining their positions, with a continuous questioning and answering; we find in Socrates a sense of not-knowing, which is generating reflective thinking. The communication is directed by a particular theme, Socrates is not giving any direct answers to Alcibiades, rather he is posing constant questions to his replies. He is constantly facilitating Alcibiades to critically engage with his own statements and thoughts using a common verbal language.

The Platonic dialogues are not the examination of any random hypothetical views/concepts, neither it is merely about the logical acumen of that person. It was the examination of men, their immediate moral intuitions, that how well they lead their life. It is quite evident that the interlocutors were not defending something which were not in accord with what they used to practice in their life. For instance, Protagoras was the teacher of Virtue, but it was debatable whether Virtue can be taught. Similarly, Gorgias was a rhetorician who considered rhetoric as an art, but it was arguable that it is not art. Considering this, we can say that the dialogues were not merely clash of different epistemic perspectives or logical relation between propositions but of personalities as well. Therefore, Dialogues required other qualities such as cooperation with other person, there has to be mutual support for developing an inter-subjective relation. The participant must have then honesty and fearlessness to say what they actually believe or think. For that reason, when Protagoras attempted to give a hypothetical view about the nature of Virtue, he was stopped immediately by Socrates. Socrates wanted to hear what he himself thinks about it. He said it's 'You and me' which I want to put on examination.

“Protagoras: It's not so absolutely clear a case to me, Socrates, as to make me grant that justice is pious, and piety just. It seems a distinction is in order here. But what's the difference? If you want, we'll let justice be pious and piety just.

Socrates: Don't do that to me! It's not this "if you want" or 'if you agree' business. I want to test. It's you and me I want to put on the line, and I think the argument will be tested best if we take the 'if' out."(Plato, 1997, p.764).

Socrates here puts the criteria that the respondent should say exactly what they themselves believed in order to enact the dialogue effectively. Dialogue therefore, not only demanded logicalness and consistency in the argument but places moral demands on the participants as well. Many times, the respondents lacked these virtues therefore, their response obstructed the progression of dialogue. For instance, Protagoras can be seen as being angry, Meno wanted to quit and started abusing Socrates etc. It demanded that the participants should free themselves from anger, arrogance and intellectual laziness(Seeskin,1947, p.3) Dialogues, therefore, at the same time were like a training or preparation for the soul to have honesty and to have the courage to go wherever reason leads them.

In dialogue such as *Theaetetus*, Socrates compared his art of interaction with midwifery, which is also termed as *Maieutic*. Midwife is the woman who is herself barren or past childbearing age but helps others in delivering babies. Socrates said, he did midwifery not with the body but with the soul in delivering ideas which is yet not taken out of the soul or ideas which are not brought out to consciousness. Socrates in his dialogue appeared as a barren man who cannot provide any knowledge on his own. As the midwife is not the one bearing the child, Socrates couldn't bear any wisdom. He says:

"For one thing which I have in common with the ordinary midwives is that I myself am barren of wisdom. The common reproach against me is that I am always asking questions of other people but never express my own views about anything, because there is no wisdom in me; and that is true enough" (Plato, 1997, p.167).

One of the central techniques Plato's Socrates used while interacting with interlocutors was *Elenchus*. Which means "to contest", to put someone or something to the test", "to show or indicate", "to cross examine or to refute". The basic structure of the *elenchus* was Socrates asking the X-ness/essence/definition of something, such as what is "X"? And then refuting the answers from the interlocutors with the intent to have a more refined version of it, then again repeating the process. This was a destructive process through which he impugned one's reputation of being competent on the topic. However, this refutation used to bring the state of perplexity in the interlocutor, and generally it leads to the willingness to learn. These features of reflective thinking, rational inquiring, and a sense of not-knowing could be understood as dialogue (See Sudhir Kumar Yadav's paper for a detailed argument).

One of the characteristics of Platonic dialogue is that it goes on without reaching any certain end. It begins in perplexity and ends in *Aporia* or uncertainty. If we take any dialogue, be it on justice or on piety or on knowledge etc. they never settle in any certain, and final answer.

The effort to define something goes on with misunderstanding, vagueness, confusion and misinterpretation etc. and all these obfuscate the very possibility of grasping the exact meaning and to reach a common understanding. The participants in the dialogue have to take continuous effort in trying to remove all the misunderstandings to convey their position clearly. Moreover, they also have to realize the logical implication of their position. There is a constant attempt to be understood and get examined by others and it helps the interlocutor to reconsider, reformulate and reinterpret with clarity and coherence. This necessity to formulate and reformulate denies any kind of finality and closure in dialogue. Hence, dialogue always remains open-ended, perpetuating with unending progression.

The characteristics of dialogue such as reflective thinking, rational inquiry, commonality of issue/theme where at least two parties/interlocutors/voices are arguing from contrary or different positions, however, it is also open for multiple epistemic perspectives/ positions and even engagement with oneself from two different perspectives has been explained in this paper. Other characteristics such as inter subjective relation where there is a two-way process of active listening and speaking, has been also well explained elsewhere (in Sudhir and Parveen's paper).

In contrast to the Platonic dialogues, a conversation with one's pet cat, would not be an exemplar of dialogue because it does not initiate reflective thinking in both the participants, and there is no common verbal language. Therefore, one cannot claim to have dialogue with plants or animals because there is no perceivable reflective thinking in them. However, if reflective thinking is an important feature of dialogue, will all those forms/modes of communication that initiate reflective thinking in humans be called dialogical? For example, there could be various stories, movies, speeches that might initiate reflection in oneself, however, since this is not being done by engaging in a two-way process that would not be considered as a dialogue (See Sudhir Kumar Yadav's papers).

Moreover, if the process of self-reflection in both the parties is important, then it necessarily implies that there will be at least two people to have a dialogue. However, the question that emerges is what if these two participants are in disagreement with each other? In such a case, the interaction would be considered dialogic because all the necessary conditions are being fulfilled even though there is no final conclusion.

The discussion above clarifies the impossibility of dialogue with other entities, whether living or non-living. However, one wonders whether someone can have a dialogue with oneself or not? Let us say, in a situation where a female gets pregnant without marriage, she is not feeling shameful about it, but she is made to feel ashamed by the family members and other members of society. Here, the term shameful implies, the person herself experiences the emotion shame and ashamed implies that the people and society around her are trying to belittle her for her act, they are humiliating and demeaning her. This state, which she has

achieved where she is not shameful but being ashamed is because she is self-reflecting, rationally inquiring, and is in a state of ‘not-knowing’, therefore, one may say here that she is having a self-dialogue. She may convince herself that this act is not shameful in itself, but being associated with marriage or bachelorette and certain values associated makes it “worth feeling ashamed for” or the other way around, however, what matters here is that her choice is based on logical arguments. Without such a dialogue, based on social perceptions, she would have experienced shame of her own act which she didn’t possibly regret at a particular point in time. So, here it could be inferred that it is not necessary for two people to be there to have a dialogue but one single person with multiple positions can also have a dialogue.

In the example above, it could be seen that dialogue with self involves critical thinking; considering multiple prospective positions on an issue thereby making one’s choices conscious. It also shapes the decisions of a person in daily life situations. Therefore, all reflective thinking could be considered as self-dialogue.

As it has been mentioned in Platonic dialogue, the purpose of Dialogue is to inquire and engage with one another using reason. If we think critically, there are multiple positions and reasoning of a person which would generate any new knowledge or perspectives. Just as in the example of Shame, the lady is considering all the contrary positions and refuting their possible arguments based on reason, this deliberation is helping her to use reason to arrive at her state of not feeling shameful about her act.

Thus, it is the presence of multiple voices and not multiple people that is important to have a dialogue. If multiple people are constantly engaged in communication with each other which has all the features of dialogue, except the presence of multiple voices, then, these people with similar views are engaged in a conversation with each other because the presence of a single voice or perspective would be ‘monologue’ in the Bakhtinian (Holquist, 2003) sense because the voice coming from multiple people is one, it is single- *mono*.

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Dialogue

Aradhana Luthra

Questions such as: ‘What is dialogue?’ ‘What are the prerequisites of dialogue?’ ‘Is dialogue subjective or objective? ‘What is the importance of dialogue in any scenario?’ “Does it have an impact or not?’ are some important questions to be answered for various reasons when one talks of it. The first and the most important reason is to understand the term for the sake of its own understanding as also to make sure the appropriate usage of the term. A second and related reason could be that there are terms such as, discussion, argument, and debate etc. that are used synonymously to dialogue. Hence, we need to clarify whether these are same or closely related. If they differ, then how?

Further, is it essential to comprehend the daily use of the concept ‘dialogue’, in education and/or in any other situation in life. Speaking specifically in the context of education, it is often argued by educationists, philosophers and others that learning should be a dialogical experience. Hence, this paper also deals with the question ‘whether learning should be made a dialogical experience for learners? If yes, to what extent and how?

Let us begin the journey of answering these questions one by one and discovering the nature of the dialogue. The first question is ‘what is dialogue and what are its prerequisites?’ Let us take an example of two children talking to each other about a certain object say, a book. They are sharing their views about that book. Can we call it a dialogue? Maybe, because there are two people present ,who are more or less, at equal positions, have mutual respect, sharing views using language and are deriving some understanding from the conversation going on. The questions that arise from such an understanding of dialogue could be: Are all the conversations dialogical where people on both sides are at equal positions? What is the meaning of the term ‘equal’ here? Can there be a dialogue between people who do not have mutual respect? Can there be dialogue without language? Is dialogue for sharing views only? Do we always derive some understanding with dialogue?

Let us find out with the help of the above example. In the example, equal means that both of them are speaking and are being heard. They are in the same class. “Being heard” is an important term here. Along with this, if a person is speaking, it does not ensure that he/she is being answered also (we will also find the difference between being heard and being answered). For example, a person preparing for his or her presentation, alone in a room is not being heard by anyone else. One might say that he or she is speaking, so it is a dialogue!

But is it? As ‘dia’ in dialogue means ‘through’ and ‘logue’ means ‘speak’. It explains that something is passed through by speaking. As in the case of a person preparing for a presentation, he/she is speaking, observing himself or herself and not being answered by

anyone including himself or herself. If it is not being passed to anyone, and also, if one is not answering to oneself, it can not be called a dialogue.....

Another question which comes up at this point is whether one can have a dialogue with oneself or not? Since the person speaking is the only one present, is it dialogue? That person might not feel answerable to himself or herself at all. It cannot be said that there is a conversation going on. It may look like there is a speech being given by a person, but there is an absence of an audience. Now if the person is answering to oneself, can it be called a dialogue? ‘Feeling answerable’ shows that he or she was being heard, observed and comprehended, and probably, there was something which required a reply or a reaction.

Again, is it that simple? Is dialogue only a reply? If so, then how can one reply to oneself? One can be just saying ‘good’ to oneself for speaking well which may or may not be considered a reply. One could simply be rectifying his or her mistake, in the above case. It could be that the speaker is evaluating himself/herself and making necessary changes to improve or appreciating the efforts. On the contrary, the person was probably saying ‘good’ to himself or herself as this is what his/her observer would have said after listening to the speech or presentation, had there been one. It is the speaker who chose the other personality, “an imaginary audience”, to be the observer and respondent for his/her speech. In the above case let us say it was his/her partner, boss or the person for whom the presentation is being prepared. The speaker is then anticipating/imagining possible questions or responses that the imagined audience (with whom s/he is fairly acquainted) could have asked, on his/her own and then responded accordingly. But it was totally the speaker’s decision to choose the second party for the discussion.

But is it necessary that the imagined audience will always be a human? Could it be nature or any other non-living thing?

To what extent is language required for dialogue? There are still some unanswered questions. Let us start with another example here. Suppose a man starts jogging in a park and starts enjoying views (sights) for the first week, and he stays enthusiastic to find something new, a new flower or bird every day and keeps jogging. He wakes up every day, in spite of all the feeling of sleeping some more time by saying to himself, “let’s see what’s new today...” and gets on. This keeps him afresh, helps him to begin his day with an optimistic view. We can say that this happened because of the presence of the park or nature, or he liked to jog or both. We can say that being in nature brought about some change in the person. With this, we can say that dialogue is possible with nature.

Now let us talk about a classroom where the teacher cum facilitator enters and asks to handover the homework given in the previous class. Two-third of the learners did so but one-third of the learners did not do their homework. The teacher scolded them and gave them

some extra work and asked them to submit all the work on the next day. The learners did not do it on the next day as well. The teacher scolded them again. In this example, the learners did understand what the teacher said but did not act accordingly. Also, there was no change in the teacher. Though there was a learning present, where the learners learnt that the teacher would scold them if they did not do their work and the teacher learnt that scolding would not work if the learners would not do their homework.

With this example, we might say that in dialogues, language is present, learning does take place and behavior may or may not change.

But is language essentially vital for dialogue? For this, we might want to know what language is... Language is the medium through which we share our thoughts and ideas to others. It can be done by using signs, symbols, gestures or words which are mutually understood.

Let us take the example of a car driver and bike driver. The bike is behind the car. The bike driver is blowing horn continuously, but the car is not giving him his way. Here, it would not be right to say that it was unclear to the car driver that the horn was being blown to ask him to give way to the bike driver, as blowing horn is a mutually understood symbol by both. The implications of the process may vary, but he could have given way or not. In other words, the feeling of answerability was there but the way he could answer may vary, he might have given way or not. Here, it might not be wrong to say that the dialogue was happening between the two drivers as one was getting the message provided by the other and had a feeling of answerability. Also, the language in the form of mutually understood symbols was also prominently present.

Another thing, which is quite connected with the signs and symbols, is text. It is quite a logical question about what happens when we are reading a text. Let us take the example of a person who's reading a book, sitting alone in a room. At the beginning of the 4th page, the person starts laughing. At the end of the 7th page, the person shouts all of a sudden "Wow! Good. He deserved it". At the end of the 10th page, the person gets sad. Now with this example, we can clearly notice that the person is changing expressions and even speaking while reading a text. It seems as if the person is replying to one of the characters in the book or maybe is getting sad or happy for the character. Everything we read is written by someone and are thoughts of someone else and so it would not be wrong to say that every reader is indirectly having an interaction with a person and hence, is feeling answerable to the writer.

But what if there are no words and no mutually understood signs? How would you feel if you saw a boy talking to a strawberry tree? Let us take the example of a young boy talking to a strawberry tree in his front yard. Not as if it is a tree but as a friend or a relative, hugging it and kissing it. Whenever the boy is dejected or joyous, he tends to the tree and spills out

everything to it. He does it because this tree was grown by his grandma now that she is no more, it reminds him of her and he feels that she is here now. He gets replies when the wind blows, when the branches move, when the leaves fall, etc. This is somewhat like our first example: the speaker chooses an imaginary friend to be his/her listener or second party. Here, the child chose the tree as the second party for conversation and received questions and answers from the tree which he thought as his grandmother talking, in his mind. The child has decided and given the place of the grandmother to a tree grown by her. Someone observing it might just say that the movement of the trees is because of the wind and leaves are falling because of seasonal change. But for the child, he feels responsible for the tree (in this case, his grandmother) and also answerable to all the questions. For the observer, the child is merely talking to himself. It is him who's asking all the questions on her behalf and it's him who's answering the questions on her behalf.

With this we can conclude that at least one person is required for dialogue and the other side can be an object with which you are emotionally connected, which indicates we are having a dialogue with the person whom that thing symbolizes.

It is the speaker who is interpreting all the possible answers which could have been given by the other person if he/she was really here.

Although, it does not mean that the answers are totally true or even false. It is because the current discussion is the result of one or many past conversations and is the result of the speaker's understanding of the second party.

What if there is no other object present there is only one person and nothing else. Are all the objects symbolic to another entity or any other person? In the above case, the tree symbolized the child's grandmother. Let's take the example of a person who writes a diary every night before going to bed.

In this case, a boy articulates all his thoughts and concretizes them. He is definitely attached to his diary and the diary symbolizes any other person with whom he is having this conversation.

After sometime, when the person reads his diary himself, all the things that were written by him and all the events which happened in the past ,he is, in a way, actually having this conversation with himself.

In the first part, the second party was the 'diary' which was not symbolizing anyone else, though had an emotional connection with the boy. But the second part can be a dialogue with self.

Let us take another example to understand it. Whenever the class teacher asks the learners to do their assigned work on time, he/she is definitely being heard by learners (except if there is a hearing disabled learner, even in that case he/she can read, or there is some other way to convey the message). Will the teacher be answered – depends on a lot of things. Even answering is of different types, such as students may say ‘yes’ to the teacher, may say ‘ok’, show their grief or discomfort with the work by saying ‘no’ or probably some of them will show the work the next day.

So, with this, we can say that being heard is a human capability which is involuntary while answerability of any kind is a choice.

With this example, it is time to find out the relationship between dialogue and learning.

If we listen to ‘Buber’, dialogue can help in learning, but he is against the traditional idea of education where information and wisdom are poured from above. As well as the newfound enthusiasm and assumption of progressive teachers that equate education with the unfolding and development of the child’s creative powers and a spontaneous capacity to assimilate the environment through immediate experience according to the child’s needs and interests.

Buber did not see the teacher as a passive, uncritical bystander but as one of the vital elements that filter experience in order to make the selection of the effective world, so that the child may discover an autonomy to his own response to the world.

Before we come to our conclusion and know more about dialogue, it is time to know how a discussion-based classroom is. The discussion-based classroom is one in which learners are given opportunities to speak and to discuss their thoughts and reach their own conclusion. They are given space to think and respond.

Dialogue is, which happens within the mind of the learner during the discussion-based classroom. A discussion about a monument creates curiosity in the learner to know more about it and even visit it and other monuments too and even asks the teacher to go there.

A conversation may be with or without the intent of learning. For instance, a child while convincing his/her parents to send him/her on a school trip may begin with random talks and then move on to the main topic of asking their permission. There was truly an intent present while there is not always an intent present when you talk to your friends. During the first case, what is with the child’s random talks, the parents realize that he/she is about to ask for a favour and reply to him/her even without her/his asking. Probably this is what the dialogue is and when, while talking to your friend you get to know about something new, that can be called a dialogue, where two people are involved just as Buber has mentioned ‘I and Thou’ where Thou is any living being or Supernatural being such as God. Buber has accepted God’s

existence. Buber also mentioned ‘I and It’ – in this ‘it’ is any non-living thing such as nature, just like our example about the person who changed due to being in nature.

Back to the parents-child example, a dialogue is finally getting to know about something did and as Buber said: “the child may discover autonomy”; the dialogue is where there is a final decision, and where there is a language present, mutually understood language.

Whenever learning takes place, some things change in the learner. Although, it’s possible that it might not be visible. Buber (ref) understood education “as a process towards maturity by a growing capacity to know and to be known by the other, essentially as true for the teacher as it is for the pupil.” Game where there is of other like in ‘I-Thou’, but in ‘I-Thou’, there is a presence of wholeness whereas in ‘I-It’, ‘I’ is separated from the self it encounters.

Finally, least one person is required for dialogue and the other side can be you yourself, an object with which you are emotionally connected which indicates we are having a dialogue with the person whom that thing symbolizes like talking to the gift one gets on his/her birthday, any other person or even nature. But there is a possibility that the other thing is spiritual such as God.

Hence, dialogue is where mutually understood language or silence (in case of spiritual or I-Thou and also men and also man and gift (I-It) is required, arises answerability that can be in different forms, some kind of attachment is required (exception between manager and worker – authoritarian dialogues, if used for formal jobs), where learning takes place (anything that you didn’t know before).

Dialogue is when you are involved in a conversation or a discussion, you realize something that you didn’t know before and you start a discussion of your own in your mind and get to a conclusion and finally, you know something new on your own. It is when you find your own path due to the path shown by others. Hence it can be said to be an inevitable part of learning. As we all know learning takes place in the mind of the learner, every learner learns a unique thing while listening to the same lecture in the classroom. It all happens as a result of the dialogue happening in their mind, where they relate the new information given by the teacher to the already present information in their mind, as every human is the result of his or her experiences. This is where we can say that we know where a teacher should focus, a teacher should focus to make it possible that, all of his learners can relate with /to the information given and learn something.

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Reflections on Facilitating the Analysis of Dialogue as Dialogue with Self and Others : Journey of Pinky Yadav—in her own Words

Pinky Yadav

Abstract

This paper is an experiential paper reflecting on my experiences from various vantage points, such as a project-scholar; peer-mentor; and student of Philosophy of Education, during the past year while working on different projects. This write-up is also a kind of process document to articulate my experiences of being a scholar, mentee, and peer-mentor. Further, while editing of the papers presented previously, I came to understand my various engagements with my supervisor as a kind of dialogue that bore all the characteristics discussed by various authors. Thus, this paper is also an attempt to explicate my lived dialogue.

Keywords: analytical method, conceptual analysis

There could be multiple vantage points to write these reflections: Project-scholar; Peer-mentor; and Student of Philosophy of Education. But, this is a reflection on how these three identities, together interwoven as they are, defined and guided my journey through this entire process. It would be extremely difficult and imposing on my part, to associate any one event to any one of these roles. It was rather a holistic engagement of myself and individuality that brought about the learning and the realizations that I have had through the course of it. Nevertheless, to understand these reflections and their context better, it is important for one to know what these three are.

Soon after the session began, we were all allocated supervisors randomly for the project, which is an important component of the M.Ed. course. I, just like any typical student, had some notions of what a project is all about and the intent was to get over with it, with least efforts. Nevertheless, I have been identified as a good student for the most part of my academic life by most of my teachers, maybe because I have been open to do quality work even though, I would prefer putting in minimum of my efforts.

I chose to work on ‘Happiness’ and thought of studying its relationship with Education. Though a project is not just an assignment, but an initiation into the world of research in Education, yet I, just like any typical student, asked my supervisor, what should I do now? What is my task? The first question that he asked me was ‘What is Happiness?’ Now as simple as it may sound, I could not answer it. I did attempt with cliché answers like happiness is being at peace. Then, the following questions were ‘how is happiness different from peace?’ and ‘why do we call it happiness and not peace?’ No matter what answer I came up with, it was followed by a question that made me question my own answer.

This exercise made me realize how casually and conveniently we use concepts in our lives without actually knowing or understanding what they are? With this realization the first task that I was assigned to was to conceptually analyse ‘Happiness’ At first, it was difficult to even understand what it means to write a conceptual analysis. As per the reading shared (Soltis, 1968), there could be three kinds of analyses: generic type, differentiation type, and conditions type. Along with the reading, an elaborate discussion on how should one go about it had been there. Despite all these conversations, instructions, and readings, a conceptual study seemed no less than a treasure hunt. I was excited and quite aware that this journey is going to be something crucial, but was clueless about what it would be like or whether I would even be able to complete it at all! The same sentiment was also shared by the B.Ed. students, and, partly, the reason for feeling clueless about it was the huge gap between the schooling that we have had so far, and partly the very nature of the analytical method. Our schooling so far is largely transference of knowledge from one end to the other, whereas, the analytical method requires one to question each and every description, or given content, to identify its implicit assumptions, to draw logical inferences and conclusions and to prove one’s point beyond reasonable doubt to be considered valid. By the very sound of it, knowledge is to be constructed by active engagement with the content at hand.

Irrespective of how it may sound, but being moulded and framed in the former schooling tradition, it was difficult to even think that this could be done and then actually being able to do it. It came as naturally to one as it could be, to say in reference to any concept that, ‘This is X’. It never occurred even once that what it takes for ‘X’ to be ‘X’, to imagine the implications of ‘x’ being ‘x’ was farfetched.

These apprehensions posed a serious challenge to my supervisor. He had to teach me the spirit of the analytical method, the very nature of which demanded from me to break free of my comfort zones and overcome my training from the traditional schooling processes; which by now I had internalized. Hence, he, as he shared later, had to keep coming up with new ways of pushing me by experimenting in his pedagogies such that it turns out to be helpful, but must not compromise the nature of the discipline and the learnings that ought to be.

A similar exercise was being taken up by him with the B.Ed students as part of the paper titled Conceptual Foundations of Education. The B.Ed. students, being new to the field of education, were quicker and open to such an attempt as they did not have to stop themselves from referring to the thinkers whom they have read. Nevertheless, since, learning analytical method is more procedural in nature, hence, the attempted write-ups required feedback and rework. While experimenting in his pedagogies, Sir asked me to read and discuss the write-ups of B.Ed. students along with him. The concept that they chose to analyse was *Dialogue*. I am not sure why the class chose to analyse the same concept, but if I were to guess, then it could be that they thought they would be able to help each-other in the assignment.

The intent of this exercise was to help me, as a scholar, learn and understand the analytical method better, along with helping the B.Ed. students improvise and rework their write-ups, by asking them questions that help them to explicate and elaborate their ideas and find their own directions. The traditional schooling also makes us keep a distance from the teacher, so, by including me as a peer-mentor he also wanted a sort-of bridge between him and the students. Being enrolled in the M.Ed. course, it was easier for me to identify and understand the theoretical underpinnings of the arguments and the larger perspectives they were rooted in as we are taught about various thinkers in our foundation papers on Philosophy of Education, Sociology of Education, Psychology of Education, and other optional papers. However, the task with B.Ed. students was to highlight the implied assumptions in their write-ups, and questions, claims that either needed justification or contradicted their own assumptions, whether implicit or explicit. Here I simultaneously assumed the role of a Peer Mentor along with being a project-scholar, I was to facilitate the journey for the B.Ed. students to the best of my abilities. In the beginning, it seemed like an easy task that was enjoyable because here I was the one to ask questions, wherever I felt were needed.

However, the task proved to be more difficult than I had imagined from the beginning itself as the B.Ed. students being young, inexperienced and new to the discipline of Education and the task of analysis, would often take it as a criticism and consider it as a flaw in their write-up; even if the question was asked to help them elaborate on the point. This risked the very intent of the entire process, which was to make them understand the worth of their own thoughts and ideas and the importance of rational arguments. Hence, they had to be told repeatedly that being questioned does not imply that their idea is faulty; rather they need to argue for it better. The fear was that scholars should not feel threatened or judged in the process. A sense of competition to perform better, which directly comes from the traditional kind of schooling, which largely prevails in the country, worked as another challenge. Scholars initially were very hesitant in sharing their write-ups and discussing their ideas with each other. Some of them feared that their ideas would be stolen or someone else would perform better, as this was a compulsory assignment for the paper Conceptual Foundations of Education. But as this sense of competition gave way to mutual discussions and the confidence to take different positions, it proved to be a major motivation to keep working. As a result, they did not give up.

The discussion while reviewing often ended up at a point where scholars would reconsider their position. There were a few who were left confused and ask how could that be dialogue? Or how can one have dialogue with inanimate objects or the self? It seemed like an extremely bizarre idea to them. There were questions around various aspects of dialogue: content, intent, agents, nature, relationships, value and other such. These discussions not only helped me understand the various dimensions one can think of, while attempting a conceptual analysis but also helped me conceptualize dialogue for myself. While posing questions to these scholars, I would also try to answer it for myself, at times the discussions on these

various aspects of dialogue, helped me arrive at numerous insights during those discussions, not just around dialogue or happiness but in general about education and life.

But the most beautiful part of this journey was experiencing my own idea of dialogue. It would be difficult for me to say whether I experienced or defined it first. The meaning that I construed of dialogue during and after all these engagements is, sketchily, a conversation that is meaningful to at least one of the parties engaged, is deeper and impactful, is normative, brings about a positive change, and this engagement is emotional as well as rational in nature.

In retrospect, while reviewing the write-ups, I grew as a scholar, person, and as a peer mentor. At the beginning of it, I was closed to any sort of engagement with people around me and did not participate in the institutional events, other than necessary. It left my interaction with people around me as minimum as possible and I often came across as either egoistic or rude. So when I began the process, I would be inconsiderate of anything other than the write-up. My focus was only on asking questions that would help scholars to enhance their write-ups, irrespective of their backgrounds, previous knowledge, state of mind, and how open and ready were they to the process. There were times when I would ask so many questions that the number of questions threatened to exceed the size of the write-up itself. As a result, a few scholars felt overwhelmed, bogged down, or occasionally even threatened, which brought about all kinds of reactions from feeling demotivated to being angry or having a sense of alienation from their own work.

All this never went unnoticed by our teacher. He would always be observing all this, but would never tell me direct enough what I ought to do. Instead, he would at the end of the day ask me, what did you learn today? Or how was your day? I would share my experience of the day with him, and he would ask me questions that would make me reflect on whether I did the right things. At times, when needed, he would sit with me to review and ask me to hold my questions. This often made me feel that I am not doing it right, that I should probably stop and first learn the nuances of giving a feedback. At times like these, he would help me identify what did I choose to do that brought about these results. There were also times, when in my ignorance or preoccupation, I would not even realize that something went wrong, for example I may have been inconsiderate towards someone, and he never failed to bring it to my notice. However, he never told me to choose to be relational (see Priyanka Sheoran's write-up, this volume), rather he would only question my individualistic position. At times, I would not be able to articulate my ideas to him and would act out in frustration or would argue incoherently, changing my position as and when it suited my argument. He would never reject my arguments, but highlight for me the shift in my position. This helped me understand the importance of being coherent in one's argument and how a slight change in assumption/position at any point may lead to a major perspective shift.

With time, I started to be conscious of the person whose work I am to review and I realized the moment I try to understand the context of the person, it helped me establish a link between them and their arguments in the write-ups. I could almost trace the emergence of the idea from the context of the writer. Hereafter, I would first try to gauge, ‘how open the person is’, ‘which questions could be asked’, ‘how many questions could be asked’, and most importantly, I became extremely conscious and sensitive of ‘when to stop’. I had often observed Sir, appreciating almost everyone at the end of the review, and there were times when I would wonder ‘this wasn’t that good, we have read better write-ups’. Now I understand the intent, content, impact, nature, and value of those two words he would say, “Good work”. I now understood, the appreciation was for attempting to write, to bring it for review, and for not being scared of critical comments. It also gave motivation and hope to the scholars to keep working and not be bogged down. It was an indication of his trust in their capabilities. I would say it was dialogue. These two words probably, were meaningful to the students, had a positive impact on them, had a rationale, and acknowledged the emotions of the students.

This process always left me with something or the other to reflect upon at the end of my days. Initially it was amazing to find answers to questions by myself though with time I learnt the importance of staying with questions. At times, while thinking of something that happened the same day, I would come across answers to questions of some other days. I realized the importance of the journey to find answers than just the answers themselves. It ensured numerous learnings for me, one of them being accepting of various possible answers to the same questions. I also understood the importance of articulating these learnings, not just for the sake of telling others, but also for me to realize, feel, and embrace my own growth. It also helped me to understand myself and others I am related to in any formal or informal setting. I experienced dialogue as a way of living, with self and with others.

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About Upanishads

Upanishads are the most ancient writings compiled in Indian Philosophy. They are the best examples of good philosophy and good literature. The literal meaning of Upanishads – to sit near the feet of the Guru and learn.

Upanishads were written at a time when there were a lot of ritualistic activities and people had become skeptic towards rituals and sacrifices. The material world, which is rich and prosperous, failed to give inner peace and tranquility to the human soul. The Upanishads brought in the idea that other than the material possessions, one needed to satisfy one's soul by seeking spiritual knowledge which would bring peace in a man's lifetime – which is the real message conveyed by the Upanishads in the form of stories, parables, dialogues. The Upanishads are rich in the essential ideas, the principles of our cultural life, which deal with man's search for the eternal truth—which is a source of joy. These principles do not shun body and its accompanying needs but they are respected as conditions or instruments of the life of spirit in man.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in Foreword to – Upanishads in Story and Dialogue by R.R. Diwakar, writes, “ There is a responsibility laid on man as an individual to integrate his life, to relate the present to the past and the future.” Further, he says, “The men of spirit, those filled with serenity, wisdom and joy, are lovers of humanity”. The Upanishads are not ‘criticism of life’ but they are earnest inquiry into the ultimate Truth, in which a small section of people take interest. Yet, the range of studies of those days seems to be wide enough. Upanishads have not been written for the sake of writing, nor are they the works of one single person. In fact, they are records of spoken words, dialogues compiled over a long period of time. Here Dialogue is the ruling form in the Upanishads, where questions and answers predominate. They are not abstract but the instances or examples are taken from everyday life. The Upanishads believe in the continuity of life after the death of physical body.—Although not proved by any arguments. That is why when Nachiketa asks Yama as to whether the soul lives after death—Yama answers by saying that even the gods do not know the mystery. But still rebirth is taken for granted—as the form of continuity of the soul after the ‘death’ of the body. Bhagwad Gita is also in the form of dialogue between Lord Krishna and Prince Arjun, which takes place just before the battle is fought at Kurushetra.

The dialogues are created/held so as to reach the jnana or knowledge. But this knowledge is not intellectual knowledge but Spiritual knowledge. Here the spiritual knowledge is differentiated by means of examples and dialogues.

In Indian Philosophy, Upanishads hold a very important/prominent place, apart from Vedas. Those parts of Vedas which are termed as Upanishads are quite unique. The Upanishads deal

with the spirit and with knowledge of the spirit. Many later philosophies such as Sankhya and Yoga etc. have been born out of Upanishads.

The Upanishads helped humans to swing away from rituals to true knowledge. There are many dialogues compiled in the Upanishads. Some of the famous dialogues are : Yama and Nachiketa (the seeker), Gargi and Yajnavalkya and many more . Some good dialogues in simple form are compiled in : Upanishads in Story and Dialogues, by R.R. Diwakar, published by Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

Summary and Analysis of the Articles on Dialogue

After wading through the various articles on ‘Dialogue’ I would like to summarise the salient aspects of Dialogue as discussed in the compiled Articles. Each Article is unique in some aspect or the other of ‘What is a Dialogue’. I would like to congratulate Dr. Vikas Beniwal for his able guidance to the writers/authors as well as Ms. Pinky Yadav, who guided the students and her fine tuning the write-ups of the various authors in weaving the ideas about dialogue into a beautiful design guiding them and taking cognizance of almost all the (well known) aspects of What is a Dialogue, avoiding overlapping of various aspects of the dialogue. It was not an easy task, as is apparent from the finished task as well as what is reflected in her own experiential write-up.

The article by Sudhir Kumar Yadav, ‘The Nature of Conversation in Dialogue’ sets the ambience for understanding the meaning of dialogue—what it is and what it is not. In a dialogue—the common aspect is language, content and context—which are to be mutually understood among living human beings, as different from animals and robots—the difference being that human is an agency—meaning that he/she is able to exercise his/her will. To the question – Are all human conversations termed as dialogue—the difference from other allied forms of conversations, debates, discussions, talk—is explored. Why do we enter into a dialogue is also discussed. The article brings out the essence of dialogue as different from other forms of exchange of thoughts. There is commitment and a relationship is formed which is an important aspect of a dialogue.

Here reference is made about Katha Upanishad where dialogue takes place between Yama and Nachiketa where conversation is mediated through logic and reason. Mention of ‘Allegory of the Cave’, which is a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon is made. Buberemphasizes the use of dialogue in education where freedom of expression is a precondition of a dialogue.

Explanation is given as to why one cannot have dialogue with oneself—because self-talk cannot go beyond the limits of one’s own knowledge and learning—because dialogue leads to new learning.

The article by Priyanka Sheoran, ‘The Essence of Dialogue’, states that dialogue is a concept and it is carried on between at least two entities—i.e., dialogue with someone. Dialogue is used both as a Noun and a Verb, that is, a thing and a process. Dialogue is also used in dramas—as a means of disclosing/unfolding the storyline. Dialogue happens between two people/groups on certain defined issues. Exploration is done on the idea of ‘dialoguing with oneself’ as an academic exercise.

The next article by ParveenKaur, ‘The Requisites of a Dialogue’, begins the discussion on dialogues in a movie, drama—their purpose and style. Dialogues between the bureaucrats of two countries, or two States—where dialogue takes place to resolve some issue and/or come to an agreement and if not, then have more rounds of dialogue, which will help to come to an agreement.

In education – dialogues happen between teacher and the student/s to build upon the knowledge that is already there in the child via question and answer mode/style/technique. In all these three examples of the usage of dialogue mode – the aim is to look for answers in a logical flow where a linkage is built with the previous knowledge wherein conversations can begin and end up–thinking critically and learning something – which would make/ turn it into a ‘dialogue’. Dialogue is not necessarily a product but essentially a process—an ongoing process – where both learn from each other which may lead to self-education.

New Aspect-- Dialogue in movies, State Officials, in Education, Logical order in a dialogue; Dialogue as a Noun and a Verb.

Article by Khushbu Jangid is ‘Fundamentals of a Dialogue’. This article states that dialogue, when it happens, happens in a ‘conscious state of mind’. A dialogical exchange happens so as to ‘share knowledge’ in ‘shared language’. A response is expected here – whether it is agreement or disagreement or mere acknowledgement. The essential difference between dialogue and interaction is that it leads to ‘broadening of horizons’. A situation of one having dialogue with oneself is explored as well as having a dialogue with something/one other than a person. But this is not a dialogue, nor a monologue and cannot be considered as a dialogue. Arguments, debates, discussions lack certain qualities which are integral to a dialogue. Dialogue proceeds with direction, reason, openness, freedom to express one’s viewpoints.

New Aspect : Conscious state of mind, Response is expected, Broadens horizons. Has Direction, Reason, Freedom of expression .

The next Article, by Ishita Solanki, ‘Essentials of a Dialogue’, begins with the possibility of a dialogue with Robots (Artificial Intelligence) and animals but soon its limitations are highlighted. The degree of commitment of the participants has to be high. Dialogue is enquiry- based. A simple conversation can turn into a ‘dialogue’ under above mentioned conditions. The relationship between/among the participants is explored. The important dialogues of Yama and Nachiketa, Allegory of the Cave (Plato) and viewpoints of Martin Buber are explored to understand the essence of dialogue. Freedom to explore one’s view, without fear—is an important pre-condition to encourage creativity.

New Aspects–Degree of Commitment, Inquiry – Based, Leading to Creativity.

The article by Deepali Mahendru and Tanweer Alam is ‘Learning from Platonic Dialogues’. In this article, justification of a dialogue with another imaginary object or inanimate object is explained, citing different examples in different situations. Discussion based classroom highlights the need for a dialogue in classroom situations.

New Aspects : Justification of a dialogue with imaginary objects or inanimate objects, Dialogues in a Classroom.

The last Article, is written by Aradhana Luthra, which begins with forms of communications with pet animals via gestures, sounds, etc., to make animals understand oneself (owner) and vice –a-versa, that is, oneself understanding the animal from its gestures. By citing examples, it is inferred that conversation may or may not be based on logical reasoning and arguments, but still be termed a dialogue.

New Aspects : Conversation with animals (where both, the owner and the pet understand each other) in the form of gestures can be termed as dialogue.

The next Article is by Ms. Pinky Yadav, M.Ed. student in the Department of Education, University of Delhi , which is termed by her as –Her journey in her own words.

What is a Dialogue

Sushil Dhiman

Other than what has been described so far, through the various Articles, there are some more aspects of dialogue, that merit mentioning. These aspects have been gleaned over from various dialogues that I have read, to understand the nature of dialogues—What is termed as dialogue as distinct from other forms of communications.

There is a fund of knowledge gathered through the centuries and passed on to the next generations to be eschewed, understood in many ways, gathered together and then added to the already accumulated knowledge—and passed on to the next generation – for them to add upon. Each generation keeps adding to the existing knowledge, to be taken further. The ancient wisdom gets new and newer dimensions of the accumulated knowledge as the societies progress forward. We are still in the process of evolution, and the knowledge gathered together is not static, but dynamic. These earlier insights of the intellegentia are to be seen with a new vision and this is done by entering into Dialogues.

According to Pupul Jayakar – Dialogue, in essence, is the asking of a question and a response to that question and out of that response, a further question arises-. The movement of a group of people opening- up a situation, has been one of the most ancient methods of enquiring in India (as evidenced in Upanishads) what we arrive at, is a certain illumination which comes through such enquiry.

Dialogue happens to be a major approach in the discovery of ‘what is’. “It is the awakening of the ‘senses’ – the heart, the mind, the eye, the ear, the touch—every element – to the nature of what the question was and the response which arose in the mind in response to the question”. A certain kind of energy is born which brings about a transformation in the people who participate in such a dialogue. Here no enquiry is a single enquiry but essentially it begins by asking a question and movement is set in motion which helps in the flowering of the ‘bud’—the question that is in seed form, blooms into a flower in all its glory and beauty of thoughts and ideas. In any dialogue, there is a question and from that question develops the understanding.

Dialogue helps open the doors of the mind, brings people together to unravel the mysteries of life, leading to some kind of awakening—which can be termed as ‘leap of insight’.

There is a recurring question in the Articles—whether dialogue with oneself is to be considered dialogue or not ? Someone did say that dialogue with oneself, with nature, with animals, objects, by using signs, symbols, gestures, actions—is a kind of dialogue. However, it has been negated by another author, the reason given is that the same person is interacting

with oneself, in thoughts and while dialoguing with oneself—one cannot go beyond oneself, whereas ‘dialogue’ should make you go beyond yourself.

It is a fact that the dialogue takes place around a round table setting, meaning, there is no one in a position of authority, no chair- person to regulate the dialogue. All participants are in an equal position. But what happens when a dialogue takes place between a doctor and a patient, or a teacher and a student, which is an unequal position, and here the question of hierarchy does arise. In this situation, the dialogue is mostly one-sided, that is, doctor trying to find the problem, from the symptoms, so as to reach a diagnosis. In the second half, the patient asks questions to know the diagnosis, prescription of medicines and any precautions to be taken etc. Here, from this example, relevance of dialogue, which can take place in various fields of life, is understood. So, dialogue covers a wide field— inquiry into the nature of things as it covers almost all the aspects of human life.

In case of teacher and student, which can be termed as a kind of Socratic dialogue and/or as dialogues compiled in Upanishads, which take place between a Guru and Shishya, it can be understood—that the teacher comes down to the level of student and the student rises up to meet the teacher’s level and they meet at a medium point, where they can understand each other and dialogue happens between the enlightened and the one who is less enlightened.

But there is ‘intention’ present in both sides—intention to understand (student), to be comprehensible (teacher to student). A ground has to be established – to ask the right question and the answer is revealed in a subtle manner.

There is a purpose in a dialogue but there can be a dialogue without an agenda-- i.e., specific purpose – but the dialogue does have a wider perspective that of clarity of ideas, which would, of course, help one to chart one’s course of life. There is no hierarchy of position nor in the understanding level, i.e., intelligence of one person to another. Wherever there is an inquiry or investigation, there is no hierarchy (except in case of police inquiry, which is not taken up here),, conducting the entire dialogue as in the case of Socratic dialogues, and Buddha’s dialogues. There is a difference between hierarchy and unequal position. It is believed that an elder person does have more knowledge, more insight into things which the others may not have. In certain cases, there is a master who is instructing, conducting the entire dialogue as in the case of Socratic dialogues and Buddha’s dialogues.

But in a dialogue, it is assumed that all participants are equal. Equality does not mean similarity. There is friendship, that is congeniality, cordial relationship among the members – which can be equal relationship as among friends or unequal relationship as between father and the child, teacher and the taught.

There is an intensity and energy while in a dialogue, which sets the pace of dialogue and implies the equal partnership in the flow of the dialogue which would lead to clarity and

illumination. Dialogue breaks down the divisions of walls, i.e., minds so that the energy flows without hindrance.

According to Ramchandra Gandhi :- There seems to be similarity between the Upanishads, Socratic and Buddha's dialogues, where each acknowledges the reality of the other and that there is knowledge inherent in each one that is waiting to be revealed, even by oneself, through dialogue.

Dialogue is an interaction, coming together. In a dialogue, there is curiosity, courage to face the facts—both in mind and heart. A question arises about the place of ‘silence’, during a dialogue. There may be silence of one person—which does not mean he/she is not listening or participating with intensity, but he/she might be eschewing what has been said so far. Because during a dialogue there is thinking quietly as well. Dialogue cannot be denied to oneself. It depends upon how we understand the context of the dialogue.

Silence is listening at deeper level. Silence is a state of attention. (In the book –Nature of Dialogue—A whole chapter is devoted to Silence in Dialogue—which cannot be elaborated here due to paucity of space) but there is to be an intention to resolve the issue/s.

In a dialogue, there is no place for animosity. There is no place for ‘anger’. The dialogue is in a language which is understood by all the participants, consists of verbal communication, gestures and signs which are understood in the same way as the speaker uses them.

Another important aspect is—Listening of—language, signs, symbols, gestures—One must listen patiently and then respond. Every member is expected to and allowed to speak, while others listen. So, both listening and speaking are important facets of the dialogue – Which also speaks of the respect that the listeners and speakers show to each other.

While coming to the round table for a dialogue—there is to be an issue – which needs to be resolved, that is, there is an intention to resolve the issue. We may not agree with each other—while dialoguing about the issue, but respect for each other is held, and we may end up with the famous words—We agree to disagree. There are to be no arguments just for the sake of arguments.

So, the following points, as discussed above about a dialogue, can be fulfillment:--

- Status of dialogue with oneself ;
- Dialogue amongst equals and unequals ;
- Place of Silence ;
- Language, signs, symbols to be understood in a similar way ;
- Listening and Speaking – both have their importance and relevance ;
- There is to be no place for anger, meaning one must maintain a cordial ambience ;

- The corollary to the above is—that we all respect each other ;
- There is the intention to resolve the issue, even though we may end up saying—We agree to disagree.

Anyway, dialogue is an ongoing process. Even when we reach at a consensus, we can begin from the consensus and indulge in further dialogue. Dialogue never ends. Can be compared to a dialectical situation –Thesis – Antithesis –Synthesis. For next phase of the dialogue, the synthesis becomes the Thesis and the next phase begins. Dialogue never ends.

An important observation – During the process of a dialogue, the situation can be – Where One (A) knows and the Other (B) does not know and B wants to know. In another situation – Both A and B do not know and both want to know, may be from each other or others, who are participating in the dialogue. Consider another situation, where both A and B know, and they want to know more—because knowledge is never-ending nor perfect. There is always more, much more to know.

Dialogue – Its meaning and Nature

We need to understand the significance of dialogue in understanding the problems, issues that are faced by all of us in our daily lives. At the same time, man wants to unravel the mysteries of Nature, God, Soul, that is, explorations of the spiritual world which fall in the domain of Metaphysics. Knowing both—the daily mundane life is as important as the metaphysical world. Dialogue is used to explore our inner thoughts, inner psychic world which is complex, full of sorrows and joys of life.

To the question—What is a Dialogue ? It is a flowing movement with dynamic interaction of ideas which are expressed by the participants.

Dialogue is an age old tradition beginning since the advent of civilization, when man realized his existence distinctly different from other living beings inhabiting this earth. When man advanced from sign language to verbal language and began his quest for knowledge using language as the vehicle of his thoughts as well as communicating with other human beings in sensible ways, questions and answers became the mode of explanations. Then man started accumulating knowledge which was to be handed over to the next generation, so that the next generation has a head start. The tradition of understanding the accumulated knowledge began in the form of questions and seeking answers either from Guru/Teacher/Elders and/or by oneself.

Language, on one hand, is supposed to convey what one wants to convey. On the other hand, it is understood by multiple others in multiple ways. It is not like sign language which conveys what it means. An interesting observation is, that in sign language you can not tell lies, but convey only the truth. You cannot ‘lie’ using sign language whereas in language – a single word can have multiple meanings. That is why, when speaking to convey something, sometimes we tend to say, ‘Oh, I did not mean that but this’. Sometimes, in that process of clarification, we are able to convey the correct meaning, i.e., what I wanted to convey, and sometimes we make it more complex. The word may have one meaning but the intensity of what it conveys is different for different people, the way they are used to using that particular word or concept in their personal space. For example, the word ‘accident’ will have different meaning with respect to the intensity of the ‘accident’, the way it is used in one’s daily life. It can be a mere scratch on the car or a major impact on the car. And when one single word has multiple meanings, then think of the sentence – single, complex, compound and then paragraphs, prose, poetry, stories, parables etc. etc., which will have different meanings for different people.

Because of this ‘multiple meanings’ in the words, clarifications of the exact meanings, of not only words but sentences and paragraphs etc. are needed. Dialogue is used thus to seek clarification

In the B.ED., programme, there is a topic namely—Dialogue – which is to be studied in the context of – Upanishads, Plato’ Dialogues, J. Krishnamurti and Martin Buber. Let us find out how, if at all, they are different from each other and in what way.

In Upanishads, we find that, in a dialogue between Guru and Shishya, that is Teacher and the Student/s, the onus of asking questions is on the students and the Guru/Teacher answers, according to the abilities of the student/s. Some students, according to their intelligence, are satisfied by the immediate answer of the Guru, who gives a layman’s answer to the question posed. Let us take a simple example of the question—How does it rain ? There are ten students in the group/class. The Teacher replies—the clouds come and it rains. Now some, i.e., say two students are satisfied with the answer which states the obvious fact. The remaining eight are not satisfied with this apparent answer, think deeply and ask next question— Where do the clouds come from ?; Then next question—How do clouds form ? Then next question—When do the clouds, after forming, begin to rain ? And so on, till the last student, who is still asking more and more in-depth questions, till the whole process of cloud forming and rain is explained.

The questioning ability is according to one’s ability to understand the answer and then next question is asked, which is deeper and questing for more knowledge regarding an issue or a phenomena, till one is able to understand the whole process and still remains curious to know more. The best example in the context of education, is the dialogue between Yama and Nachiketa, from the Upanishads. However, one question is raised here—Suppose the Guru does not want to share the deeper knowledge with the student/s, then what? To this query, it is said that the Guru, if he knows the answer, is obliged to answer the student/s and satisfy his/their quest for knowledge. Only, in the case of extremely secret knowledge, the Guru could use his acumen—whether to impart that extremely secret and sensitive knowledge to the student or not. In such cases the Guru would test the ‘supatrata’ of the student, that is, whether he is to be given that knowledge or not. This was an extremely important issue for the Gurus. It could be spiritual knowledge or knowledge of weapons for warfare or any other knowledge.

Alongwith, imparting knowledge of various kinds, the Guru/Teacher, would also fulfill in the students, where, when, how, on whom to use that knowledge—because as we know ‘nothing is good or bad in itself, it is the usage that makes it so’. That is, the ethical use of that knowledge is instilled in the student alongwith while it is being taught. For example, medical doctors have knowledge of all kinds of medicines, toxins, poisons etc. which can kill a person—but they hardly ever use this knowledge for destructive purpose, because ethical use of these materials is instilled in them alongwith their knowledge during their medical course. That is why ‘supatrata’ of the student was to be ascertained first and then most secret knowledge was to be imparted to him, under the watchful guidance of the Guru.

So, in Upanishads, the onus of asking questions to seek answers, lay on the student, according to his abilities, capabilities and intelligence. The Guru would gradually initiate the disciple/student/shishya into the depth of knowledge, checking his progress and his intentions at every step.

Now, let us talk about the other age old dialogues, namely, Socratic Dialogues. (They are also referred to as Plato's Dialogues, because whenever Socrates indulged in dialogues, they were faithfully recorded by Plato, who was Socrates' most able student).

Socrates used to roam around in the arcades, where young elite men would meet and while away their time. As these young men are to hold the positions of statesmen very soon, they must be educated towards their roles, that of being able rulers in their fields. According to Socrates, the rulers must be intelligent and wise. Socrates would talk to these young men and enter into dialogues with them regarding their understanding of the concepts, like justice, courage, peace, democracy etc. Here Socrates would question them regarding these concepts, pretending that he himself was ignorant and wanted to know from them. He would indulge in dialogue with them and ask questions on the fulfillment of seeking answers from them. He would counter question them on their beliefs/responses and seek clarifications. Thus, Socrates would lead them towards the formation of clear ideas of the concepts.

Here we see that the onus of questioning lies with the teacher (Socrates) and the students (young men) were to respond according to their understanding and intelligence. Socrates would further question them and make them think deeply and respond. This helped in removing the 'cobwebs' of uncertainty in them.

According to Socrates, we all are born with knowledge, which is present in each one of us albeit in seed form. Just like seeds germinate when suitable conditions are provided to them, similarly the teacher, by providing suitable and sufficient conditions for germination, let the seeds of knowledge germinate into full grown trees of knowledge, which is of course a slow and steady process. Just like in germination process, excess of any one ingredient or lack of any one ingredient will halt the flowering out of the seed, similarly the student will be affected adversely if any one ingredient of how to teach –is left out or missed out- here 'timely' and 'proper intervention' is of utmost importance .

According to Socrates, the teacher acts like a 'mid-wife' who helps the knowledge of Truth to take birth. His faith that knowledge is already present in each one of us is proved by him, when by careful questioning skill, he helps a shepherd boy, who has never had any formal education, to prove the Pythagoras Theorem .

Socratic dialogues are famous for bringing one from the ignorance (equated with darkness) towards enlightenment (equated with light) as is described in the Allegory of the Cave. These

exercises help in making one think deeply and loudly, till clarity of thoughts is achieved. And this is done by oneself albeit with the questioning by the teacher—leading a person from darkness (ignorance) towards light (clarity of thoughts).

In Upanishads also, the purpose of questions and answers was to lead a person to enlightenment. The difference being that in Upanishads the student asks the questions and in Socratic dialogues, teacher asks the questions and leads the student towards knowledge.

In the case of Jiddu Krishnamurti, dialogue is undertaken as a means to explore the psyche (inner self), which is full of complexities, sorrows and joys of life. A dialogue is a fluid movement of thoughts where ideas are expressed in a dynamic interaction among participants. Here dialogues reveal the knowledge of the various minds meeting each other, exploring the ideas where new insights are gained as the talks progress. “It is an unfolding landscape of the inner universe at that given moment”. [Nature of Dialogue ppvi]

After the death of J. Krishnamurti, The Centre For Continuing Dialogue—Krishnamurti Foundation India, 60ulfillme a 3-day Seminar to discuss – What is a Dialogue? Many well known thinkers like Ramchandra Gandhi (Author of Sita’s Kitchen), Pupul Jayakar etc. (22 in all) met together and explored the significance of dialogue in understanding the problems we face in our daily lives.

There is a freshness in such an enquiry—where arguments and counter-arguments flow to give rise to clarity of thoughts, new viewpoints and views coming to give rise to clarity as well as creativity.

J. Krishnamurti would hold Seminars in Vasant Vihar, New Delhi, periodically, where he would discuss and respond to various challenging questions of the participants, regarding many issues, faced by people, which are vital in our lives like—“sorrow, pain, anxiety, anguish, tears, fears—which needed to be addressed to so as to survive these problems and to dispel our ignorance.

J. Krishnamurti believed that dialogue is a conversation that goes on between two or more than two people in a friendly manner, who would talk seriously. The stress is on ‘friendly manner’ and ‘serious talk’.

J. Krishnamurti would indulge in dialogues with students, his fellows and mostly with ordinary people of all ages from all walks of life. He said that he had no answers to the various specific problems spelled out by persons, but that he would guide them, counsel them as to how to understand their problem and find solutions, but what the solution would be—that depended on each and every self.

J. Krishnamurti held discussions with like-minded people, who were interested in seeking clarifications from within the things. In discussions, statements were made by various people, but very rarely they came to a single point of agreement which would reveal what they were discussing.

J. Krishnamurti would begin interaction with people by being just like them—not knowing the answer, i.e., at the same level of knowing or not knowing and then to every response he would counter question so that the response would open up further enquiry—thus delving deep into the problem or issue with questioner and be with him or her.

Here the stress is on ‘equal level’ and ‘opening up’, new vistas of understanding. He believed that such question-answer movement would help the perplexed to get an answer/satisfactory answer. Here, the minds move together into the situation, where togetherness is the essential element in the field of teaching. Here the stress is on ‘togetherness’.

Martin Buber (1878-1965) was a German Jewish philosopher, theologian and a political leader. He is known as a leading religious existentialist, who wrote *I-Thou* (and many other books), where he explored the relationship of a person with Thou, ie., You. He differentiates between the two primary relationships : I—Thou and I—It. The relationship of a person with another in I—Thou is fulfillment by openness, reciprocity and a deep sense of personal involvement. I—It is fulfillment by the tendency to treat something or someone as an impersonal object—a thing where no relationship is formed, even though the ‘It’ may be a living person/being. Reality arises between agents as they encounter and transform each other. According to Buber, reality is dialogical. He describes God as the ultimate Thou, the Thou who can never become It. It is an exploration of and into the existence of the ‘other’

This is a quest to know and experience the immediate world via, language and dialogue in its entirety. With his emphasis on the wholeness of human existence, Buber points to the fulfillment of this existence., which is essentially rooted in the moments when one encounters the other as ‘Thou’, which becomes the ground for a dialogical relation.

There are twofold attitudes of man towards the world of I—It and I—Thou where Buber finds the individualistic basis of the existence of man in I—It attitude, where he forms a relation with the other in I—Thou attitude. This attitude has implications for the way one understands life itself. The I—It and I—Thou relations are not only dichotomies but also a hierarchic diversity, for then “the decisive distinction between I—Thou and I—It would be dissolved by degrees”. These are the two modes in which life is lived.

For Buber, “dialogical principle is an ontological one because it is concerned with a basic relationship between man and being; hence with the being of man since this is grounded in

his relationship to being". Buber understands dialogue as a holistic meeting of beings. The dualities understood via dialogue are : self-other, person-social, internal-external, observer-observed, knower-known, and mind-body. A dialogical relation cuts across the hierarchies, dualism and dichotomies and the sphere of 'between'. This sphere of 'between' is found 'neither in one of the two partners nor in both together, but only in their dialogue itself.

Buber's understanding of dialogue focuses on the whole being, complete existence and lived reality of the participants. Buber understands that dialogue is about going beyond oneself. The nature of dialogical relationships is dependent on the two aspects – mutuality and inclusion . Inclusion enables one to meet and know the other in his concrete uniqueness.

When a relationship Edited by has both mutuality and dialogue, then it is a dialogue of friends, but when it has none of these, then it is a monologue. In educative scenario, there is partly one-sided relationship—there is mutuality but only partial inclusion, i.e., inclusion of the student by the teacher. "Mutuality makes possible the relationship of education, because it makes the pupil trusting and accessible. One-sidedness sustains the educative relation, because it preserves the distance between the participants". Here Buber is asserting that education must not become a relation of friendship.

Relations derive their genuineness only from the consciousness of the element of inclusion of the other side, for example, the teacher must be spontaneous and wholly alive to be able to communicate directly with the beings.

Conclusion

It is not easy to understand completely or limit the meaning of 'dialogue'. It is an extremely complex activity which can not be limited in any way, to a single style. We have tried to see dialogue from four different perspectives, which are not exhaustive by any means, yet these four perspectives fairly bring out the different ways, dialogues can be held meaningfully. What emerges from this analysis is one major fact—that it seeks clarification and leads to enlightenment, i.e., dispelling ignorance and reaching clarity of thoughts and thus 'truth'(truth with a small 't'),that is the wordly truth, whereas man seeks the ultimate Truth (Truth with a capital T) meaning the ultimate Truth, which is still beyond our grasp. Perhaps, because of our limited intellect, we are still striving to go beyond that limitation, by engaging in dialogue with other intellects, so that the combined intellect of each unique person may guide us to reach the ultimate Truth.

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The Power of Dialogue: Opening Avenues for Growth and Enlightenment in Schools

Seema Agrawal

All human progress is the outcome of being connected. It may be the connection with people, nature, books, gadgets and so on. Communication and dialogue are the pillars of the transfer of knowledge, experience, and skills. They lead to the adventure of awareness and understanding.

“The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our life.” –Anthony Robbin

This is true about the process of learning; both, formal and informal. Whenever one wanders the memory lanes of student life, the moments when one had connected with the beautiful minds are fondly recalled. Their impact, everlasting.

One of the greatest challenges for a teacher who believes in and aspires to make a difference in the lives of students is the quality and skill of getting 'connected' with the students and being their co-passenger in the journey towards knowledge and understanding. A true teacher always looks for the opportunity to start a dialogue; to indulge in conversation with the students and provide innumerable opportunities for meaningful interactions. Undoubtedly, the impact of such planned or spontaneous 'dialogues' in a class with a group or even with an individual is both, nourishing and enlightening.

The Power of Dialogue

"The job of an educator is to teach students to see vitality in themselves." –Joseph Campbell. In the beginning of my life as a teacher, I became sure of the immense power of dialogue. Why?

Because I distinctly remember what I had gained as a student during such interactive sessions from my experienced teachers. They had opened my mind to relevant issues, given me the confidence to express myself, and propelled me into exploring the vast untapped and unknown lanes of knowledge. These experiences motivated me to create dialogue-driven sessions to connect with my students to know more about them and lead them to engaging activities pertinent to the syllabus and beyond it.

“Communication works for those who work at it.”

When I joined as a principal in a school in the mid-session, I was keen to know and understand the mental climate, cultural background, and levels of learning of my students. I

tried my best to find out ways to interact with the students at all levels; most of the time spontaneous and at other times, subtly planned. They gave me an insight into their social economic and academic issues and guided me to work in the desirable direction.

They also raised imperative questions that needed an answer. And teachers were also requested to keep some time for open-ended discussions in their classes.

The Circle Time

One of the primary teachers always began her day with “*Aaj subah kya hua?*” (*What happened this morning?*) sharing some class appropriate anecdotes, making her children come out with their own experiences.

Gradually, visible positive changes were witnessed in that class; students became good listeners, were more eager to ask questions and were also ready to answer. They were now more attentive with better attention span and above all, they developed a great connection with the teacher and displayed observable improvement in their behaviour and academics. This was a point of reference for other classes.

This ‘Circle Time’ is now widely used in many schools as a special time for social interaction among young children to improve their confidence, imagination, vocabulary, and – above all – to know them better.

How to Start a Dialogue?

The willingness to start a ‘dialogue’ with a student or a class needs a conscious effort and clarity about the objectives. A teacher may start the conversation by something as simple as “*I forgot my tiffin today which had 2 chapattis and some vegetables*”. This might sound inconsequential, but it can, and it has, led to conversations about the food habits of students and led to the discussions about good food habits.

A teacher may also refer to the hustle and bustle of the morning hours and lead the dialogue with the students to make them aware of time management, preparedness, and punctuality. At times, such discussion may also lead to the knowledge about something which is not otherwise known and becomes an inspiration for all. A student, during a casual conversation about morning routine in class, revealed how his mother had been very sick and bedridden for months. He, being the eldest, had to cook rotis in the morning for all the three school-going children in the family. This elicited admiration from all students in the class.

Know Your Students

The dialogue with a group of students at times helps at bridging the gap between the class and a new teacher. One of the teachers who joined the school at the end of the session was

not a great conversationalist. She shared her fear about the academic results of the class as she hardly knew the students.

She was advised not to teach the syllabus for a period or two and instead engage her students in seemingly casual but well-planned conversations. The same teacher who faced disinterested expressions on the faces in her class was able to use those two planned ‘free’ periods as a bridge to know her students better. It was not only she, but also her students who benefited from the special classes because even they were apprehensive about the new teacher until *she* opened up to them.

Conversations Lead to Action

The conscious effort to engage the students in meaningful and productive dialogue leads to a conducive and vibrant classroom environment. It demands a teacher to be continuous and relevant in her efforts. It must be taken as an important strategy to bring out the best in the students in a class and make them aware of relevant issues.

During the Kargil War, while sharing my experiences of the 1965 and 1971 wars with Class XIIth, the discussion led to the analysis of the role of media in bringing war closer to homes and making students aware and curious about the futility of war. The discussion continued and the idea of each student making a special card addressed to a soldier was born.

The details of the plan were worked out by the students themselves. The head-girl and the head-boy took the responsibility of visiting each section of the school to make this exercise fruitful and beautiful. After two days, one special period was set aside for card-making. More than a thousand beautiful cards were made with messages which were submitted to the Army Headquarters by the School Headmistress, a senior teacher, and the Head-boy and Head-girl. The idea was further discussed and resulted in celebrating the first 15 days of every August as Patriotic Fervour days, engaging students in various patriotic activities.

Fruits of Prudence

Initiating a conversation at every possible opportunity also helps a school leader create a confident atmosphere in the school. Such opportunities provide rare first-hand experience and insights into the issues which are perhaps known to the school leader but need an impactful realisation.

There is a difference between knowledge and realisation. Good leaders have both.

The meetings with the monitors which had a code of secrecy to be followed by all the attendees revealed the pluses and minuses of any new Rule introduced, reasons of a particular section not doing well in a particular subject, and even suggested ways for improvement. Interestingly, often a Class-Monitor, who did not feel confident in divulging

information in the meeting in front of other monitors, returned afterwards to share some perspective.

'Between Us'

These experiences led to the yearly practice of 'Between Us' meetings with the students of class XIIth in the month of February. It was held after the pre-boards and practicals. It was just between the students and the Principal (myself).

After the last-minute guidance and motivation for the upcoming examination, a brief introduction about the importance of 'Between Us' was shared with the students. Then, a printed questionnaire titled 'Between Us' was given to each student. Giving their names was not mandatory. The questions also graduated from very simple to the more probing ones. This exercise was a little unnerving for me as well as the students in the first year but proved to be a wise, enlightening, and progressive exercise. The answers given by the students enlightened me with their valuable inputs about the functioning of the school and helped me improve the same in the next session. The simple-looking questionnaire included questions like:

Which were the subjects where adequate efforts were made to improve student performance?
What are the things you would like to add to the physical infrastructure of the school, how the participation of the students can be improved in games and sports?
What new activities may be introduced in the school?
What would you like to share to improve the academics in the school?

It was encouraging to note that in the 1st year only two students put their signatures on the proforma. But by the 5th year, almost 90% of the students were writing their names, many of them in bold letters followed by a smiling face or a big thank you. Similarly, the selection procedure of the student council included a proforma fill-up, group discussion, personal interview, etc. This process provided authenticity to the selection procedure and revealed different aspects of the personalities of students which often remained unknown or are known quite late for the needful guidance and assistance.

Discovery Through Discussion

Dialogue is an adventure.

One of the ways to reach out to the maximum number of students by the head of the school is to have a Principal's class, whenever there is an opportunity. It can become a great learning for the Head of the School, provided the intention is to explore. One such period with Class XIth (in which about 50% of the students were newly admitted a month back) became a memorable experience for me as a principal.

There was a poet amongst the students who composed beautifully in both Hindi and English. He still composes.

This discovery led to many poem recitations on the current topics in the morning prayers, inspiring many hidden poetic talents in the school to come out of their shells. Similarly, while interacting with a small group of newly admitted students who had joined the school a few weeks ago, an answer by a student to my question ‘What one thing you wish your previous school could have done for you?’ kept haunting me throughout the day as I tried to find a solution to that answer. His answer was ‘Ma’am, I was in the school for five years from class 6-10 but did not get a chance to be on stage. Not even as a part of the school choir group.’

Though my school had many groups to lead the prayers, I immediately changed that to roll-number wise, 8-10 students leading the prayer starting with class XIIth. It did not matter if everybody could sing but it was really heartening to see the smile and pride of students standing in front of the school. Very soon, the students were reminding the music teacher about the next classes’ turn. This way, every student could get a chance to be in front of the school at least twice in a year.

Traversing a Bed of Thorns

Opportunities for dialogue bring revelations which otherwise would have remained hidden and might have resulted in unimaginable consequences. During one of the interactions on women safety, just after the infamous Nirbhaya Incident, one student from a senior class gathered the courage and confided about the alarming situation she was facing after the untimely death of her mother at her home. After careful thinking and discussion, the matter was discretely brought to the notice of her father and resolved.

Similarly, a casual interaction with the students waiting for the school bus in the afternoon led to the information about a video game shop just near the bus stop in a colony which was being frequented by many senior students every day. A few parents of the colony were contacted and the needful steps were taken to save these children.

On another occasion, one of the primary teachers became aware of the situation of a little girl going to a tuition centre after school hours. Without losing time, the matter was brought to the notice of the parents for earnest action.

Trust is a Must.

While making dialogue possible and finding different ways for purposeful interaction with the students, one important point is trust. Trust between a teacher and students is of great value. The information gathered during an informal or formal conversation must never be distorted or misused. On many occasions, students confiding in me had requested not to share

their problem with a particular teacher for the fear of being ridiculed or being commented upon. Breach of trust may work as a full stop to the effort of connecting with students.

The Blessings of a Connection

Despite having ‘no time to stand and stare’, a responsible teacher goes above the prescribed syllabus and loses no opportunity to nurture students in different ways. What is needed is a willing and proactive heart, sensitivity, and the cultivated skill of having meaningful conversations/dialogues with a clear objective.

It is said and been proved that all learning is active.

The learning gained through dialogue is a blessing for both, the teacher and the student. The teacher can open the gates for the smooth sharing of ideas, bridge the gap of unfamiliarity, can ‘connect’ with the students, become aware of their background, build up their confidence, and set the ball rolling for cooperative learning.

And this is not a mean achievement. The students who find their voice heard and valued in the class, feel empowered. The listener also gains a lot and becomes ready to take risks due to the confidence generated by the teacher. It forms an unending relationship with the teacher: a relationship necessary for real learning.

One of my favourite quotes is by Sean Junkins, “I would rather have one day of authentic student engagement than a career of handing out worksheets.”

Go Out Smartly

There is no time to be wasted. Go to your class with positivity, break the ice, be spontaneous, let knowledge, ideas and opinions flow. Let experiences be shared, let there be eye contact with the student at the last bench, laugh at yourself, allow your students to fumble, listen to them, leave the class with excitement, making them look forward to your next class because, “So often, you find that the students you’re trying to inspire are the ones that end up inspiring you.”

About Ms. Seema Agarwal : With more than three decades of experience in school education, she is the recipient of many awards including State Teachers’ Award. She was the Principal of S.S.L.T. Gujarat Senior Secondary School, Civil Lines, Delhi, for 21 years. At present she is Academic Consultant with the Education Department, NDMC.

A Dialogue on Dialogue

Tripti Upadhyay

To explain the meaning of any term, we, generally, write a detailed expository note after due deliberations. In this way, the explication of a term, a concept or a statement can range from a paragraph to a whole thesis. More so in a discipline like Philosophy. Probably because of such a long, explanatory deliberations philosophy is often considered terse, boring and highly difficult. In this style of writing, when one asks --What is Dialogue in philosophy, and What is its place and role in the Philosophy of Education, the answer will again be a description and explanation of what is generally understood by the term 'Dialogue'. What are the results of its application and these stances will be supported by taking one or more examples. But the nature of these examples will again be descriptive and elaborative, like taking up a situation where Dialogue is happening or happened and then analysing it. As a result, the perception of philosophy described above remains unchanged.

This paper is an unusual attempt at deliberating what a Dialogue is. Here is presented an imaginary dialogue between a teacher and a student, deliberating upon Dialogue by using it. It attempts to address issues like --What is a Dialogue, its place in Education, effects and challenges, including an example of dialogic form i.e. Socratic Dialogue. It is hoped that in the realm of philosophy, even after being short, it would be able to address the questions in a creative and interesting manner.

- Teacher : Trisha, you seem anxious today? What happened?
- Trisha : Yes, I guess. I am not able to clearly articulate why I am so anxious.
- Teacher : Would you still like to try to articulate?
- Trisha : Sure. Thank you so much for asking. I am not comfortable with my experience in the previous class. I feel something was lacking.
- Teacher : What do you think it is?
- Trisha : I felt it to be one – sided. I felt like not just asking, but sharing as well, A lot in the on-going session. But I could not.
- Teacher : Why do you feel that it was one sided? What was one sided?
- Trisha : The talking; No! the discussion; No! I am not even sure what to call it.
- Teacher : What would happen if it becomes two-sided? Is it a matter of feeling That it is two-sided? Of course, your teacher must be talking to you.
- Trisha : Exactly! You got it right. I wanted the 'it' to be two-sided, rather with everyone's participation in it. It could have been so much more enriching experience.
- Teacher : But isn't a lecture enriching? Why does everyone need to speak?
- Trisha : I find lecture enriching only to a certain extent. When we are

- introduced to something entirely new, it may help. But after that it may become limited and repetitive, sometimes to the extent of being redundant.
- Teacher : What exactly is your pain--Is it the content or the feeling?
- Trisha : Both. Had we got a chance to share, it would have shown how we grasped the concept from earlier lecture. I feel learning should be participative/inclusive. Doesn't Constructivism also tell us this?
- Teacher : Let us not get into the technicalities of it. What I am trying to understand is what has made you so sad?
- Trisha : I wished to speak, ask further questions from the ongoing argument. May be the course of the lecture could also have been different as a result.
- Teacher : So, you feel unheard and unacknowledged.
- Trisha : It was like although being a student, my curiosities and interests were not acknowledged.
- Teacher : What do you think would make you feel acknowledged?
- Trisha : If a teacher gives us a scope to ask questions, delves into related ideas and motivates and guides to further explore them, links those with the core idea, it is a good enough acknowledgement of a learner. Something like Socrates did with his pupils.
- Teacher : But then, without the process of questioning and answering, at the most, you may feel bored in the class. Socrates never made his pupils happy. What are you so anguished about? Are you sure that it is because of the lack of intellectual stimulation only?
- Trisha : Not just bored, we may even lose the track of the class. We become as good as the furniture in the room. I think the idea of the class gets defeated if we are not even mentally present there.
- Teacher : It seems that you feel dehumanized as a student. Am I correct?
- Trisha : Yes. Aim of Education should be to become a better human being in every sense. Then why is the process of Education dehumanizing? Isn't it contrary in/to the extremities?
- Teacher : Yes, when you put it this way, it does seem so. But then what is it that you find in Socratic conversations but miss in your own class? Socrates did make others feel ashamed by his constant questioning and sometimes even made mockery of them.
- Trisha : Mocking or making people ashamed of themselves could have been a personality trait of Socrates that may have crept into his practise of teaching. Otherwise, if we see/ understand properly, his practice is quite a stimulating process. It makes one agitated within their comfort zones of knowledge and understanding, to seek further, and hence enriching themselves; becoming wiser with every discussion.

- Teacher : They surely are. But aren't you dehumanizing as well by ignoring the feelings of other people?
- Trisha : I think he ignored those up surging feelings that would interfere with one's learning and development. May be, he believed in the principle of "**no pain no gain**" for knowledge.
- Teacher : May be, but then couldn't it be the case that you have different beliefs than your teacher, and this difference is bothering you?
- Trisha : I may have different beliefs in terms of the style/practise of teaching. As far as the content goes of that particular subject, I was in line with his/(her) beliefs. I feel I could have given more depth to the ongoing lecture with my questions and observations. It would have been beneficial to the rest of the class too.
- Teacher : Hmm... you surely would have added to the discussion. But, is your concern then about the way the class is being taught or your feel that it is not being taught at all?
- Trisha : My concern is with the way class was being taught as it had limited our experience as well as the content.
- Teacher : Then, if someone asks questions, lets you articulate your ideas, and responds to your questions, then, is that person a good teacher?
- Trisha : It makes me feel like a participant in the teaching-learning process. So, accommodating us in the processes designed for us, definitely makes the person a much better teacher.
- Teacher : But, then is that all that is there to being a teacher?
- Trisha : There is more, but presently my anxiety was due to this only, or its lack rather.
- Teacher : What else would you like?
- Trisha : Lesser rigidity, more inclusion of learners, diverse content and space for addressing concerns beyond the syllabus.
- Teacher : Well... I understand the need of listening to students and diversity of content, but wouldn't discussing students 'beyond-the-syllabi' concerns seem like going beyond the demands of the profession? Everyone may not be comfortable with that.
- Trisha : Isn't the profession about helping and guiding the youth in learning? Even if a teacher is uncomfortable with certain things, which might add to the development of the learners she should address to that. It is also a demand of the profession.
- Teacher : Can we ever do a good job of something that we are uncomfortable with? Aren't you segregating the person from the teacher?
- Trisha : We cannot leave it also just because we are uncomfortable with it. Both demands need to be addressed to. We will have to find some or the other way for it. Maybe that is why we talk about multiple ways of

- teaching. Or maybe that is why Socrates considered pain an inevitable part of learning. He must be dealing with future teachers.
- Teacher : Well-said. I agree that discomfort is not a good rationale to not do something, but then, teaching seems more like a negotiation between competing demands. In keeping Socrates as an ideal, are you not closed to negotiation?
- Trisha : Again, I am not keeping Socrates as ideal, but his way of teaching should be a guiding light. The teacher can add or subtract as per the context as well.
- Teacher : Nevertheless, ‘should’ is the language of ideals. But, even if you don’t consider it as an ideal, I am still curious as to what else do you think is the strength of his method?
- Trisha : Maybe this is the only alternative method I am exposed to, which I definitely prefer over the prevailing one, hence I appear to be taking it as an ideal. Also, as I said above about the limitation of the lecture method, this was the only alternate idea I was exposed to, hence my understanding is limited. Coming around, application of this method of teaching might have given us exposure to other ways as well, or something entirely new might have emerged which would have been my ideal and comfortable for the teacher as well.
- Trisha : At this point, I have an insight as well as a question. I started with being anxious which I find am not anymore. Aren’t we also engaging in Socratic method right now which is definitely stimulating!
- Teacher : That is an interesting insight. What else do you think is happening or happened here?
- Trisha : We are engaging in a discussion about teaching and learning, the practise, the roles.

Both of us are in one of these roles. Hence, it may help us a great deal in performing our respective roles in a much better manner. As a result we both are switching roles as well as in when you learn something about being a good teacher, at that precise point you assume the role of a learner while I, your student, assume the role of a teacher. We are not in rigid compartments. The term teaching – learning process seems to be truly justified here.

A continuous negotiation between the roles is also going on. Probably we have come a step forward than Socrates, blurring the hierarchy in the dialogue.

- Teacher : And, how does it make you feel?
(Suddenly other students enter the room for their class and the dialogue is stopped abruptly.)

Trisha (to herself, while leaving the classroom) : I am feeling way lighter now. Actually, I am feeling elated after it. ‘It’ was a dialogue. Oh! I actually went through the journey from anxiety, through discomfort and pain, to elation – the joy of attaining knowledge. I am amazed. I actually experienced what I had read in the texts about the Socratic method. I experienced its strength first-hand. It is so true that the highest joy of a man is to attain knowledge. Words are falling short in expressing my immediate state. Maybe another dialogue, some other time, can help in its expression.

This dialogue may seem obvious to some, however, for others, it may come alive as an expression of their own experiences. This alternate way of presentation of philosophical deliberations is hoped to lead the reader towards his/her own realisation and illumination, just like Trisha expresses after the dialogue. Thus, a single engagement representing the shared experiences, it also has the potential to culminate into dialogue at multiple levels - between the characters of the teacher and the student it is attributed to, the author and the reader, the text of the dialogue and the reader, author's dialogue with the self and the reader's dialogue with the self. Such experience, and exposure, will further make the reader sensitive to look for dialogue when it is not apparent as well as a philosophy when it is not stately done.

Dialogue as a Pedagogical Tool : An Exploration

Seema Rani

Introduction

Dialogue is an expansion of consciousness of thoughts of individuals persons. It introduces the critical notion of facilitative participation and use of theatre for enhancing communication in the classroom. Dialogue Education is an educational approach to (adult) education which was firstly described by Jane Vella in 1980's. It is foundationally based upon constructivist principles which can be used for transforming learning of the beings. It is an approach in which multiple theories, principles and practices can be applied in concrete form for facilitation of learning in the classroom for the students.

The concept of Dialogue is introduced in contrast to Monologue approach, which has been going on for years in the field of education learning. This Monologue approach presents information by the teachers in front of the students, who receive this information without engaging in it. So, the approach based on Dialogue shifts the focus of educational approach from 'active teacher-passive student' to 'active teacher-active student'.

A Dialogue approach to education views learners as subjects in their own learning and honours central principles such as mutual respect and open communication (Vella, 2002). Ideas are presented to learners as open questions to be reflected on and integrated into the learner's own context (Vella, 2004).The principle working behind this approach is that any adult has enough life experience to converse with any teacher on any subject **and** that learners learn best when content relates to their experiences. So, the whole purpose of the 'Dialogue Approach' is to achieve the more meaningful learning that affects behavior.

In 'Dialogue Approach', learners are dealt as subjects or decision makers not as repetitions. Educational Objectives are based on achievement like mentioned in Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives. Along with this, learning tasks are structured as open questions in which learners are able to connect with the content or text and leading to open dialogue among the students and with students and teachers as well.

Conceptual background of the study

Martin Buber's concept of Dialogue—

According to Martin Buber, dialogue is not only a rational communication or a dialectic relation with the others but he understands dialogue as a holistic meeting of beings. Buber cuts across the hierarchies, dualisms, and dichotomies because the 'self' takes shape in the presence of the other. In an encounter with the otherness of the 'other', both 'self' and 'other' enter in a sphere "which is established with the existence of man as man, but which is conceptually still uncomprehended. (Baniwal, 2018)

Buber takes Dialogue as “solely actual happenings between men, whether wholly mutual or tending to grow into mutual relations” [Baniwal,2018]. *I and Thou*, Buber’s best known work, presents us with two fundamental orientations – relation and irrelation. We can either take our place alongside whatever confronts us and address it as ‘you’ or we can hold ourselves apart from it and view it as an object, an ‘it’. So, we engage in *I-You (Thou)* and *I-It* relationships. *I-You* involves a sense of being part of a whole. The ‘I’ is not experienced or sensed as singular or separate; it is the “I” of being.

Buber talks about three kinds of Dialogues :- (Buber 1947: 19)

1. **Genuine Dialogue** – No matter whether spoken or silent – where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them.
2. **Technical Dialogue**, which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding.
3. **Monologue Disguised as dialogue**, in which two men, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways and yet imagine they have escaped the torment of being thrown back on their own resources.

These, nature of different dialogical relationships are dependent on the two aspects **Mutuality** and **Inclusion**. Only in this situation Dialogue goes beyond monologue approach.

Paulo Freire’s concept of Banking Model of Education.

Paulo Freire advocates the idea of dialogue in contrast to monologue, the traditional approach to (adult) education whereby student is filled like receptacle with information. He is against the concept in which, it is thought that the more completely the teacher fills the receptacles the better a teacher he is. This concept is labelled as “Banking Approach” in education. He critiqued about the ‘Narrative culture’ of the Education system. Narration is that knowledge or content which is detached from the reality. Knowledge is being seen as motionless and compartmentalized. This system of narration leads students to memorize content mechanically. In this situation education just becomes as an act of depositing. So in this kind of situation Freire and others recognized a need for reform in (adult) education practices, particularly with respect to equity in the relationship between (adult) learners and teachers (Vella, 2004).

Paulo Freire suggests the problem-solving approach for gaining knowledge or to confront reality as against banking model of education. This problem- solving approach leads towards the liberating education which consists in acts of cognition, and not transferring of information. The practice of problem-solving education entails at the outset that teacher-student contradiction be resolved. For this problem-solving approach, dialogical relations should exist between the teacher and the students. Both are jointly responsible for a process

in which all grow. So, education is being taken as practice of freedom and not taken as domination on others.

According to Jiddu Krishnamurti

“A dialogue is very important. It is a form of communication in which question and answer continue till a question is left without an answer. Thus, the question is suspended between the two persons involved in this session. It is like a bud with untouched blossoms . . . If the question is left totally untouched by thought, it then has its own answer because the questioner and answerer, as persons, have disappeared. This is a form of dialogue in which investigation reaches a certain point of intensity and depth, which then has a quality that thought can never reach.” (quoted from **Jiddu Krishnamurti**)

Jiddu Krishnamurti said that a teacher has to be a revolutionary person, the one who persistently awakens his student’s intelligence, and sense of responsibility and this commitment to awakening the consciousness of students or people is undoubtedly based on a ‘strong moral passion’.

Dialogue mentioned in the Upanishads-- ‘The Upaniṣadic dialogues themselves are closer to Socratic dialogues, which even though have the form of dialogue but entail a dialectical process of argumentation and refutation, which may or may not become dialogical in Buberian sense.’

On the basis of the above discussion, we can say that concept of ‘dialogue’ is differently enounced by different savants at different point of time. Such as we saw that Buberian concept of dialogue based on '*holistic meeting of the beings*' and Paulo Friere conceded it '*as a process of problem solving*'. Whereas J.Krishnamurti, believes that dialogue is '*an investigation (through question-answer sessions)which reaches at a certain point of intensity and depth*'. If we see Educational Theories, then we can also find that the concept of dialogue is also impelled by the Piaget’s concept of '*creation of situation of struggling thoughts for developing concepts*' and ‘socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky i.e. **Zone of proximal development**’.

Relevance of the study— In contemporary education system, when we talk about collaborative learning, experiential learning, individualized oriented learning, education for liberation of minds and souls then there is an overly need of an environment in which students can interact with their peers and with Teachers in which, through dialoguing, they are able to develop their understanding level. On the basis of the review of literature and contemporary educational expectations or goals, researcher is able to say that ‘dialogue’ can be a strong pedagogic tool for involving or engaging students with the text and initiate them in the process of learning in the class without any hesitation and fear. So, through this paper researcher tries to see explore the '**Viability of the dialogue as pedagogical tool in the**

classroom.' This paper is a small step in enhancing understanding of the stakeholders of education system in finding out the possibilities of 'Dialogue' as a pedagogic tool in the classroom.

Statement of the problem— Viability of 'Dialogue' as Pedagogical Tool in the Classroom

Research method—Researcher wants to enquire or to explore the 'vability of Dialogue as pedagogical tool in the classroom' by using qualitative research method. For studying of the above said problem, researcher took semi-structured interviews from two subject teachers each of Hindi, English, Social Studies and Science on different issues. Researcher has taken Class IXth as a sample because it's a starting step of adult education. For triangulation of the data she held group discussions with 40 students each of two sections of IXth Class where students were able to express themselves freely.

Data Collection

Researcher made some tools for semi-structured interviews and for group discussions which are as follows:-

Tools for the Teachers

1. What is Dialogue?
2. What is the process of Dialogue? How it happens or takes place in the class?
3. Have you ever taught any topic or concept through 'Dialogue' in your class?
4. What do you say about the effectiveness of the 'dialogue' for understanding of any content or text?
5. What are the challenges you have faced while teaching through this pedagogical intervention in the class?
6. Do you want to give any suggestions for better implementation of this tool?

I What is dialogue---

English Teachers' Responses -- English teachers said that Dialogue is a mode of interaction but in their English class they take it in a very technical manner as such in a form of "*role play of any chapter or story or drama*" or "*conversion of the story in the dialogue form*". Whereas **Hindi teachers** said that "*Do ya do se adhik logo ke beech me hone wali baatcheet hi samvaad hai,*" "*kisi ghatna ya kisi bhi Vishay par ant:kriya hi samvaad hai.*" **And Social Science teacherstold that** that Dialogue is '*a two way communication which cannot happen in the absence of any one person.*' It is a process in which a topic or issue is discussed at the deeper level and in different dimensions. Science teacher said that "*aapas me ki gayi baatcheet hi samvaad hai or uske bina science padhayi hi nhi ja sakti*"

II Process of dialogue and topics were being taught through dialogue in the class—

English Teacher's response- Teachers told about the learning level of the 9th and 11th class , they said that students are not able to read sentences or reading text. So, they raised question

that ‘How could we expect from the students to speak or interact independently or take participation in an open discussion in the class?

Hindi Teachers said that “*samvaad ke liye kam se kam do patro ka hona tatha kisi vishay ka hona atyant aavshyak hai , iske abhaav m e samvaad sambhav nhi hai*”. “*Samvaad ke dauraan vishay ke vividh aayaamo ke bare me baatcheet karte hue , kisi nishakrsh tak pahunchn a atyant aavshayak maanti hai . Samvaad ko prshnottar vidhi se alag maanti hai kyonki usme koi ghtna nhi hai ” “ samvaad ko natak athva kahani ke roop me prastut kiya ja skta hai .*” The teacher said that process of meaning making of the text is called dialogue. Stating saying and Listening are the part of dialogue. we all useit in our daily life. Teachers said that “*kaksha me ek-dusre ko sunana, kisi ghatna par baatcheet karna, vibhinn udaharno dwara bachcho ko visha y se jodnaa aadi samvaad ki prkriya ka aadhaar hai .*” *One Hindi Teacher said that “vigyapan samvaad ka bahut hi mahtvpoorn ang ha i aur samvaad ke abhaav me samaaj ka astittav hi nhi hai .*” *Advertisements can be an important base for developing sense of real Dialogue because dialogue in advertisement reaches to our heart which help us to think at the deeper level at the* The teacher gave an example of the chapter “Jhansi ki rani”, in this chapter students could connect through dialogue because they have already read about her and they have also seen movie based on the life of Rani lakshmi bai. The teacher said that “*bachcho me sahi-galat ki samjh viksit karna bhi samvaad ki hi prkriya ka hissa hai/.*” Another Hindi Teacher told that through the chapter “*reedh ki haddi*”, *she asked the children to prepare a role play and the students performed very well.*” Teacher affirmed that Students also showed great participation on discussions based on contemporary issues like ‘*swachh bharat swasth bharat*’. Hindi teachers also told that approximately 70-80% of the syllabus can be taught through dialogue. The teacher also mentioned that when we teach through dialogue then the chapter finishes soon as compared to when we teach by reading line by line of the chapter. Even chapters are ready with question-answers for students from the exam point of view. According to them, dialogue is a method by which students satisfy their curiosity.

Social Science Teacher’s response-- Both the teachers believe that Dialogue is a very effective mode in teaching-learning process. One teacher said that for ‘dialogue’ both the partners must be at the same level of thinking. As said by the Martin Buber that Mutuality and Inclusion are the foundational components of the dialogue. Teachers also said that as a teacher they use the language in the class according to the level of their students, only then they can be a part of any dialogue and develop their thoughts. They said that the ‘dialogue’ becomes more fruitful in the IXth Class because ‘concepts issues or topics’ mentioned in these classes are the extension of the topics which were given in the previous classes. In this condition, students feel more connected with the content and become more responsive. Students take more participation in the class as they have more experience with the time. Topics like Constitution and Constitutional Values, Fundamental Rights, Process of Election etc. are taught in the class. The teacher said that in Economics, we can also use this mode

“dialogue” as pedagogical tool. For example, discussion on ‘market’, ‘selling and buying’ like issues connect the students to their daily life. Whereas there are a very few possibilities or opportunities in Geography and History, sub-branches of the Social Science, as these subjects are mostly based upon the factuals. But still one teacher mentioned that topics like ‘climate’, ‘Save Environment’ and ‘Revolution’ can be dealt with the dialogue mode because Dialogue can connect our past to our present.

Science teachers said that ‘Dialogue can be used in teaching of General Science topics at the lower grade (6th to 8th class) like ‘Environment and its protection, natural resources, water cycle, nitrogen cycle, carbon cycle, concept of light, general chemical and physical reactions like conversion of water into ice, making of steam, parts of flower etc. Both teachers affirmed that only 20% of the curriculum can be taught through dialogue. Students can understand these topics by visualizing these changes directly. They also told that subject of science is foundationally based on ‘Learning by Doing’ approach.

III Effectiveness of the dialogue:

Though English teachers believe in ‘Dialogic teaching as a fruitful pedagogical tool’ but they are not able to apply it in their classroom situations. They mentioned that it can be productive in the private schools’ context but not in their case. Because ‘Dialogue cannot happen’ in the one sided response situation’. They believe that dialogue is used as method in the condition of active participation of the students. Delhi Government has also taken some steps to prepare students to interact in **English Language**. During vacations they made arrangements for English Speaking classes in the school.

Whereas the **Hindi Language** and **Social Science** Teachers said that, when they teach through dialogue mode, Teaching and Learning process becomes more interesting and students take great participation in the class. Hindi teachers do not take dialogue as hurdle in completion of the syllabus rather they take it as resource. While Social Science teachers said that dialogue is a good method but still they cannot apply this at its maximum possibilities due to huge course content. The Hindi Teacher said that through dialogue “we teachers can better understand our students”. Teachers also mentioned that it is a good method to make students feel connected, joyful and responsible for holistic learning in the class. Students’ understanding level is also reached to the next level. All teachers believe that dialogue helped students in developing their self-confidence and interest in the subjects by which they are able to participate in different competitions like debate, essay writing and ready to perform as an anchor as well. Even she said that performance on any drama leads the children towards professional aspect of learning. They are able to act and react. When students are taught with this approach, they become more sensible because dialogue connects students to the content at the emotional level. Hence, we can say that ‘Dialogue’ plays a very important role in the holistic development of the children,

The Science Teachers also believed in effectiveness of dialogue in teaching of science subject. They said that the topics which are taught through dialogue students take great participation and are seen very connected in the class. Dialogue is able to built relations with the text and the content.

IV Contribution of the dialogue in solving handling exams:-

Hindi Teachers said that Dialogue is not a hurdle in handling maximum portion of the exam but we have to prepare our students as per requirement of the exam because according to prescribed exam system it's a demand from the language learner that they are able to use language technically.

One social science teacher said that if we give some note making task after 'dialoging' in the class then students are able to use the content in the exam. She affirmed that there is need for technical preparation of the content for handling the question paper. Otherwise students feel lost in the exam and they will think that cramming of facts is the only basis of qualifying exam. Teachers also said that the number of questions based on critical and analytical thinking in the exams are increasing consistently.

Science teacher also told that questions based on thinking or daily life science are increasing in the exams but still the teaching of science is being taught by experimental method not by dialogue, which is demanded by the authorities as well.

V Challenges you have confronted :-

Large classroom size, students' non-reactive attitude in the class, huge syllabus course content, lack of basic infrastructure amenities facilities etc. are the problems told by approximately all the teachers. The Hindi Teachers and the Social Science Teachers said that approximately 50% of the syllabus can be covered through dialogue whereas Science Teachers said that only 20% of the syllabus can be handled with dialogue approach otherwise almost the whole syllabus is based on practicals which deals with learning by doing method in the class. Science Teachers told that while their subject was mainly based on experimentation and the science labs in the school are very small as compared to the students' requirement. So, how could all students learn through this experimentation method when the syllabus has constraint of discussion or dialogue. In this situation a large group of students remain unlearned. Students also feel lost or dissociated with the content in the absence of dialogue.

VI Suggestions for Better implementation of Dialogue in the classrooms— Hindi

Teachers suggested for inclusion of more chapters in the curriculum which are based on drama or dialogue. Actually, the dialogue can make students ready for communicating sensitively. Social Science Teachers said that the E-Facilities for the concerned subjects must be provided along with the basic infrastructure facilities in the era of digital world. **Science**

and Social Science Teachers suggested that ‘E-Content’ of the prescribed syllabus should be available for the access of every teacher so that they can any time show to the students as visual things, effect being more deep. **Science Teachers** also suggested that if they are able to add on more discussion or interaction along with the practical portions of the syllabus, then the interest of the students can amazingly develop in the subject of science. One Science Teacher also recommended that the choice of science as a subject should be given at the entrance of the 9th class instead of 11th class. So that the ones who are interested in science, only those would take science and other students could have General Science or Science related to our daily life. And teachers should try to teach this General Science through ‘Dialogue mode’. This process will make children more active and confident with the science subject.

Classroom size should be smaller because in the large class size, the process of dialogue can’t be done completely and successfully. Course content should be curtailed so that maximum portion of the curriculum can be dealt with this approach.

Teachers must go beyond the exam- oriented teaching-learning process, only then they can do justice with the teaching of their subjects.

Tools for the Students :-

- 1. What is Dialogue?**
- 2. Which subject teachers have taught through ‘dialogue’ method in the class?**
- 3. How it is being done in the class?**
- 4. How do you feel during the class in which the teacher uses Dialogue as method of teaching?**
- 5. How dialogue can be mademore effective in the classroom?**

I What is Dialogue?

IXth class students response:-- When researcher asked that what is dialogue from the students? following responses came from them, which are as follows-- “baatheet hai” “kisi ek Vishay par baat karna” “do ya do se adhik logo ke beech ant:kriya ka hona ” “vaad-vivaad” and “ prashnootar”, are all these are part of any kind of dialogue.

Whereas **students of Class IXth** said that “do logo ke beech ki baatheet”, “Do ya do se adhik logo ke beech kisi kriya ke dauran baatheet”, “kisi Vishay vishesh ya kisi durghatna, kisi niyam , kisi pariksha aadi par kam se kam shabdo me baatheet hi samvaad hai”. Some other groups of student said that “aalochnaatmak dhang se vichar prkat karna”, “salah dena”, “chintan karna” , “sanketik maadhyam se apn i baat ko rakhna hi samvaad hai.

II Which subject teachers have taught through ‘dialogue’ method in the class? And how it happened in the class?

IXth class students said that ‘our Hindi Teacher and Social Science Teacher have taught many topics through dialogue.’ They also told that it begins with a welcoming note by the teacher and there is action and reaction between two students or more than two students and with Teacher as well in the class. Discussions are also being done in the class.

They gave some example from their class content in which they were taught through Dialogue in the class. For example—“reedh ki haddi” which is taken from their **Hindi text book**. One another example from their **Social Studies** textbook i. e. ‘Election’. They shared that these above mentioned topics were taught through discussion in the class in which they were able to understand the related concepts more easily. Through this method they were able to understand that they should not cast their vote based on any kind of our personal greed.

Whereas Class XIth student said that our Pol. Science Teacher, Hindi Teacher and History Teacher used Dialogue as method in the class. They said that these teachers connect their content with students’ practical life. They give an environment to the students for thinking and reflection. Interaction is also being done among students and students with teachers in the class. They gave some examples in which they taught through Dialogue mode , such as- concepts of “Politics, development, secularism, peace, equality, election process” etc. in the **subject of Pol. Science**. They also said that in the **subject of History**, they are also taught about ‘Art and Culture’, ‘Responsibilities towards the country’ through different examples from our daily life. They also told that chapters of **Hindi subject** like ‘bharatvarsh ki unnti kaise ho’, ‘uski maa’, ‘dopahar ka bhojan’ etc. were being taught through Dialogue in the class. The Hindi Teacher is also taking listening activities through Dialogue mode.

IV How do you feel during the class in which the teacher uses Dialogue as method of teaching?

Students of both the classes (IXth & XIth) said that ‘Dialogue’ is very effective in enhancement of our learning level. Through this they are able to express their views, ideas and feelings about different issues. They are also able to reflect upon different affairs. During the process of dialogue, they feel more connected with their peers and with the situations as well. They (with peers and teachers) collaboratively enhance their knowledge at the deeper level. These kind of discussions remove break our internal fear to express ourselves and builds our confidence.

In our exams, the understanding built through Dialogue mode helps us to be thoughtful about the questions in the exams. We are also able to elaborate or explain the answers by giving different examples which we were discussed during dialoguing.

V How dialogue can be more effective in enhancement of your learning?

Students of both the classes (IXth & XIth) said that the mode of ‘Dialogue’ could be used in others subjects and in more topics related to the curriculum for effective and practical learning .

CONCLUSION

First, the researcher wishes to share her overall observation about the practice of dialogue as a pedagogic tool in the classroom is that, approximate all teachers said that ‘Dialogue’ is not a new word or concept in the field of education. They said that they used it earlier also, in their classes as and when they got the opportunity for transaction of the content with this approach. Another observation is that it is most importantly required for dialogue that the person must be connected with the language in which he she communicates with others. Otherwise it cannot reach process of ‘dialogue’. The interaction discussion with **Hindi and English Teachers**, strengthened this idea that ‘Link Language’ plays an very important role for generating and developing ideas at the deeper level. We can also say that ‘Link language’ is responsible for the process of ‘Reflection’. On the basis of obtained data from the teachers and students, researcher can conclude that students feel more comfortable while communicating in their mother tongue (i.e. Hindi in the context of the study)

On the basis of interaction with **Social Science Teachers**, the researcher is able to analyse that there are more possibilities of ‘dialogue’ used as pedagogical tool in Civics and Political Science subjects. When we see that our exam pattern also follows up with analytical thinking and situation- based questions, then there could be more possibilities of using ‘dialogue’ as a pedagogical tool. Whereas the **Science Teachers**’ responses brought the researcher to the conclusion that there is a very small portion of syllabus (approx. 20%) that can be transacted handled through ‘Dialogue’ as this subject is mainly based upon the ‘Learning by Doing’ approach. There are very few possibilities of dialogue in the current curriculum of the science. If the teachers are able to add more discussions in the class with the practical portions of the syllabus then the science subject would be the favorite subject of the students. Comparatively they become more ready to acquire and internalize the new concepts and ideas. Science curriculum should be more focused upon the daily life general life concepts, so that students can develop as rational beings in the real sense.

On the basis of the above analysis, researcher can say that the Hindi and Social Science subjects have more options possibilities of teaching through dialogical method as compared to English and Science subjects.

If we see the students' responses then, researcher can say that students of both the classes showed great interest in 'dialogue' mode of pedagogy. They feel more connected with the text. This mode gives them more and more opportunities to associate their school knowledge to their daily life activities. They also suggested using 'dialogue as method of teaching different subjects' in their classes. Class XIth students expressed their views more elaborate on the topic concerned. They felt more confident in interpreting the issues and develop like a reflector.

In the end, the researcher can say that there is a dire need of reflection about the use of 'Dialogue as pedagogical tool' in the class by every stakeholder in the Education System. Researcher feels that **'The Teachers must go beyond the exam-oriented teaching-learning process only then they can do justice with the teaching of their subject'**.

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Dialogue in a Science Class- Room

Dr. Vandana Gupta

The forms of talk that occur in a classroom have been spotlighted as critical for teaching and learning. How should teachers talk in their class, and how much should they talk; how should students be motivated to talk and discuss ideas. Over the years, theories have been proposed to seek answers to these questions yet hard evidence remains elusive

However recent research has indicated positive relationship between patterns of classroom dialogue in science and student learning, reasoning and attitudes towards school. Based on this premise, this research article probes the impact of classroom dialogue in science for grade 9(age group 14 years) on the topic ‘Structure of Atom’. The design of instruction comprises of Planning, Implementation and Evaluation which are detailed as follows:

Design of Instruction

The teaching methodology adopted by the researcher consisted of three phases :

1. **Planning:** Following steps were considered for planning the instruction
 - a) identification of schemas that already existed in the cognitive structure of the learners' age group under construction. This is also known as identifying the previous knowledge of the learners.
 - b) Setting the instructional objectives in behavioral terms.
 - c) Organisation of content in sequential manner.
2. **Implementation:** This included imparting instruction to the two experimental groups based on inductive model and concept mapping respectively and to the control group using conventional method.
2. **Evaluation:** The teacher continually evaluated the teaching methodology adopted by her, through the students' responses during the classroom sessions. These responses judged the student comprehension of the content and also their degree of involvement. After each class, the students were motivated to attempt a set of questions, which is an appraisal of the thought processes used by them to arrive at conclusions. After the treatment, the sample was subjected to an achievement test which aimed at evaluating their comprehensibility and applicability of concepts.

Topic : Structure of Atom Class : IX Age Group : 14+ 1 years

A-1.Planning:

a) Judging the previous knowledge of students

The students are aware of the fundamental particles present in an atom, their location and charge

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b) Instructional objectives in behavioral terms

- I. Differentiate the spinning motion of the electron from its revolving motion.
- II. Justify the existence of electrons in orbits
- III. Interpret the orbits as energy levels
- IV. Calculate the maximum electron carrying capacity of each orbit.

c) Organisation of content in sequential manner

The instruction begins with introduction, which links the previous knowledge of the learners with the content. After introduction, the content is presented in 2 stages.

Stage 1: Spinning motion of Electrons-- Major concepts presented in stage 1 are:

The electrons exhibit revolving and spinning motion. Spin can be clockwise or anticlockwise.

Stage 2: Orbit- Major concepts presented in stage 2 are:

The electrons move in shells or orbits also known as energy levels. The maximum capacity of each shell is given by $2n^2$

A-2 Implementation

A-2 (i) Instructions Basedon Concept Mapping Model.

STAGE 1: Spinning motion of electrons

Phase I- Presentation of Abstraction

The teacher started the lesson by probing the previous knowledge of the students

Tr.: You have studied about the structure of atom in class VII and VIII. Can you recall something about the structure?

St: An atom has an outer region and a central region.

Tr.: Fine!

The teacher writes ‘atom’ ‘outer region’ and ‘inner region’ on the black board.

Tr.: What is the central region called?

St.: Nucleus

Tr.: What does the nucleus consist of?

St.: Protons and neutrons.

Tr.: Ok , what does the outer region consist of?

St.: Electrons.

Tr.: Yes!

The teacher writes the keywords on the blackboard and the list looks like

Atom

Outer region

Inner region

Nucleus

Protons

Neutrons

Electrons

Tr.: Do the electrons have fixed position?

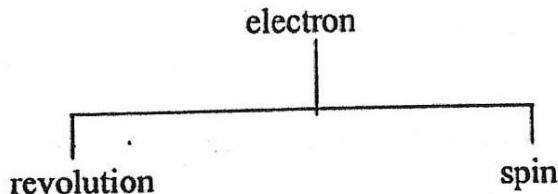
St.: _____,

Tr.: The electrons are mobile, i.e., they are always in motion. Today, we are going to study about the movements exhibited by an electron. ‘The electron exhibits two types of motion: revolution and spin. What do you think the electrons revolve around?

St.: Nucleus.

Tr.: Yes.

The teacher writes on the black board



Tr.: Give me an example of a revolving object.

St.: Swings which move in a circular fashion, like in ‘AppuGhar’

Tr.: Well yes!, what else?

St.: Blades of fan revolving about the central motor.

Tr.: Good!, what about the solar system?

St.: Yes, the planets revolve around the sun.

Tr.: True!, now tell me about an object, which spins, about its axis

St.: Top

Tr.: Good!, what else?

St.: The earth spins about its axis. One full spin takes 24 hrs.

Tr.: Wonderful! The electrons can spin both in clockwise and anticlockwise direction, what do you understand by the clockwise spin?

St.: Spin, which is synchronous with the motion of hands of a clock.

Tr.: Demonstrate with your hands.

Students show the movement with their hands. The teacher acknowledges their actions.

Tr.: Yes!, and the reverse is the anticlockwise movement.

The students move their hands in reverse circular fashion to show anticlockwise spin.

St.: A top

Tr.: Right, and an example of object, which spins in anticlockwise fashion.

St.: A firkani, which children play with.

Tr.: Besides that.

St.: “-----”

Tr.: Observe the central part of the fan

The teacher switches off the fan so that the speed of the fan slows down and the students are able to observe the direction of spin.

Tr.: In which direction is the motor spinning?

St.: Anticlockwise direction.

Tr.: Yes, the clockwise and anticlockwise spin is designated as positive and negative. Can you guess which spin is designated as positive?

St.: Clockwise.

Tr.: Rightly so!, in addition, the anticlockwise spin is given a negative designation just to show its reverse nature.

Phase II- Propositional Phase

The teacher points at the list of concepts and sub-concepts written on the black board. She asks the students to copy the list in their notebooks:

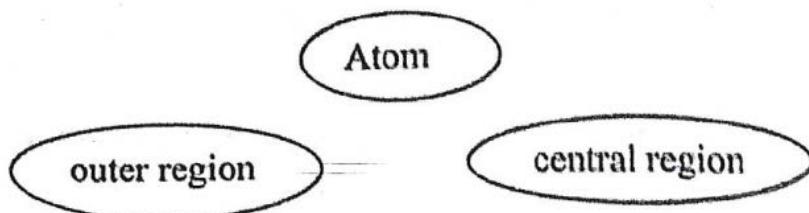
Tr.: Of the various concepts you have noted down, identify the most inclusive i.e. broader concept.

St.: Atom.

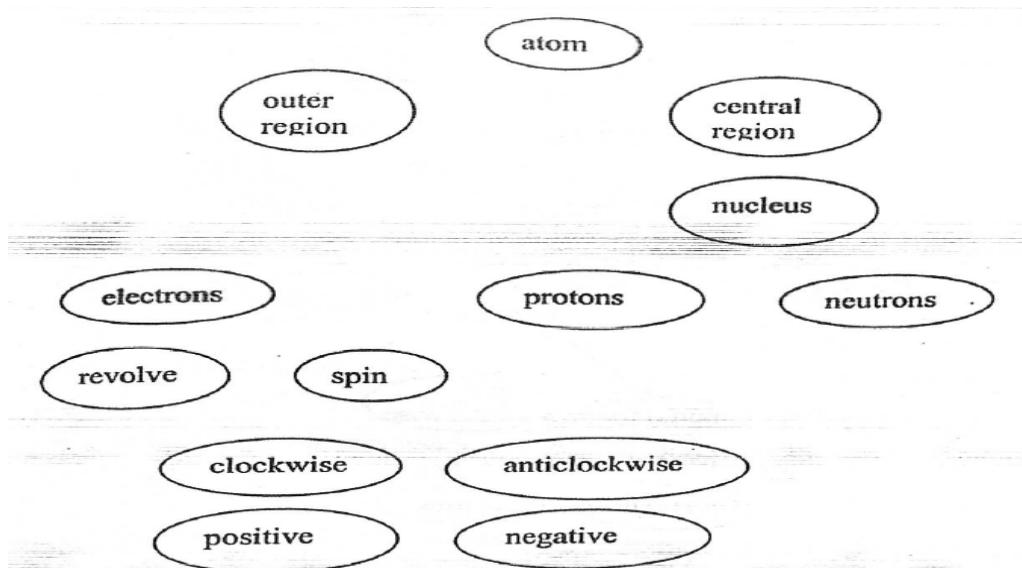
Tr.: Right. Now place this concept label on the top. Now identify the next less inclusive concept, which should occupy the hierarchy.

St.: Outer region and central region.

Teacher writes on the board:

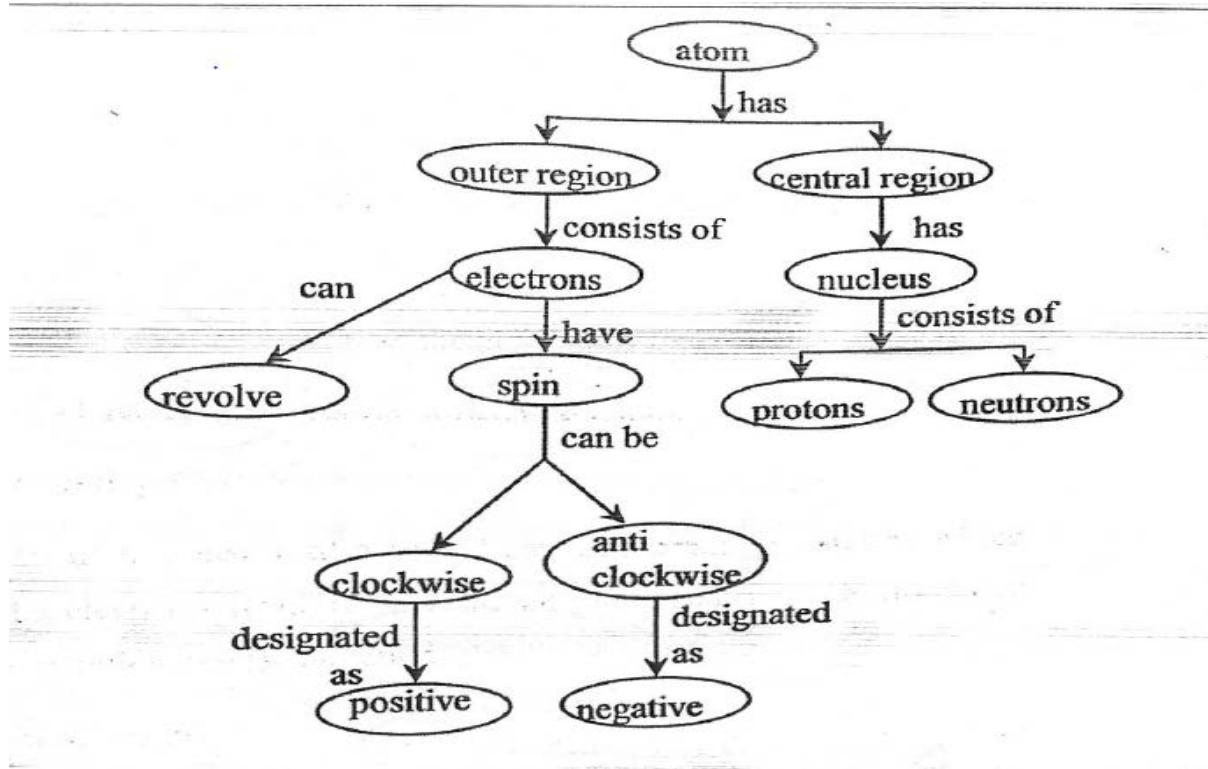


The teacher continues probing the students till the following pyramid is evolved on the black board.



Now the teacher calls one of the students to the board and asks her to connect the various labels using arrowhead lines. The rest of the students are directed to do so in their notebooks.

After appreciating the students' efforts the teacher guides the students to define the connecting lines with appropriate words so that the relation between concepts could be highlighted using minimum words. The final structure developed through mutual discussion, which was displayed on the black board, looks like this :



Phase III: Application

Tr.: Can you compare the structure of an atom with the handle of a sewing machine in motion.

St.: Not exactly!

Tr.: Why do you say so?

St.: If we consider the wooden handle as electron then through it revolves around the central axis (nucleus), it does not spin.

Tr.: Excellent, of the many examples that we have discussed today, which one most resembles an atom?

St.: The solar system.

Tr.: How?

St.: The earth and the planets are synonymous with the electrons and the sun is synonymous with nucleus. Like the earth, the electrons exhibit both the spinning and revolving motion.

Phase IV: Closure

Tr.: Will someone summarise the discussion for us?

St.: We have learnt about the structure of atom.

Tr.: Good. Go on.

St.: An atom consists of a central part called nucleus, around which the electrons revolve. Also the electrons spin in both clockwise and anticlockwise direction.

Tr.: That's right.

The teacher proceeds with the lesson

Stage II : Orbit

Phase I: Presentation of Abstraction

Tr.: When the electrons move around the nucleus they do so in a fixed path and not in an arbitrary fashion. Can you cite a few objects that take fixed path while in motion?

St. A: The planets move around the sun in a fixed path.

St. B: The traffic on the road.

St. C: The handle of the sewing machine revolves in a fixed circular path.

Tr.: Good. What would happen if all the planets move in one path instead of different paths?

St.: If the planets are moving with different speeds in one path they could collide with each other. In that case the planets would fall in the sun.

Tr.: Similarly, the electrons of different energy and hence different speeds move in different paths to avoid possible collision. These paths are called Shells or Orbit.

The teacher writes Shells, Orbit on the black board.

Tr.: These shells or orbits are given different names. The path or shell closest to the nucleus is called K shell. The next is L shell. What would be the next?

St.: M shell

Tr.: Yes, and the next?

St.: N shell and so on.

Tr.: The K shell is given the number represented by $n=1$, what are the values for the subsequent orbits?

St.: For L shell n will be 2, for M shell n will be 3 and so on.

Tr.: These orbits are sometimes also called energy levels.

The teacher writes energy levels on the black board.

Tr.: Can you tell me why?

St.: These shells have fixed energies associated with them.

Tr.: Excellent. The K shells have the least energy and the energy of the shells increases as we go away from the nucleus. The shells have a fixed electron carrying capacity which is given by $2n^2$, where n is the shell number. Now tell me the capacity of the K shell?

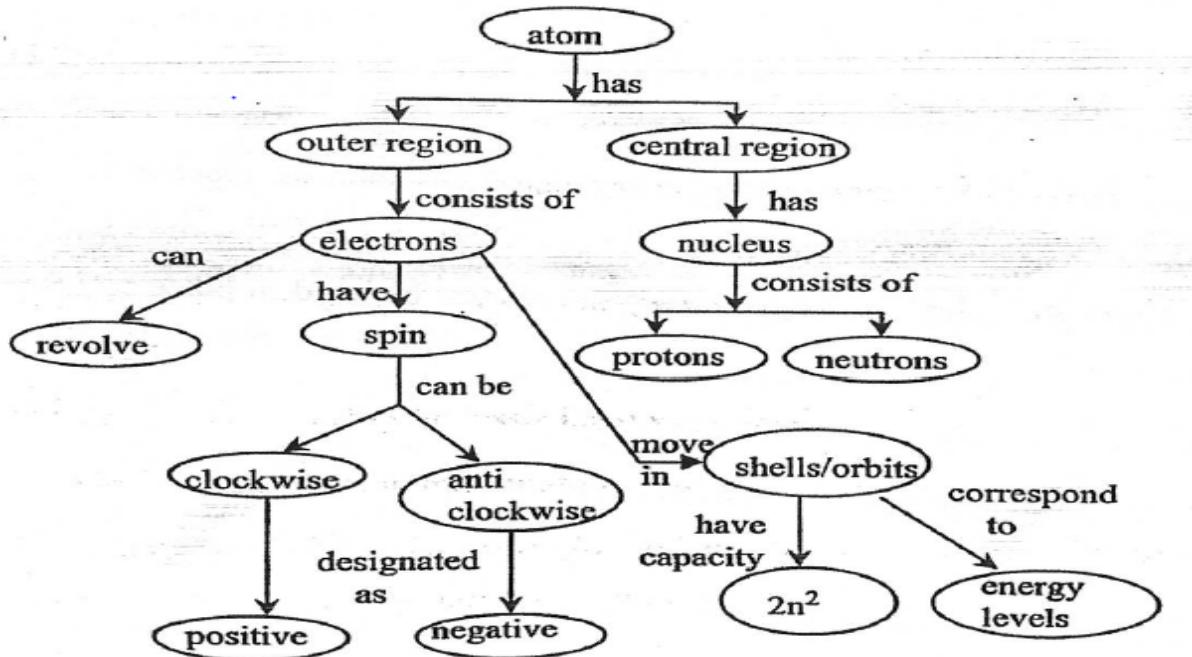
St.: For K, $n=1$ i.e. $2(1)^2 = 2$ electrons i.e. K shell can carry a maximum of 2 electrons.

Tr.: Good. Now workout the capacity of L & M shells.

The teacher calls two students one by one to the blackboard to work out the problems.

Phase II: Propositional phase

After acknowledging their responses, the teacher draws the concept map further on the blackboard as developed through discussion. The whole concept map looks like:



Phase III: Application phase

After the discussion, the teacher poses some thought provoking questions to the students, like:

Tr.: What would happen if all the shells have same energy?

St. A: Then the electrons would be arbitrarily distributed in the shells irrespective of its capacity.

St. B: The concept of the ‘maximum capacity of the shell’ would not have existed then.

Tr.: Good. Can M shell have 8 electrons?

St.: Yes, M shell has $2n^2$ value of 18 i.e. can have a maximum of 18 electrons and not more than 18 electrons. But it can have less than 18 electrons.

Phase IV: Closure

Tr.: So, what is the use of orbits in an atom?

St.: They have fixed energy and carry fixed number of electrons leading to a stable atom

Tr.: Yes. Do you think the label “energy level” can be used in place of orbit?

St.: Yes. Because orbits are associated with fixed energy.

Tr.: Good. You seem to have mastered the concept of orbits.

The teacher completes the lesson by giving a few questions involving reflective thinking, to the pupils to work upon.

Major Findings

Such type of dialogue in a science classroom has positive impact on the comprehension and retention of concepts as students are allowed to form their own concepts under the mentorship of the teacher. Students build, elaborate, evaluate and clarify concepts under such classroom settings. They doubt, challenge, reject and accept the theories and arrive at self-constructed fundamentals. Research indicates that when student participation is high, high level of elaboration and querying were positively associated with learning outcomes. Healthy dialogue in a science classroom builds positive attitude to schooling and self- as-learner. Also such dialogues promote group work, appreciation and understanding of fellow-students' point of view, thus leading to a congenial social learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Engaging Children with Dialogues in Science Classroom

Dr. Manisha Wadhwa nee Dabas

Abstract

Dialogue with children in classroom context enhances construction of knowledge. It is challenging as teacher needs to encourage children to participate but when children freely express themselves it is very rewarding. It boosts up critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Frequent questioning makes children think more deeply and clearly about the ideas. It also brings in varied perspectives to the context. In this paper four examples of dialogues with children in science classroom were taken. These examples helped in inferring that exchange of ideas among a teacher and children or among peers bring in multiple points of view. They learn to respond to the ideas of others and reflect on their own ideas in an effort to build their knowledge.

Introduction

“Friends, Romans, Countrymen lend me your ears. I have come to bury Cesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them; the good oft interred with their bones. So let it be with Cesar.....”

Antony’s speech continues in William Shakespeare’s play Julius Cesar. It is one of the most famous dialogues used from Shakespeare’s works. In common parlance, the mention of the ‘dialogue’ makes us think about plays, movies or any other rehearsed situations. In movies and plays actors remember the dialogues and perform on stage. The performance put up by actors generally is well rehearsed. In contrast, “*rehearsed*” dialogues are not there in any classroom situations.

In educational and philosophical context, “Socratic dialogues” come to our mind. These dialogues were used around fourth century B.C. by the Greek philosopher Socrates. These are available in the works of Plato, one of his disciples. Socrates believed that truth can be discovered by asking questions, thinking deliberately and people can be trained to seek out and find out answers to philosophical questions like--What is life or What is happiness and other concepts.

In present day classroom situations, dialogues with children serve as an important tool to get to know their views and to help them look at things differently. When dialogues happen in groups, children not only speak and express their views but also listen. This process in turn encourages critical thinking. When children engage in dialogues, many times this exercise leads to a better understanding of the subject. Scientific concepts are abstract in nature, which implies that one can’t see concepts like temperature, respiration but only see the effects of the concepts like hotness, breathing -- in our lives. Thus, in such a scenario, it is more important to engage children with dialogues.

In this paper four different examples of dialogues with children have been taken. Attempt has been made to explain the nature and purpose of dialogues in science classroom. All four examples are from middle school science concepts. In the first example, it is shown how dialogues challenge existing schemas of children about any science concept, then through interaction children co-create knowledge. The second example focuses on how children bring in multiple perspectives in classroom, by moving away from the idea of ‘the one right answer’. The third example indicates that motivation and comfortable environment of classroom, promotes question raising skill. Raising questions is the first step towards scientific enquiry. In the last example role of peers and other adults is highlighted and how interaction through dialogues help in learning.

Example 1 -- Building on Children’s Existing Knowledge

Concept : Transparent, Translucent and Opaque

Class VI

Students were introduced to the terms- transparent, translucent and opaque as see-through, slightly see-through and non-see-through using some examples like glass, butter paper and wall. Then the following dialogues were recorded:

- Teacher : We discussed that glass is a transparent object. But, why can’t we see through the window pane of our class (pointing towards the dusty window of the class)?
- Student 1 : Glass is a see-through object but this one is covered with a thick layer of dust.
- Student 2 : On this dusty window pane two things are overlapping with each other –glass and dust. One is transparent and the other is not.
- Student 3 : There is a film on windows of a car, wrappers on plastic bottles. On these items, too, transparent object is wrapped or covered with non-transparent object.
- Student 4 : Why can’t we see objects in a dark room?
- Student 1 : ... because in a dark room there is no light .
- Teacher : We see with our eyes but only in the presence of light.
- Student 2 : Yes, we can see when light rays reach our eyes.
- Student 5 : Light rays fall on the objects and objects reflect it. When those reflected light rays reach our eyes we can see that particular object. Like this wall and blackboard in classroom (and all of us... laughingly) are reflecting rays which are going into our eyes that is why we can see.
- Student 6 : Objects reflect light but at the same time it is not like a mirror?
- Teacher : We can see our image in mirror because of reflection, here wall is

also reflecting but we cannot see our image in it. This happens because there is a difference between two surfaces. Have you observed the difference between two surfaces?

- Student 7 : Mirror is smooth and a wall is rough.
- Teacher : There are two kinds of reflections - Regular and Irregular. In mirror there is regular reflection and on wall there is irregular reflection.
- Student 8 : A wall is opaque and causes irregular reflection, that is why we are not able to see our image on it.

Analysis

These dialogues in the class made class more interactive and children got an opportunity to present and participate in the conceptual development. In a simple lecture style, a teacher may have explained how light passes through some objects and why it does not pass through others. But using examples from daily lives and giving children opportunities to think and express, helped them to construct their own knowledge. Secondly, question like ‘Why can’t we see objects in a dark room?’ shows that students try to interpret a concept from their perspectives. The counter questioning of students about their observations in real life experiences helped them in eliciting their ideas, which further helped in constructing knowledge. According to Jean Piaget, a psychologist, children begin to actively build their understanding of the world through their ‘schemas’. These are constantly being revised and elaborated with new experiences through processes of “*accommodation*” and “*assimilation*”. Children assimilate a new idea or information with adding to what they already know, as it fits in with their current understanding. However, when they come across new experiences or ideas that are against their prior knowledge, then they form a completely new schema to accommodate the new idea.

Example 2 Exposure of Children to Multiple Perspectives

Grade VII

- Concept** : **Sustainable Water Management**
- Material : Newspaper clippings about ground water depletion in some Indian metropolitan cities .
- Teacher : The planet Earth is covered with 70% water but still, people do not have enough clean drinking water. Do you have enough water for your use at home?
- Student 1 : In my colony water only comes after three days.
- Teacher 2 : How does water come to your house?
- Student 1 : Through Tankers
- Student 2 : In my house water comes through pipes but it is only one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. During that time everybody is busy filling water.

- Teacher : How do you store water?
- Student3 : We have big buckets and tubs. We fill each possible container.
- Teacher : Are there some ways through which we can avoid wasting water?
- Student 4 : Use water from a bucket instead of shower during a bath.
- Student 5 : Do not leave the tap running while brushing teeth.
- Student 6 : Reuse water at home. My mother washes vegetables in a bowl then that water is given to plants.
- Student 7 : Some people get enough water and some others are facing the shortage.
Why?
- Student 8 : How can we save water for our coming generations if we do not have enough water supply now?
- Student 9 : Why can't we use water from the oceans?

Students realized that problem is much more than just water conservation.

- Student 10 : How and what we can do to prevent the ground water depletion?
- Teacher : What steps can you suggest for replenishing and saving ground water?
- Student 4 : Let us put more and more water in the ground so that water reaches ground level.
- Student 12 : Is it a solution or we are wasting more water by doing so?
- Student 6 : We should find ways to treat ocean water and make it drinkable that can solve the drinking water problem.
- Student 8 : We can make it rain more often. We have observed that we get much less rain now so if it will rain more somehow we can maintain ground water level.
- Teacher : How can we make it rain more?
- Student 6 : By taking care of pollution if we do not pollute the environment water cycle will function properly and it will rain more.

Analysis 2:

This discussion shows that children carefully observe like how water is reused and conserved in their homes. They are keen observers of their surroundings and they shared many examples. Question like “Some people get enough water and some others are facing the shortage. Why?” clearly indicates that children are thinking about unequal distribution of resources in our country. They tend to analyze the context from different perspectives. It stimulates critical thinking about these real-life issues. Children were able to look at the bigger picture of pollution, untimely and less rain leading to water scarcity. They also understood that these issues are interrelated. These lessons teach young minds important life-long skills. The other interesting question asked by a child was “Why can't we use water from the oceans?” Such thoughts and new ideas generate curiosity among children and

further may encourage in hypothesis formation and experimentation to work towards finding solutions for these.

Children are constructing knowledge from their experiences, exploration or inferred from other children's dialogues. This constant construction of knowledge is going on in the minds of children all the time. This is called as the 'active nature of learning' by Jean Piaget, that is, children construct knowledge rather than simply receiving or storing it.

Example 3 Encouraging Question Raising Skills in Children

Concept : Menstruation

Class VIII

Teacher : Yesterday we had studied about fertilization in human beings, but in adolescent age group, fertilization process does not take place, then what happens?

Silence

Teacher : Why do we use sanitary napkins?

Silence

Teacher : Have you seen advertisements from different sanitary Napkins companies like Whisper, Stayfree etc. on television?

After few minutes

Student1 : Yes

Student 2 : (hesitantly) We use napkins during periods.

Teacher : Have all girls begun their menstruation process or not? Please raise hands those who have.

About 26 girls out of 40 raised their hands.

Teacher : Do you have any query about this process? Do you want to ask any questions?

Student 3 : In a workshop in school, few months back, we were introduced to sanitary napkins. They also told us how to wear/use it.

Student 1 : Why does this happen every month?

Student 4 : Why does it last for 3 to 4 days?

Student 5 : What will happen if this unfertilized egg remains in our body and it Does not come out?

Student 6 : Why is it important to maintain hygiene during the time of menstruation?

Student 7 : How can we maintain hygiene at that time?

Student 4 : We had studied in last class that when egg is fertilised then zygote is formed, then when does this zygote turn into boy or girl?

Student 8 : Does zygote grow in our stomach?

Student 9 : How are doctors able to tell whether the embryo is boy or girl?

- Students 10 : How are twins born?
- Student 11 : Why are there twin girls, twin boys or twin boy and girl? How does it happen?
- Student 12 : My mother still uses napkins. Do periods start after the birth of child again?

The teacher recorded their questions and answered their questions one by one patiently in the following two classes.

Analysis 3

Generally, teachers are hesitant in teaching topics on human reproductive system. They tend to cover the topic quickly without going into too many details. When a class teacher of these children was interviewed, she replied that “I never learned anything about sex, not even basics of reproduction, when I was in elementary school and it turned out fine”. Another teacher replied that “It is not necessary to learn everything at school. Somethings we learn with age”. In contrast to these teachers’ comments, the above example clearly shows that children have lots of questions. They only needed an initial support and encouragement. Once they realised that teacher is answering their questions, without feeling shy, they opened up. In fact, there were too many questions. Teacher took two additional hours for answering their questions. In this case it is seen that children’s dialogues were in the form of questions. There were many girls in class who were going through the process of menstruation, but they did not know the correct scientific basis behind it. Thus, dialogues with children enhanced awareness and knowledge about the concept. Through dialogues, students’ and teachers’ exchange of ideas happen which lead to develop their capabilities, skills and expansion of their understanding. They learn from one another and deepen understanding on the subject matter.

Example 4 Small Group – Children Learning Through Interactions

Topic : **Acids and Bases**

Class VII

Children were divided into small groups with 8 children in each group. Some items were listed on Blackboard like curd, vinegar, baking soda, soap solution, lemon juice... Children were expected to guess their taste and decide their nature as acidic or basic and also add to the list. The following is an excerpt of one of the groups in the class:

Student 1 : (Reading from the list on board) lemon and curd are sour in taste.

Student 2 : Vinegar is also Sour

Student 3 : Baking soda is not sour, it is bitter.

Student 4 : Soap solution.

Silence

Student1 : Last week I spilled dal on my school shirt. When I washed with soap

- the yellow (turmeric) stain turned into red.
- Student 5 : That we all know, but what is the taste of soap solution?
- Student 6 : It does not smell citric. It must be bitter thus, alkaline in nature.
- Student 7 : Bitter tasting substances are bases or their nature is basic or alkaline.
- Student 8 : Is it possible to taste all the substances to find out their nature?
- Student 2 : No. No.
- Student 3 : Some acids are poisonous.
- Student 5 : Like toilet cleaner.
- Student 2 : That is acidic in nature and that is poisonous too.
- Student 3 : If it can clean floors by removing tough stains then it can damage our organs also.
- Student 2 : Let us add to the given list.
- Student 8 : Bleach is alkaline.
- Student 6 : My grandmother takes '*Digene*' tablet when she has acidity.
- Student 4 : It is alkaline, as it neutralizes acidity in stomach.
- Student 7 : Pepsi and Colas are alkaline.
- Student 4 : ORS is alkaline
- Student 3 : ORS...
- Student 5 : It is solution of sugar, salt and water and given during diarrhea.
- Student 1 : It is taken to rehydrate our body.
- Student 2 : One can drink normal water to hydrate our body, then what is the purpose of ORS?
- Student 6 : My younger sister had it when she had cholera.
- Student 2 : Cholera, why does it happen?

Analysis 4:

It helped teacher in identifying misconceptions such as 'Pepsi and Colas are alkaline in nature'. Children were discussing the cases that they have seen at their homes like washing of the stained shirt and grandmother using antacid tablets. Children were sharing their knowledge with peers like listing acidic and alkaline substances. Questions asked during discussion such as 'One can drink normal water to hydrate our body then, what is the purpose of ORS?' were unexpected. It also indicated that children are thinking out of the box. The discussion also facilitated children to think about what is cholera and how it is caused? Such dialogues stimulate thinking among children. In this small group children were expressing their thoughts (dialogues) freely. Small groups provide everyone ample opportunities to express. Children are constructing their knowledge from interacting with others. Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, also emphasized the idea of learning through our interactions and communications with others (Social Constructivism). In a classroom context, learning happens through interactions with peers and teachers. Teachers are expected to create opportunities for meaningful exchange of dialogues in classroom. It may facilitate

abstract learning processes. Through this process everyone learns – a few sharing their existing knowledge, others build on that knowledge.

Challenges faced while engaging Children with Dialogues

The following are challenges faced while engaging children with dialogues:

Limited Participation: Dialogues with children are supposed to be an open and active participation by all. Sometimes, it became a limited dialogue between any two to three members and the remaining children silently sitting and inactive.

Noise in classroom: A large class size of 50 children creates hindrances in allowing dialogues with children. At times, class becomes too noisy and disorganized. Children tend to speak with each other without listening to others. In such scenarios it is not possible to continue.

Individual differences among students: There were different kinds of children in a large class – outspoken, shy and reserved. Some children were afraid of being wrong if they spoke up. Some others were intimidated by the dominant peers and so did not speak. Every child needs the time to get familiar with the concept before participating. However, it was observed that more and more children participated after a few classes, and almost everyone wanted to put their views forward.

Implications for Science Teaching- Learning Process

The use of dialogues in science teaching learning process has the following implications:

Building Awareness: In a group activity, children are exposed to new information and ideas presented by other peers and/ or teacher, thereby encouraging building awareness about different concepts. There may be few children who might not have any information about certain topics but they can hear others and build their awareness.

Eliciting Misconceptions of Scientific Concepts: It provides opportunities for connecting with previous knowledge and experiences. During dialogues with children, their misconceptions are unearthed, which may be addressed to by their teachers, either by correcting them or modifying them. It provides opportunities to clarify thoughts by encouraging children and teachers to ask new questions thus, promoting development of the conceptual knowledge.

Connecting Learning to Everyday Life Experiences: Children, through their dialogues ,are able to connect what they learn in school, to their own life. It allows students to interact with the subject matter. At the same time, the process encourages children to carry knowledge

from school settings to their lives outside of school, thus, minimizing the gap between ‘school knowledge’ and ‘everyday knowledge’. It also affirms role of children as co-creators of knowledge in classroom.

Understanding Multiple Perspectives: Engaging children with dialogues allows for the consideration of several ideas and points of views. It provides exposure to multiple perspectives, and to understand how well children empathize with perspectives other than their own.

Promoting Collaborative Learning: Children learn in groups with each other. They learn to speak up as well as learn to listen and value others’ opinions. By working in large and small groups, children learn to value their ideas and gradually taking more responsibility for their learning. It helps in promoting and understanding of the collaborative nature of doing science.

Developing life-long skills: Dialogues in classroom encourage personally meaningful ideas and the use of everyday language rather than focusing on the correct answers and the use of textbook language. Other than use of everyday language, children learn tolerance for others, attentiveness for listening, and being respectful. Active participation by children also promotes respect for children’s voices and experiences. It helps them learn the processes and habits of democratic discourse. It develops the capacity for the clear communication skills of ideas and meaning. It improves their ability to think critically. These life-long skills are developed among children which are necessary and important for life beyond classrooms.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that dialogues with children should be included in subjects like science. The learning through dialogues, enables children to express their thinking and opinion to others. At the same time, children take turn to speak, thus learn powerful norms and skills for collaboration such as listening, adding to others’ contributions, and even disagreeing. During this exchange of ideas, children find alternatives, change ideas and even negotiate meanings. For effective use of dialogues there should not be any fear. They should be free to ask questions, express their ideas and even reject an opinion on the basis of evidence. Teachers play a significant role in creating a classroom climate by providing enough opportunities, giving them enough time and value to each and every response, appreciating the participation and by being mindful. Dialogues in science classroom also serve an excellent way of concept development by eliciting misconceptions and clarifying doubts. There are times when children deviate from the given concept/ topic, thus for the teacher, it is important to keep track of the discussion. It ensures and increases the engagement of children and helps them to retain the information much better. It deepens their understanding especially through hands-on application--based learning opportunities. Furthermore, it enables children to invent,

create, imagine, take risks and dig for deeper and different meanings and perspectives of a concept.

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