



Dialogue as a Space of Relationship

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What is it?

Dialogue as a space of relationship describes an approach mediated by dialogue which takes inspiration from the philosophy of dialogue - a branch of contemporary Anglo-European philosophy founded by Martin Buber - and from transdisciplinarity – according to the perspective proposed by Basarab Nicolescu, contemporary Romanian physicist and philosopher. The approach to dialogue as a space of relationship takes a transcultural (across cultural groups) and transdisciplinary (across disciplines) perspective. In this view, dialogue becomes a space of relationship, more than *for* it, a space *between, across and beyond* both cultures and disciplines. This implies that dialogue and relationship are connected: dialogue needs relationship to be realized; at the same time, dialogue creates relationship. Dialogue may also become the relationship itself. Therefore, the space of relationship is not necessarily a common ground, as dialogue and relationship may provide the space in which cultures and disciplines meet.

Who uses the concept?

Although the notion of dialogue as a tool for building relationship seems common among scholars of communication, practitioners of dialogue and within the philosophy of dialogue, the perspective of dialogue as a space of relationship has been rarely investigated. As this approach is focused on relationships, in addition to cultures and disciplines, it might also be addressed to different contexts, such as religions - thus, different religious traditions and beliefs - and philosophies, either with Anglo-European, or with non-Anglo-European orientations.

Fit with intercultural dialogue?

The approach to dialogue as a space of relationship relates closely to intercultural dialogue. In fact, it could not be a transcultural approach (between, across and beyond cultures) without being intercultural. The intercultural and transcultural perspectives are complementary and integrate with one other. Participants create a space of relationship in order to engage in intercultural dialogue.

What work remains?

This approach is new, and has been rarely investigated, thus much work remains on the possible implications in terms of learning and teaching to build a space of relationship mediated by dialogue. Theory and praxis go together in this approach, as study allows us to understand this perspective, and what we experience through dialogue permits us to comprehend this approach. The goal is to promote an attitude to dialogue as a “lifestyle”, either in the academic context, or beyond, and far more broadly, in everyday life.

Resources

- Buber, M. (1937). *I and Thou* (R. G. Smith, Trans.). Edinburgh, UK: T. and T. Clark.
- Mangano, M. F. (2015). Dialogue as a common ground between, across and beyond cultures and disciplines: A case study of transcultural and transdisciplinary communication lectures for graduate and undergraduate students. In N. Haydari & P. Holmes (Eds.), *Intercultural case studies* (pp 73-86). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.
- Nicolescu, B. (2002). [A new vision of the world: Transdisciplinarity](#) (excerpt from *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity*).