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# Rethinking the Work: Fresh Perspectives on Residential Social Justice Education

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## Intergroup Dialogue:

The goal of intergroup dialogue is sustained communication across difference, in an effort to increase student's self-awareness and agency. Typical dialogue models last 8-12 weeks, though many tenets of these conversations can be adopted, including the aspects below and in the chart. Some foundational skills to create a deep, authentic dialogue:

Relate: Listen.

Affirm other's experiences

Share similar.

Ask: Open Ended questions for clarification& to explore speakers intentions

Pan: Pay Attention Now to identity dynamics and name them

Share: Link your head and heart. Link your narratives to others. Share your triggers and feelings

### % of Time Spent:

Foundations of Identity and Social Justice- 10%

Trust Building and Assessing Vulnerability- 25%

Dialogue Skill Building- 25%

Discussing Hot Topics (can be local, global, or personally experiential): 40%

### Safe Space, Brave Space:

Creating a "safe space" aims to encourage a space where students feel safe to disclose and be vulnerable. However, on the flip side it also sometimes translates to students with dominant identities as a shield against being confronted for things they may say. Instead, a better model may be "brave space," a principle that instead encourages students to lean into discomfort and share their perspectives with courage, with discourse as the ultimate aim.

## Theater of the Oppressed:

ToTo originated in Brazil in the 1970s. Augusto Boal, the creator of ToTo, was inspired by the works of Paulo Freire that aimed for dialogic forms of learning and education. Boal adopted these into theater, with the aim to create theater that communities could interact with, participate in, and use to share their experiences.

### Boal’s Methods:

Boal examined many theater methods to allow communities to come together and process injustice. Here are a few useful ones to use with students:

Image Theater: In Image theater, participants strike still poses to represent different aspects of a topic or principle.

Combining all images together creates a visual representation of the spectactors' experience

Forum Theater: Forum theater allows audience members to provide suggestions or hop up and change the action of a scene to work through a problem or issue. A pre-made skit provides the background action.

Invisible Theater:

Invisible theater is performed in a public space, where people watching do not realize the action taking place is theater and not reality. This idea has been adapted into flash mobs in recent years.

## Examples in Residence Life:

Here are some examples of how we have used these techniques and other techniques informed by the pedagogical underpinnings of this work.

### RA Training:

Small Group Processing Dialogue Groups (Mixed Identity and Affinity Spaces)

Forum Theater: Bias, Conflict Resolution & Confrontation

### Staff Pro Devo:

Staff Standards Dialogue

Power & Privilege in Work Dialogue

Image Theater: Explore themes around SJ and identity, values, or position descriptions

## Resources:

Adams, M. (Eds.) (2010). Readings for diversity and social justice. New York: Routledge

Boal, A. (1985). Theater of the oppressed. New York: Theatre Communications Group.

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Herder and Herder.

Landreman, L. M. (Eds). (2013). The Art of Effective Facilitation. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC

Maxwell, K., Nagda, R., Thompson, M. (2011). Facilitating intergroup dialogues: Bridging differences, catalyzing change. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing

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