Understanding Facilitation: A Study of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviors in Intergroup Dialogue Facilitation

Leasa Evinger
Clemson University, levinge@clemson.edu

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UNDERSTANDING FACILITATION: A STUDY OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS IN INTERGROUP DIALOGUE FACILITATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership

by Leasa Kowalski Evinger
May 2014

Presented to:
Dr. Tony Cawthon, Committee Chair
Dr. Leslie Gonzales
Dr. Cassie Quigley
Dr. Cheryl Warner
ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher education have recently articulated the value of creating environments where diverse individuals can interact. However, “educators have been challenged to articulate clearly the educational purposes and benefits of diversity” (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002, p. 330). Intergroup dialogue is one approach that has been utilized in academic settings to further social justice education (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). This approach “combines experiential learning and dialogic bridge-building methods with critical analysis of socially constructed group differences and the systems of stratification that give rise to intergroup conflicts and social injustice” (p. 10). While there is a body of intergroup dialogue research, particularly related to diversity outcomes experienced by participants (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Gurin, Nagda, & Sorenson, 2011; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Holley, Larson, Adelman, & Trevino, 2007; Miller & Donner, 2000), there is a dearth of research on dialogue facilitation.

This study served to extend the body of research by using qualitative inquiry to represent how Peer Dialogue Facilitators articulate and demonstrate knowledge, skills and behaviors that are necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. The study utilized a case study approach to provide an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). The bounded system in this case was Peer Dialogue Facilitators, who are responsible for facilitating sessions of the New Student Dialogue program, at Clemson University. Five pairs of co-
facilitators were observed throughout the New Student Dialogue program. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also participated in interviews and shared information about their facilitation experience in class discussions.

Results and discussion illuminate the main categories of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated and articulated were necessary for effective dialogue facilitation. Knowledge, skills and behaviors had some discrete themes, but the majority of findings indicated the overlapping nature of these categories. The integration of knowledge, skills and behaviors is essential to the facilitation of a fluid and dynamic environment that must be created for effective intergroup dialogue facilitation.
DEDICATION

For all those who believe that dialogue can change lives – one person and one dialogue at a time.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to share my heartfelt appreciation for those who made this dissertation possible. First, I would like to express my gratitude for Dr. Tony Cawthon, my chair and advisor. He provided me with the best possible balance of freedom and prompting to ensure that I met my goals. I appreciate that he always seemed to know what to say and when to challenge me to draw out my best work.

My committee members Dr. Cassie Quigley, Dr. Cheryl Warner, and Dr. Leslie Gonzales provided specific coaching and guidance throughout the process. Each challenged me to think about something that would hone the research study and/or provided me with a resource that would take the study to the next level. Each of their respective areas of expertise greatly improved the study.

I would like to thank the participants of this study for allowing me to become a part of their lives and for sharing their time and talents with me. This cohort of Peer Dialogue Facilitators proved over and over that they know best what they do. I am honored to have a glimpse into your facilitation and more so your passion and love for dialogue. I want to specially thank Marie for always refusing to work within the confines of instructions. As a result, a very simple comment made during member checking changed the course of data analysis in significant and amazing ways.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and support. I have felt your prayers and your encouragement throughout the PhD process. Knowing that I had your love and support made it possible for me to "keep
trying.” But most importantly, I am grateful to Nathan for the immense sacrifices he made to give me the time, the space, and the energy to reach a final product.
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Intergroup dialogue has been used in a variety of contexts, including academic and community settings, to further a number of outcomes. These outcomes may include conflict resolution, intercultural understanding, multicultural competency, furtherance of democratic goals, perspective taking, and others. Dessel and Rogge (2008) discussed twelve research studies that were completed between 1997-2006 in both academic and community settings to provide a review of the empirical research on intergroup dialogue. This time period yielded a number of applicable studies that focused on community issues, such as navigation of racial tensions and misunderstanding between Arab and Jewish populations, as well as studies in a variety of academic settings that furthered social justice education through the use of intergroup dialogue.

Intergroup dialogue is defined in several ways. Dessel and Rogge (2008) stated that intergroup dialogue is “a facilitated group experience that may occur once or may be sustained over time and is designed to give individuals and groups a safe and structured opportunity to explore attitudes about polarizing societal issues” (p. 201). Dessel, Rogge, and Garlington (2006), in their study of the use of intergroup dialogue in the training of social workers, described the process as “a facilitated community experience designed to provide a safe yet communal space to express anger and indignation about injustice” (p. 303). Dessel et al. (2006) cited the ability for dialogue to engage people in conversations that advance advocacy, justice, and social change. In yet another context, Zúñiga (2003) described the intergroup dialogue approach as one that “combines experiential learning and dialogic bridge-building methods with critical analysis of socially constructed group
differences and the systems of stratification that give rise to intergroup conflicts and social injustice” (p. 10).

Zúñiga’s (2003) definition serves as the primary basis for understanding the intergroup dialogue program discussed in this study, which has a strong focus on experiential learning and addressing issues of social justice. Zúñiga (2003) outlined intergroup dialogue processes in more detail through the emphasis of building bridges amongst individuals with different backgrounds within our socially stratified society. Intergroup dialogue can enhance understanding by exploring areas of privilege and oppression, developing relationships, and fostering a call to action in areas of equity and social justice. Intergroup dialogue begins with participants’ knowledge and awareness of their own social identities. Participants are then able to question, challenge, and deconstruct difficult topics around social identity that may engender conflict.

Three interconnected pedagogical processes, which inform a four-stage educational design, can be incorporated in an approach to intergroup dialogue (Zúñiga, 2003; Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). The first process is “sustained communication” in which in-person group dialogue allows participants to listen, question, take risks, and openly challenge one another’s viewpoints. Achieving “sustained communication” requires a facilitator to successfully establish ground rules and trust that serve as the foundation of future conversations. The next process is “critical social awareness” where group members establish a shared vocabulary and analyze assumptions or stereotypes that may be present amongst group members. Finally, the “bridge building” process allows participants to identify underlying tensions and disconnections, take responsibility for an understanding of the “other,” and take action towards countering social injustice. Translated into four
steps of education, intergroup dialogue becomes a process of forming and building relationships, exploring differences and commonalities, exploring hot topics, and building alliances.

**Statement of the Problem**

Institutions of higher education have recently articulated the value of creating environments where diverse individuals can interact, but “educators have been challenged to articulate clearly the educational purposes and benefits of diversity” (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002, p. 330). Particularly, in response to criticism about affirmative action practices at the University of Michigan, administrators challenged whether structural diversity made a difference and further if interactions within the classroom were enough to provide educational outcomes related to diversity (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). Strong research designs, including use of control groups (Gurin et al., 2004) as well as multi-institutional data sources and longitudinal data (Gurin et al., 2002) brought credibility to results that indicated a positive affect for intergroup dialogue. The highest gains related to informal intentional interactions outside of the classroom. These studies, however, focused only on educational outcomes for dialogue participants.

A number of other studies noted in the current literature review also focused on participant outcomes. Dessel, Rogge, and Garlington (2006) evaluated the use of dialogue to provide training for social work students on addressing conflict. Nagda (2006) evaluated five cohorts of students within a social welfare program to investigate communication processes in intergroup dialogue. Hess, Rynczak, Minarik, and Landrum-Brown (2010) completed a qualitative inquiry of a dialogue course at a Midwestern
institution that brings students who identify as socially liberal and conservative-leaning together around the topic of politics. Class discussions engaged students in conversations about abortion, foreign policy and gay marriage. Student learning and experience was then analyzed through student journals, class discussions, and evaluations. Both positive outcomes (including seeing themselves and others in new ways and increased listening) and negative outcomes (including discomfort factors and issues related to the process) were illuminated in this study. Further, Mayhew and Fernández (2007) utilized the Measure of Classroom Moral Practices (MCMP) scale to analyze the pedagogical practices of five courses that included social-justice influenced pedagogies and curriculum. The results of this study provided implications for the design of academic setting courses instituted to further social justice outcomes.

While these studies have informed the current literature related to diversity outcomes in intergroup dialogue, there are several limitations that should be noted. Many studies within the current literature included a frequent use of convenience sampling and had a lack of random assignment (Dessel & Rogge, 1998). Outside of the multi-institution study (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004), most studies incorporated only qualitative data. Dessel, Rogge, and Garlington (2006) challenged future researchers to include quantitative data as well as qualitative data. Finally, Hess et al. (2010) commented on use of one-time assessments rather than longitudinal designs.

Few studies have focused on the experience of facilitators in intergroup dialogue settings. Recent research has begun to investigate elements of the facilitator experience and impact to facilitators. Maxwell, Chesler, and Nagda (2011) emphasized the facilitative role of social identity in intergroup dialogue. They believed that the exploration of social
identity was crucial to a facilitator’s understanding of self, others, and the world. Maxwell et al. (2011) sought to understand how a group of undergraduate peer facilitators perceived their social identities affecting the facilitation process. The researchers reported the significance that facilitators assigned to social identity in the facilitative role; realizations about their own or others role in power, privilege, and oppression; establishing credibility; and educating others through communicating within and across group differences. Results of Maxwell et al.’s study have implications for future practice in training and development of undergraduate peer facilitators.

**Purpose of Study**

While there is a body of intergroup dialogue research, particularly related to diversity outcomes experienced by participants (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Gurin, Nagda, & Sorenson, 2011; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Holley, Larson, Adelman, & Trevino, 2007; Miller & Donner, 2000), there is a dearth of research on dialogue facilitation. *Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change* (Maxwell, Nagda, & Thompson Eds., 2011), the first known primer on dialogue facilitation, shows “little evidence of systematic efforts to observe how facilitators actually behave or to examine how their behaviors influence the behaviors of intergroup dialogue” (Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands, 2013).

This study served to extend the body of research by using qualitative inquiry to represent how Peer Dialogue Facilitators articulate and demonstrate knowledge, skills and behaviors that are necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. Observations, focus groups and interviews provided in-depth understanding of intergroup dialogue facilitation.
through the lens of Peer Dialogue Facilitators at Clemson University. A case study approach allowed me to gain perspective regarding the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that may contribute to successful intergroup dialogue facilitation, which are useful in the current case and may also be evaluated in additional contexts.

**Research Question**

This research study addressed a gap in the body of literature by seeking to understand the knowledge, skills and behaviors that are necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. The following research question guided this study:

- *How do Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrate and articulate knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation?*

Utilizing a single-institution case study approach, I collected data through dialogue observations, class discussions where dialogue facilitation was debriefed, two-on-one interviews with co-facilitation partners, and one-on-one debriefing interviews with individual Peer Dialogue Facilitators. The case study approach allowed me to probe deeper into the ways that Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated and then described how they used knowledge, skills, and behaviors to effectively facilitate peer-led sessions of intergroup dialogue. The level of depth in a single case served to provide a rich description of Peer Dialogue Facilitators in the current program and has implications for pedagogy in both the training of dialogue facilitation and the construction of experiences for undergraduate student participants.

**Definitions of Terms**

Below are definitions for terms that are used in this research study:
• Agent group – “identity groups advantaged or privileged by historic and/or contemporary socioeconomic structures” (Maxwell, Chesler & Nagda, 2011, p. 164)

• Behaviors – Behaviors, for the purpose of this study, were adapted from the category of “personal awareness” on the PASK assessment (PASK, University of Michigan Press, 7 June 2011). Behaviors are described as largely intuitive or sometimes unconscious actions. While these things could be learned, behaviors are more often attributed to feelings or natural inclinations of Peer Dialogue Facilitators.

• Creative Inquiry – A program at the institutional setting studied which combines engaged learning and undergraduate research. Faculty, staff, and students come together around a common topic for investigation, often with an interdisciplinary focus. Creative Inquiry groups may be short (one semester) or extend for multiple semesters. (Creative Inquiry and Undergraduate Research, http://www.clemson.edu/academics/programs/creative-inquiry/index.html)

• Dialogue Facilitation - “the guidance provided in IGD [intergroup dialogue] to maximize the potential of content-based learning and structured interactions” (Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands, 2013, p. 262). For the purpose of this study, individuals who facilitate dialogue in various settings will be referred to as dialogue facilitators. Participants of this study, who specifically facilitate New Student Dialogues, will be referred to as Peer Dialogue Facilitators.
• GOODTalk – GOODTalk is a ten-week sustained intergroup dialogue experience for faculty and staff. The program seeks to engage participants around topics that are relevant to understanding and facilitating intergroup dialogue. Participants are offered opportunities for personal growth, engage in conversations across difference, and develop basic social justice knowledge. (GOODTalk, http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/diversity-education/good-talk.html)

• Intergroup Dialogue - Zúñiga (2003) described the intergroup dialogue approach as one that “combines experiential learning and dialogic bridge-building methods with critical analysis of socially constructed group differences and the systems of stratification that give rise to intergroup conflicts and social injustice” (p. 10).

• Knowledge – Knowledge, included in the PASK assessment (PASK, University of Michigan Press, 7 June 2011), describes a variety of things that a dialogue facilitator would know that are helpful for dialogue facilitation. For the purpose of this study, knowledge refers to anything Peer Dialogue Facilitators learned through instruction or personal research prior to beginning dialogue facilitation. Peer Dialogue Facilitators received one semester of pre-training through the Creative Inquiry three-semester series prior to beginning dialogue facilitation. Additionally, many Peer Dialogue Facilitators sought out additional knowledge on particular topics of interest or areas of social justice that they had chosen to explore further.
- New Student Dialogue - New Student Dialogues are a required component of the introductory class for all incoming first year and transfer students. Dialogues are comprised of 25 students, and over a period of two hours the group will explore and process the significance and salience of social identity. New Student Dialogues address a range of social issues involving but not limited to race, spirituality, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and ability. (New Student Dialogues, http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/diversity-education/one-clemson.html)

- One Clemson – One Clemson was the program that preceded New Student Dialogues. This one-time program was intended to provide mass training on one day to all incoming students. The aim of this 90-minute program was to “strengthen our sense of community by encouraging respectful dialogue and increasing awareness of different cultures and backgrounds.” (“One Clemson: Yours, Mine, and Hours”, http://blogs.clemson.edu/barkers-blog/2008/03/march-10-2008)

- Peer Dialogue Facilitator – In this study, Peer Dialogue Facilitators [PDFs] are a team of undergraduate students whose primary role is to enhance campus climate through programs which improve understanding, tolerance and communication among students. PDFs facilitate intergroup dialogue for the student body in an effort to develop essential communication and leadership skills, which are critical for living and working in diverse and inclusive communities. Peer Dialogue Facilitators foster mutual understanding, compassion, awareness, and meaningful relationships among students from
different social identities. (Peer Dialogue Facilitators, http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/diversity-education/peer-dialogue.html) For the purpose of this study, individuals who facilitate dialogue in various settings will be referred to as dialogue facilitators. Participants of this study, who specifically facilitate New Student Dialogues, will be referred to as Peer Dialogue Facilitators.

- **Skills** – The PASK assessment (PASK, University of Michigan Press, 7 June 2011) lists skills as things that dialogue facilitators do when facilitating dialogue. For the purpose of this study, skills can be taught. Peer Dialogue Facilitators described skills as specific tools that they used for dialogue facilitation.

- **Social identity** – refers to “group memberships based on physical or social characteristics ascribed by self or others that locate people within societal structures that confer advantage/privilege or disadvantage/oppression” (Maxwell, Chesler & Nagda, 2011, p. 163)

- **Target group** – “identity groups disadvantaged or disenfranchised by a system of oppression that does not favor their group” (Maxwell, Chesler & Nagda, 2011, p. 164)

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual grounding for this study is rooted in appreciative inquiry (AI) (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) described appreciate inquiry (AI) as both a methodology and a philosophy. An appreciative approach can transform organizational processes of strategic planning,
assessment and culture change from problem-based to highly affirmative. The positive, strengths-based approach of appreciative inquiry therefore assumes that organizations and processes are vital and thriving with underlying potential that can be brought forth through questioning the best of what an organization has to offer (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) described appreciative inquiry through the concept of a positive core. They articulated that the power of the positive core is in its mode of evaluation.

Human systems grow in the direction of what they persistently ask questions about, and this propensity is strongest and most sustainable when the means and ends of inquiry are positively correlated. The single most important action a group can take to liberate the human spirit and consciously construct a better future is to make the positive core the common and explicit property of all. (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 9)

Therefore, the conceptual framework of appreciative inquiry is an appropriate fit for the current case. I believe that Peer Dialogue Facilitators are not only capable, but are most effective, at having high level conversations about difficult topics with their peers. This assumption is central to this study. Through their own lens, Peer Dialogue Facilitators are the best equipped to articulate and demonstrate specific knowledge, skills and behaviors that are necessary for dialogue facilitation.

Further, Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) described the role of AI in social construction of reality, “especially with its emphasis on metaphor and narrative, relational ways of knowing, on language, and on its potential as a source of generative theory” (p. 8).
The use of appreciative inquiry for this case study allowed the researcher and participants to co-construct the meanings of definitions, such as those of knowledge, skills, and behaviors, as well as frame a shared understanding of the data. The researcher’s subjectivity statement as well as descriptions of data collection and member checking activities (provided in Chapter 3) gives life to this process as the research is described.

**Research Design and Methodology**

The current study employed a qualitative design. Merriam (2009) articulated that researchers often use qualitative inquiry because “there is a lack of theory or an existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon” (p. 15). Qualitative research then provides opportunities for researchers to build concepts, hypotheses or theories from available data. Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands (2013) called attention to a deficit within the existing research to observe how facilitators behave. In this particular study, qualitative design allowed me to test the assumptions of current research by unearthing specific examples of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that were demonstrated or articulated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators in the facilitation of intergroup dialogue.

A qualitative case study approach was utilized in this study. Yin (2008) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). The case study approach therefore provides an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). In this case study, the bounded system is Peer Dialogue Facilitators, who are responsible for facilitating sessions of the New Student Dialogue program at Clemson University. By defining a
specific case, I was able to provide a richly descriptive analysis of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors demonstrated and articulated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators.

Case studies, with a focus on many variables and their interactions, can be longitudinal (Merriam, 2009). Dessel, Rogge, and Garlington (2006) noted the need for longitudinal study in future research of intergroup dialogue settings. While the current study is meant to capture one snapshot, the research could later be extended to include multiple cohorts of Peer Dialogue Facilitators as study participants.

Case study design (Merriam, 2009) also aligns well with the conceptual framework of appreciative inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry, which focuses on drawing out the positive core of organizations, provides opportunities to capture and capitalize on the best that an organization has to offer (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The current study used case study methodology to view how Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrate and articulate knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. It is my belief that Peer Dialogue Facilitators, through their own facilitator lens, are best equipped to provide a picture of how effective intergroup dialogue facilitation occurs.

As a researcher, I employ an interpretivist theoretical framework or paradigm. Glesne (2011) provided a description of the interpretivist theoretical framework. The epistemology that informs this framework involves the construction of meaning through social reality. We interact with the world and work with the world to build understanding. For example, individuals from different cultural contexts may perceive the same event in different ways. It is important to understand how people interpret the world and make meaning of the people, objects, and events around them because this interpretation impacts decisions that we make based on the information that is presented to us. A myriad
of interactions result in a particular experience for each individual through use of this framework. Further, appreciative inquiry’s focus on the underlying expertise of its participants (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) aligns with my desire as a researcher to seek to understand the experiences of my participants as they make meaning of them.

My views are also shaped by Crotty’s (1998) description of social constructionism, which emphasized the embedded nature of people and environments, whereby knowledge is contextual and constructed through both our individual and collective lenses. As a researcher, I make meaning through my interaction and engagement with my research participants. A social constructionist framework also lends itself to emergent qualitative design, leaving space for researcher and participants to co-construct the research study. The embedded nature of my participation in this study, which is explained fully in the researcher’s subjectivity statement, sheds light on this co-constructed experience.

Site Description

The current study reported on the specific knowledge, skills and behaviors that were demonstrated and articulated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators in intergroup dialogue facilitation. The site of the research involved the New Student Dialogue program at Clemson University. The New Student Dialogue program sought to engage new undergraduate students, both freshmen and transfers, in intergroup dialogues that provide an opportunity for experiential learning around one or more social identities (i.e., socio-economic status, religion, gender, etc.). New Student Dialogues focused on teaching students about intergroup communication processes, identifying salient social identities, and specifically implementing subject content around one or more selected social identities.
Significance of the Study

The current body of knowledge related to intergroup dialogue largely focuses on intergroup dialogue participants. The largest number of studies address specific diversity outcomes that are experienced through participation in a variety of intergroup dialogue programs and settings (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Gurin, Nagda, & Sorenson, 2011; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Holley, Larson, Adelman, & Trevino, 2007; Miller & Donner, 2000).

Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change (Maxwell, Nagda, & Thompson Eds., 2011), the first known primer on dialogue facilitation, begins to tell the story of intergroup dialogue facilitation. However, this research shows “little evidence of systematic efforts to observe how facilitators actually behave or to examine how their behaviors influence the behaviors of intergroup dialogue” (Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands, 2013).

Additional research is needed to add to the current body of research on dialogue facilitation. Nagda and Maxwell (2011) relied upon research and practice to define facilitation competencies. The current study extended this knowledge by providing a rich description of how knowledge, skills, and behaviors used for intergroup dialogue facilitation are demonstrated and articulated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Implications exist for future training, coaching and evaluation of dialogue facilitators based on specific understanding of how successful facilitation occurs.

Further, the current research indicated that some may doubt the capacity of undergraduate students to design and implement social justice curriculum with their peers (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler & Cytron-Walker, 2007). While Nagda and Maxwell (2011) also
studied undergraduate peer facilitators, the role of Peer Dialogue Facilitator as undergraduate student and peer is a key component of the current study as well. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were equipped through their Creative Inquiry experience to be proficient in creating and implementing dialogue curriculum. Further, I have assumed throughout this study that Peer Dialogue Facilitators are not only competent but are best equipped to engage in difficult topics around social justice with their peers. The use of appreciative inquiry as a conceptual framework lends credibility to the descriptions that Peer Dialogue Facilitators provided about their own facilitation.

**Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five individual chapters. Chapter One, Background of the Study, introduces the research study being conducted and outlines the purpose of the study, research question, definition of terms, conceptual framework, research design and methodology, and significance of the study. Chapter Two, Literature Review, illuminates the current body of research on intergroup dialogue, providing insight into both the outcomes and experiences known for participants and facilitators. This chapter also includes a comprehensive review of the conceptual framework that serves as the foundation of this study. Chapter Three, Methodology and Pilot Study, outlines the research design, study participants, research question, data sources and collection, and data analysis of the current study as well as provides an analysis of the pilot study, which has informed the current research. This chapter also provides institutional context for the site studied and identifies the roles of the researcher. Finally, Chapter Four addresses the results of the study and Chapter Five presents the conclusions and implications from the current research study being conducted.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses a review of the current literature that has been published on the topic of intergroup dialogue. The literature review chapter is organized into specific categories that address the topic being studied. This chapter begins with definitions and descriptions of intergroup dialogue as a communication process. Next, research that specifically focuses on the participant experience is shared. Limited research available on the experiences of facilitators is then shared. Current research on facilitation helps to inform the construction of this study and was utilized in the formulation of the program named in the specific case. Gaps in the current literature are illuminated to provide space and justification for the current study. Finally, a review of other undergraduate peer programs is shared as a comparison. In addition, this chapter provides a comprehensive review of the conceptual framework that serves as the foundation for this study.

Intergroup Dialogue

Definitions

Intergroup dialogue is a communication method that promotes facilitated opportunities for groups of diverse individuals to speak to one another across areas of difference (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). Zúñiga (2003) described the intergroup dialogue approach as one that “combines experiential learning and dialogic bridge-building methods with critical analysis of socially constructed group differences and the systems of stratification that give rise to intergroup conflicts and social injustice” (p. 10). Participants and facilitators are engaged in conversations that challenge group members to unpack
social identity, discuss the role of power and privilege in society, and address systems of inequality through a social justice lens (Zúñiga, 2003; Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002).

Dessel and Rogge (2008) stated that intergroup dialogue is “a facilitated group experience that may occur once or may be sustained over time and is designed to give individuals and groups a safe and structured opportunity to explore attitudes about polarizing societal issues” (p. 201). Community settings have utilized intergroup dialogue to address interethnic conflict such as those between Arab and Jewish cultures. Research has identified that perceived differences, rather than actual differences, often drive intergroup prejudice. Intergroup dialogue provides a venue to address intergroup conflict through a facilitated conversation that allows individuals to learn about the perspectives of others and to reflect on their own views. This perspective taking may serve to allow participants to examine their own socially constructed assumptions and biases about another identity group.

Intergroup dialogue is also utilized in academic settings. Dessel, Rogge, and Garlington (2006), in their study of the use of intergroup dialogue in the training of social workers, emphasized the use of intergroup dialogue in order to “create an opportunity for critical self-analysis and relational engagement together with systemic and structural change” (p. 305). Dialogue, therefore, offers an opportunity for participants to engage in conversations that advance advocacy, justice, and social change. Miller and Donner (2000) discussed how dialogue could be used to combat racism in the training of social workers.

Gurin, Nagda and Sorensen (2011) operationalized dialogue in a multi-university study conducted involving parallel field experiments where students were assigned to a dialogue group or to a control group. They emphasized that dialogue was not a substitute
word for “talk” and moved beyond debate to facilitate a shared understanding amongst participants. Dialogue therefore requires “learning to listen, to ask questions of others, and to commit to understanding the perspectives of others” (p. 46).

Finally, Nagda and Maxwell (2011) provided a powerful description of intergroup dialogue as a venue for creating conditions that catalyze change. Dialogue seeks to unearth barriers in thinking, feeling, and relating so that there is both a better understanding of inequalities, differences, and conflicts that divide and a stronger foundation for building bridges that may help members of different groups across separations and disconnections (p. 2).

By engaging participants in dialogue, individuals learn how to live and work together for a more equal and just society. Intergroup dialogue, therefore, intervenes in spaces where individuals and groups are not authentically discussing issues of identity and inequality and provides space to bring these conversations into the public discourse.

**Intergroup Communication Processes**

Zúñiga (2003) emphasized the need within our socially stratified society to build bridges amongst individuals with different backgrounds. Dialogue can enhance understanding by exploring areas of privilege and oppression, developing relationships, and fostering a call to action in the areas of equity and social justice. Dialogue begins with participants’ knowledge and awareness of their own social identities. Participants are then able to question, challenge, and deconstruct difficult topics around social identity that may engender conflict.

Three interconnected pedagogical processes, which inform a four-stage educational design, can be incorporated in an approach to intergroup dialogue (Zúñiga, 2003; Zúñiga,
The first process is “sustained communication” in which in-person group dialogue allows participants to listen, question, take risks, and openly challenge one another’s viewpoints. Achieving “sustained communication” requires a facilitator to successfully establish ground rules and trust that serve as the foundation of future conversations. The next process is “critical social awareness” where group members establish a shared vocabulary and analyze assumptions or stereotypes that may be present amongst group members. Finally, “bridge building” encourages participants to embrace conflict in order to identify underlying tensions and disconnections. Participants learn to take responsibility for an understanding of the “other” and move towards action by countering social injustice. Translated into four steps of education, intergroup dialogue becomes a process of forming and building relationships, exploring differences and commonalities, exploring hot topics, and building alliances.

Nagda (2006) further studied intergroup dialogue as a communication process. This communication process centers on “the situational context and interactions people have within the intergroup encounter” (p. 555). A four-factor solution to communication processes emerged through the use of pre- and post-test questionnaires when studying students in a social welfare program. Factors included “alliance building,” “engaging self,” “critical self-reflection,” and “appreciating difference.” Alliance building emphasized a need for participants to see one another displaying openness and vulnerability to confront one another in order to take action towards social justice. Self-promoted personal sharing contributed to appreciation of difference by those who heard personal stories. Participants also engaged in critical self-reflection that examined their own ideas and experiences with privilege, oppression, and inequality. The complexity of the intergroup dialogue
environment demonstrated in this study provides important conceptual lessons in the practice of constructing intergroup conversations.

Several studies of intergroup dialogue have evaluated the extent to which dialogue varies for white participants as compared to participants of color (Miller & Donner, 2000; Nagda, 2006; Holley, Larson, Adelman, & Trevino, 2007). Nagda’s (2006) study of communication processes in intergroup dialogue included a comparison analysis across racial groups. Factor analysis conducted on a pre-test/post-test assessment showed no significant differences across racial groups related to four communication processes (alliance building, engaging self, critical self-reflection, and appreciating difference). Miller and Donner (2000), however, found differences between White students and students of color. Their study used tape-recorded dialogue session transcripts and questionnaires to evaluate participants in a racial dialogue. Miller and Donner (2000) found that more learning opportunities occurred for White students, which was noted to be consistent with research (Smith, 1997 cited in Miller & Donner, 2000) that White students are more likely to gain exposure in new and previously unexposed areas than their student of color counterparts.

Educational Outcomes

Intergroup dialogue has been studied in a number of educational settings and with a variety of constituents. Dessel, Rogge, and Garlington (2006) evaluated the use of dialogue in the training of social work students, primarily for the purpose of addressing conflict. Nagda (2006) evaluated five cohorts of students within a social welfare program to investigate communication processes in intergroup dialogue. Hess, Rynczak, Minarik, & Landrum-Brown (2010) completed a qualitative inquiry of a dialogue course at a
Midwestern institution that brings students who identify as socially liberal and conservative-leaning together around the topic of politics. Class discussions engage students in conversations about abortion, foreign policy and gay marriage. Student learning and experience are then analyzed through student journals, class discussions, and evaluations. Both positive outcomes (including seeing themselves and others in new ways and increased listening) and negative outcomes (including discomfort factors and issues related to the process) were illuminated in this study. Further, Mayhew and Fernández (2007) utilized the Measure of Classroom Moral Practices (MCMP) scale to analyze the pedagogical practices of five courses that include social-justice influenced pedagogies and curriculum. The results of this study provide implications for the design of academic setting courses instituted to further social justice outcomes.

Dialogue participants have experienced a variety of outcomes. Students who participated in conversations around politically-related topics experienced both positive outcomes (including seeing themselves and others in new ways and increased listening) and negative outcomes (including discomfort factors and issues related to the process) in the course of dialogue (Hess et al., 2010). Processes of alliance building, engaging self, critical self-reflection, and appreciating difference were determined in a study designed to investigate communication processes in intergroup dialogue among students in a Social Welfare program (Nagda, 2006). Dessel and Rogge (2008), in their integrative review of intergroup dialogue studies, noted that several of these studies demonstrated outcomes such as conflict resolution, intercultural understanding, multicultural competency, furtherance of democratic goals, and perspective taking.
Dessel and Rogge (1998) noted frequent use of convenience sampling and lack of random assignment. Several studies incorporated data from a single institutional source. For instance, Gurin et al. (2002) utilized single source data from the Michigan Study Survey as well as multi-institutional data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) to evaluate diversity and democratic outcomes related to intergroup dialogue. Both data sources provided consistent results regarding the importance of informal interaction that goes beyond the classroom and is related to more than simply structural diversity. Use of multi-institutional data enhances this study by indicating that this is not something that is happening only on the University of Michigan campus.

**Dialogue Facilitation**

While there is a body of intergroup dialogue research, particularly related to diversity outcomes experienced by participants (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Gurin, Nagda, & Sorenson, 2011; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Holley, Larson, Adelman, & Trevino, 2007; Miller & Donner, 2000), there is a dearth of research on dialogue facilitation. *Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change* (Maxwell, Nagda, & Thompson, 2011) is the first known primer on the topic. The editors of this book draw from experiences with the Multi-University Intergroup Dialogue Research (MIGR, or multi-university study) Project (Gurin, Nagda, & Sorenson, 2011; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013) which served to demonstrate the importance of facilitation through impact on participant experience. Evidence of the multi-university study showed measures of change in quantitative analysis of survey data and qualitative analysis of final papers written by students in the dialogue courses studied. However, the most recent publication of data from the MIGR Project
critiqued the book from Maxwell and colleagues, stating “even that book shows little evidence of systematic efforts to observe how facilitators actually behave or to examine how their behaviors influence the behaviors of intergroup dialogue” (Gurin, Meier, Nagda, & Gurin-Sands, 2013). More research is needed to develop a better understanding of the practice of facilitation and the experience of dialogue facilitators.

**The Role of Dialogue Facilitators**

Dialogue is a facilitated group experience, with a focus on building relationships across differences and promoting goals of social justice that lends itself to learning through a shared group experience (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). Facilitators are not instructors or ‘experts,’ but facilitators are responsible for engaging participants in sharing and reflection that maximizes learning.

Dialogues are often co-facilitated by two individuals who possess different or opposing social identities (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). For example, one facilitator often identifies with an agent (or majority) identity and the other with a target (or minority) identity related to the social identity that the dialogue is meant to address (i.e., in a race or gender dialogue). All participants are able to identify with someone who shares their identity group and has knowledge of the struggles and hopes of their identity group (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007) which allows facilitators to more effectively challenge privilege or stereotypes that are held within their own social identity group (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). Co-facilitators are therefore multipartial, balancing their roles to support all group members (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). In this way, “the co-facilitation alliance provides facilitators a site for enacting and modeling their commitments to intergroup collaboration and mutually beneficial learning”
Following this model, the curriculum for New Student Dialogues at Clemson University is co-constructed by co-facilitators who have been paired by target and agent group identity.

Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands (2013) defined facilitation as “the guidance provided in IGD [intergroup dialogue] to maximize the potential of content-based learning and structured interactions” (p. 262). Dialogic education emphasizes the use of structured activities, readings, and conceptual information to guide group members through listening, sharing, and reflection (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). Experienced facilitators utilize both content and process to illuminate social inequalities, such as power, privilege and oppression, and to help participants talk about controversial issues where social identity and privilege can be further explored.

The learning environment created by intergroup dialogue is highly reciprocal, strengthened by the authentic sharing, questioning and reflecting of all group members. Facilitators are responsible for guiding the learning of participants, and in doing so, learn themselves through the practice of intergroup dialogue (Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands, 2013). Very little, however, is known about the facilitator experience.

Vasques-Scalera (2011) examined by the long-term impacts of intergroup dialogue on facilitators by studying 30 undergraduates between 1.5 and 4.5 years after serving as facilitators in the Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR) at the University of Michigan. Facilitators described the ways in which they drew upon the skills they learned during their facilitation experiences in both personal and professional contexts. For example, facilitators articulated the ways they challenged family members, friends, and co-workers. They also expressed a desire to acknowledge diversity and social justice in the workplace,
regardless of the level of attention to which this was given at the work site. Facilitators in Vasques-Scalera’s study further noted that their participation in IGR could have prepared them to continue their work in social justice by providing a better transition into life beyond the program. More should be understood about this element of the results in order to build upon structures that can assist dialogue facilitators in extending their experiences beyond the scope of a dialogue program.

**Facilitator Behaviors and Competencies**

Maxwell, Nagda, and Thompson (2011) provided the groundwork for the role that dialogue facilitators play in the dialogue setting. Their text, *Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change*, was the first published primer on dialogue facilitation. The following paragraphs will address the research that is available on dialogue facilitation and how this information has shaped the current study.

Nagda and Maxwell (2011) drew upon their joint practice and research knowledge from years of working with intergroup dialogue programs in a critical-dialogic model of intergroup dialogue. A critical-dialogic model is based on frameworks of intergroup contact and intergroup relations, communication, and conflict studies that come from both the fields of multicultural and social justice education. In their introductory chapter, they lay the groundwork for establishing competencies of dialogue facilitators. Nagda and Maxwell (2011) articulated a desire to move beyond the current available research to “connect intergroup dialogue facilitation to the unique, transformative potential of intergroup dialogue and the underlying processes of change in intergroup dialogue” (p. 3).

Nagda and Maxwell (2011) argued simply that facilitation matters. The importance of facilitation has been established through studies that taut a variety of favorable
outcomes for dialogue participants. Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) would likely describe through an appreciative lens that something magical is happening in these spaces. Facilitators play a role in the creation of this magic as they serve as guide to the process, being themselves “intimately connected to the learning process” and being committed to “fostering critical-dialogic communication processes among participants” (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011, p. 6). Nagda and Maxwell outline the specific principles that guide dialogue facilitation under the following three categories:

1. Principle 1: Guiding, Not Just Teaching
2. Principle 2: Empowering, Not Just Being Empowered
3. Principle 3: Attending to Processes, Not Just Procedures

A full description of how these categories address dialogue facilitation can be found in Appendix A.

Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands (2013) presented data from the substudy of the multi-university study, in which twenty intergroup dialogues (ten race-ethnicity and ten gender courses) were analyzed. A portion of the substudy involved videotaped observations of participants and facilitators. Taping facilitators provided a picture of facilitation that included facilitator behaviors, such as speaking engagement, target-agent pairing, and how facilitator behaviors related to student behaviors.

With a focus on speaking engagement (Stassen, Zúñiga, Keehn, Mildred, DeJong, & Varghese, 2013), facilitators were coded for four behaviors: listening and support, reflection and redirection, inquiry, and advocacy. A quantitative rating scale, providing a percentage of the average occurrences of a behavior (per co-facilitator pair) in one-minute coding intervals, confirmed observed behaviors were consistent with dialogic practices.
Behaviors that promote positive interaction were higher, including reflection and redirection (53%), inquiry (22%), and listening and support (16%). Advocacy, which can serve to shut down dialogue, was observed less at 9%. However, the rich description garnered from this study was more powerful in helping the reader to understand potential impact of facilitators on student behaviors.

[Advocacy]...a woman had explained how her religious beliefs affected her political beliefs. The facilitator interjected, ‘I think that the conservative perspective is highly hypocritical when it comes to issues of church and state.’ The woman turned away, seemed hurt, and did not respond. (Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands, 2013, p. 266)

The current study can serve to provide a clear description of the behaviors that Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrate in the dialogue setting, building on the work cited by Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands (2013).

Nagda and Maxwell (2011) described how dialogue serves to bring together different groups. Facilitators are responsible for working together to “create an inclusive learning space that can hold divergent and convergent experiences and perspectives” (p. 7). An ability to do this is predicated on a facilitator’s understanding of their own and others’ social identities. Maxwell, Chesler, and Nagda (2011) emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for facilitators to develop an understanding of multiple and intersecting positionalities. Through an understanding of identity, “facilitators can draw on their multiple social identities to find points of connections with students, to empathize with the identity development and learning process rather than to impose a prescriptive understanding of identity” (p. 174).
As previously mentioned, the construction of New Student Dialogues includes the pairing of co-facilitators based on target and agent identity groups. Target-agent pairing is done in an effort to help facilitators learn across difference (during their first semester of training and instruction) and to have the ability in the dialogue setting to model communication across difference with their co-facilitator. Maxwell, Chesler, and Nagda (2011) studied co-facilitators in race and gender dialogues to understand how facilitators react to target and agent pairing in facilitation and how this impacts their experience in the dialogue setting. Facilitators articulated both challenges and opportunities related to the recognition of their own social identity. While privileged groups articulated a lack of self-awareness that may limit them, subordinate group members felt that stereotypes related to their identity might diminish their credibility in the dialogue setting. It is clear, then, that an importance should be given to the relative credibility and power that must be negotiated in co-facilitation in order to form a collaborative working relationship with one another and their dialogue participants.

Peer Facilitated Learning

Weaver and Pye (2010) studied the complexity of peer-facilitated intervention in a setting where trained nursing students facilitated weekly group psycho-educational sessions and a drop-in clinic for eating issues. This study was conducted to address a gap in the research regarding “the efficacy of peer facilitating within a therapeutic framework” (p. 392) and to better understand the experiences and needs of peer facilitators. A qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with facilitators provided insight into the transformative learning that occurred for facilitators. Participants indicated increased knowledge of eating issues, self, women and society. One participant articulated that she
was able to gain insights into “things (e.g., self-esteem issues) that I had struggled with throughout my own life” (p. 395). Participants also gained skills in public presentation, group process, and leadership that will lend to future professional practice. A melding of experiences that yielded personal and professional benefits has implications for overall preparing facilitators for the workplace, as noted in Vasques-Scalera’s (2011) study of intergroup dialogue facilitators beyond college.

Use of online discussion forums is becoming more prevalent in a world of increasing technology (Ng, Cheung, & Hew, 2012). While limited interaction has been observed as a persistent and widespread problem in online forums, increased interaction has occurred in well-facilitated online discussions. There have been some positive outcomes noted in roles that instructors can play in facilitation; however, Ng, Cheung, and Hew (2012) noted that instructor-facilitated discussion may lead to instructor-centered discussion.

Ng, Cheung, and Hew (2012) evaluated peer facilitation in asynchronous online discussions in order to examine specific peer facilitation techniques that may influence student interaction. An analysis of two cases, through analysis of online discussion transcripts and semi-structure interviews, showed that facilitators used more facilitation techniques than those seen in less active forums. Five specific techniques – including showing appreciation, considering others’ viewpoints, general invitation to contribute, questioning, and challenging others’ points – were stated by participants as having encouraged their interaction in the online forums. Some parallels can be drawn to the types of facilitation competencies that Nagda and Maxwell (2011) noted as prevalent in the critical-dialogic model of intergroup dialogue. Questioning, which occurred when facilitators “asked questions to seek clarification, encourage elaboration, or seek others’

Baran and Correia (2009) also studied student-led facilitation in online discussions. Focusing on the use of online discussions as “platforms for exchanging information, communicating, and supporting learning” (p. 339), researchers gave attention to the different types of pedagogical approaches needed to engage learners in asynchronous online discussions. Students in a Master’s level course, who were required to participate in weekly asynchronous course discussions, were challenged to volunteer for the role of online facilitator. Each participant in this study led a weekly discussion group at least once during the course. Three mini-cases reported in this study showed how different styles of facilitation could serve to promote meaningful dialogue and to produce high levels of participation in online discussions. Baran and Correia (2009) overall found that allowing peer facilitators to guide discussion lead to innovative ideas that best engaged learners and provided “an atmosphere for involvement and commitment” (p. 357). This study provided evidence of the benefits of peer leadership and facilitation that may serve to resolve doubts that were cited by Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler and Cytron-Walker (2007).

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual grounding for this study is rooted in appreciative inquiry (AI) methodology (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Appreciative inquiry is “a positive, strengths-based approach to organization development and change management” (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 1). This approach turns organizational development and change management on its head by negating that organizations are problems to be solved but rather frames them as vital and thriving with
underlying potential that can be brought forth through questioning the best of what an organization has to offer.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has been described by Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) as an approach to change that can transform organizational processes of strategic planning, assessment and culture change from problem-based to highly affirmative. Rather than looking at an organization as a problem to be solved, the AI process allows creativity and innovation to emerge by asking unconditionally positive questions about the potential of an organization through the lens of what is already good. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) described the role of AI in social construction of reality, “especially with its emphasis on metaphor and narrative, relational ways of knowing, on language, and on its potential as a source of generative theory” (p. 8).

Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) have framed appreciative inquiry through their work in higher education settings. Describing appreciative inquiry as both methodology and philosophy, Cockell and McArthur-Blair have given name to the “magic” that can happen in higher education environments. These assumptions represent the possibility of a powerful shift in higher education assessment and evaluation. As a practitioner, my assessment and evaluation work has often been driven by a need to identify and address deficits or to measure against specific benchmarks. However, there are moments in my work when I hear a student speak about their experience or watch a collaborative group take hold of the possibility of an idea – and I know that there is something powerful at work in that space. I strongly desire to delve into understanding that moment or that phenomenon because of the sense that something possible and tangible is occurring.
Leadership in higher education environments can be both formal and informal (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). One element of leadership is the ability to exercise influence. Appreciative inquiry leaders mobilize creative potential. In doing so, these leaders can form appreciative spaces that foster capacity in others and drive innovation and change. I feel that I have the potential as a practitioner-scholar to drive forward positive change in the area of social justice. My framework for this research assumes that something positive is occurring in New Student Dialogues, and particularly within the Peer Dialogue Facilitator position.

The current study tells the story of dialogue facilitation within the bounded case of Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Appreciative inquiry, which allows for a highly affirmative evaluation of a specific phenomenon, is highly correlated to my beliefs about the New Student Dialogue program and the Peer Dialogue Facilitators who are responsible for implementing these dialogues. I believe that Peer Dialogue Facilitators are not only capable, but are most effective, at having high level conversations about difficult topics with their peers. This assumption is central to this study. Through their own lens, Peer Dialogue Facilitators are the best equipped to articulate and demonstrate specific knowledge, skills and behaviors that are necessary for dialogue facilitation.

Further, the positive and affirmative emphasis of appreciative inquiry is an appropriate fit for intergroup dialogue. Nagda and Maxwell (2011) indicated that the critical-dialogic approach “seeks not only an understanding of one’s own and others’ perspectives on issues, but also an appreciation of life experiences that inform those perspectives” (p. 5). The sharing of personal stories and experiences, therefore, is central to intergroup dialogue settings. Further, the curriculum utilized in the Creative Inquiry
emphasizes the value of individuals and affirms personal sharing as productive and desirable in the dialogue setting. Drawing on assumptions that facilitators are both learners and teachers in a dialogue setting, I felt that it was vital to draw upon their personal perspectives and experiences as facilitators to understand dialogue facilitation through their specific lens as a Peer Dialogue Facilitator.

Using an appreciative lens, I allowed Peer Dialogue Facilitators to demonstrate and articulate the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are necessary for effective intergroup dialogue facilitation. Placing Peer Dialogue Facilitators at the center of the inquiry allowed me to help them make meaning of their own experiences and capture specific knowledge, skills, and behaviors that contribute to effective intergroup dialogue facilitation.

Further, there are powerful implications for program evaluation within the current case. There were no assumptions of deficits or areas needed for improvement in this case study. Instead, there was a central belief that Peer Dialogue Facilitators are experts of dialogue facilitation that affirmed their capacity for dialogue facilitation. This inquiry seeks out the best of the work that we do and capitalizes on it to continuously improve our work. We can, therefore, do even better what we already do well rather than investing time and resources in the rebuilding of a program that we believe works.

**Chapter Summary**

Zúñiga (2003) described the intergroup dialogue approach as one that “combines experiential learning and dialogic bridge-building methods with critical analysis of socially constructed group differences and the systems of stratification that give rise to intergroup conflicts and social injustice” (p. 10). The dialogue environment can provide powerful outcomes for dialogue participants (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado,
& Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Gurin, Nagda, & Sorenson, 2011; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Holley, Larson, Adelman, & Trevino, 2007; Miller & Donner, 2000). Yet, very little is known about the experiences of facilitators. The current research explained the function of facilitation (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007) and initial work has been done to establish knowledge about the behaviors and competencies of dialogue facilitators (Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands, 2013; Maxwell, Chesler, & Nagda, 2011). Peer programs in other disciplines may lend to an enhanced understanding of the benefits and opportunities of intergroup dialogue facilitation. Finally, appreciative inquiry (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) has informed the design of the current study.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND PILOT STUDY

Introduction

This chapter addresses the rationale for a case study approach to this research question. The chapter begins by outlining the research design utilized in the current study, including a description of the institution defined in this case. The pilot study is shared to highlight researcher experiences and data that have informed the current study design. Next, a specific research question is established. Proposed methodology and methods for the current study are described, including research participants, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness. Finally, the chapter concludes with the role of the researcher, where the researcher addresses subjectivities, as well as challenges and boundaries of the current study.

Research Design

The current study employed a qualitative design. Merriam (2009) articulated that researchers often use qualitative inquiry because “there is a lack of theory or an existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon” (p. 15). Qualitative research then provides opportunities for researchers to build concepts, hypotheses or theories from available data. Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands (2013) called attention to a deficit within the existing research to observe how facilitators behave. The preceding literature review displayed the lack of research that would serve to describe the facilitator experience, as well as the specific knowledge, skills and behaviors employed by dialogue facilitators in an intergroup dialogue setting. In this particular study, qualitative design allowed me to test the assumptions of current research by unearthing specific examples of
how knowledge, skills and behaviors were demonstrated and articulated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators.

Yin (2008) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). The case study approach therefore provides an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). A qualitative case study approach was utilized in this study to define a bounded system of Peer Dialogue Facilitators, who are responsible for facilitating sessions of the New Student Dialogue program, at Clemson University. By defining a specific case, I was able to provide a richly descriptive analysis of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that were utilized by Peer Dialogue Facilitators.

Further, case study often emphasizes the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. This study primarily utilized observation as a method for data collection. My role as a member of the Creative Inquiry team, and the close relationships that I have established with Peer Dialogue Facilitators, allowed me to hold the role of “trusted person” (Glesne, 2011, p. 63) when I entered the dialogue setting. However, I was considered merely an observer on the participant-observation continuum. My role within a New Student Dialogue was only to observe the co-facilitator team and not to serve as a participant during the dialogue session.

Institutional Context

Clemson University served as the institution for this study. As a land-grant institution, Clemson was initially founded as an agricultural and mechanical college to produce graduates that would work in the service of the state. Established in 1893,
Clemson University began as an all-male military school. The institution became coeducational in 1955 when a change was made to civilian status for students (History, http://www.clemson.edu/about/history/index.html). Clemson University now enrolls approximately 19,000 students in approximately 80 undergraduate majors and 110 graduate degree programs within five colleges (Clemson at a Glance, http://www.clemson.edu/about/ataglance.html). See Appendix B for a table of demographic information for Clemson University.

Clemson University experienced a highly charged bias incident on January 15, 2007. Over a dozen undergraduate students participated in an off-campus party themed “Living the Dream” otherwise known as the “Gangsta” party, in celebration of the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial holiday (WYFF4 News, 2007). The campus newspaper posted photographs from the social media network Facebook in which students wore attire aimed to satirize the civil rights leader. Among these were a number of graffiti tagged posters of Martin Luther King Jr., edited to depict the leader imbibing copious amounts of alcohol. Students portrayed stereotypical African American and Latino imagery and duct-taped 40 ounce bottles of malt liquor to their hands. Among the most striking images to surface from the party was a photo series depicting a white male painted entirely black (2007a).

Prior to this incident, the curriculum of a program called One Clemson was in development. One Clemson had not yet gained the support that was needed to garner funding and access to deliver the curriculum to a significant campus population. Coercive pressures (Marion, 2002) that resulted from the January 2007 incident prompted the institution to establish One Clemson in order to provide education about diversity and multiculturalism and to set a standard for students to respect one another. One Clemson
was implemented as a required component of the introductory course for all new freshmen and transfer students.

One Clemson proved to be limited in its scope. The curriculum of the one-time session that students were required to attend addressed diversity and multiculturalism in a broad scope that did not provide opportunities for students to explore their own and others’ identities in depth. Though there was an out of class activity that served as an additional cultural experience, feedback largely indicated that students were not exploring identities outside of their comfort zone and learned little from the experiences. A workgroup was assembled in May 2010 to review the One Clemson program and to make recommendations for improvements. It was determined at this time that a new approach should be offered.

New Student Dialogues (New Student Dialogues, http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/diversity-education/one-clemson.html), based on the critical-dialogic method of intergroup dialogue, were implemented in the fall of 2011. New Student Dialogues aims for students to explore their own and others’ social identities (such as religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, etc.) through the lens of intergroup dialogue. The program strives to provide structured group opportunities for students to learn to speak to one another respectfully across areas of difference. To accomplish these goals, all New Student Dialogue curriculums include foundational activities that define dialogue as a form of communication, establish group norms, and introduce the concept of social identity. The remainder of the curriculum focuses on dialogue about a particular social identity topic where students can explore that identity for themselves as well as hear the stories and
personal perspectives of students who hold a differing perspective within that identity group.

I believe that New Student Dialogues have begun to challenge students appropriately in the areas of diversity and social justice, but recent campus climate assessment results have reported that many students have concerns about safety and inclusion on Clemson’s campus (A. Richardson, personal communication, May 2, 2013). Concrete assessment of the New Student Dialogue program is therefore needed to determine the impact of the program on campus climate. Before beginning this assessment, members of the team that implement New Student Dialogue believe it is necessary to understand how Peer Dialogue Facilitators play a role in shaping the dialogue setting. Understanding the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are employed by Peer Dialogue Facilitators may serve to enhance selection and training of students in this role.

Clemson University also offers opportunities for students to engage in Creative Inquiry. Creative Inquiry is a program that encourages systemic inquiry by groups of faculty, staff, and students who choose to engage in research around a common topic of interest (Creative Inquiry and Undergraduate Research, http://www.clemson.edu/academics/programs/creative-inquiry/index.html). Creative Inquiry projects typically span from 1-3 semesters and may be repeated. Creative Inquiry has been tied to the New Student Dialogue program to serve as an avenue for teaching and training facilitators, which occurs during the first semester of instruction. The first semester serves as a pre-service requirement for facilitation. Peer Dialogue Facilitators are immersed in a sustained dialogue where they learn about social justice concepts and terminology, gain an awareness of their own and others identities through sharing of autobiographies, and learn
skills and behaviors of dialogue facilitation through the modeling and instruction of Creative Inquiry instructors.

Research is also hard wired into our practice through the Creative Inquiry. Peer Dialogue Facilitators learn about research, research topics of interest, and construct the curriculum for New Student Dialogues. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also understand that they are being studied, as described in the following pilot study.

**PILOT STUDY**

**Research Design**

**Site of Research**

Clemson University served as the site for the pilot study. The institution initially required all incoming freshmen and transfer students to attend a program called One Clemson ("One Clemson: Yours, Mine, and Hours", http://blogs.clemson.edu/barkers-blog/2008/03/march-10-2008). One Clemson curriculum had been in development prior to the occurrence of a bias incident in January 2007. During this incident, over a dozen undergraduate students participated in an off-campus party themed “Living the Dream” otherwise known as the “Gangsta” party, in celebration of the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial holiday (WYFF4 News, 2007). Graphic photographic depictions, including a student dressed entirely in blackface, surfaced after this party. Coercive pressures (Marion, 2002) pushed the institution to provide the financial support and student access needed to fully implement One Clemson curriculum, which provided education about diversity and multiculturalism and set a standard for students to respect one another.
One Clemson, however, was highly limited in its approach. Social identity was not addressed in depth, and students often were not pushed far enough out of their comfort zone in order for true learning about difference to occur. A team of individuals re-envisioned the goals of One Clemson in May 2010 and developed New Student Dialogues, a new program based on the critical-dialogic model of intergroup dialogue.

New Student Dialogues were implemented beginning in the fall semester of 2011. New Student Dialogues were a required component of the introductory class for all incoming first year and transfer students and provided an opportunity for incoming students to learn essential dialogue and intercultural communication skills. New Student Dialogue curriculum engaged students in dialogue around issues of social identity and focused on a range of social issues involving but not limited to race, spirituality, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and ability. Dialogues were comprised of 25-30 students, and over a period of two hours the group explored and processed the significance and salience of social identity. Undergraduate Peer Dialogue Facilitators were responsible for facilitating New Student Dialogue sessions.

**Study Participants**

Participants in this study served in the role of Peer Dialogue Facilitator. Since New Student Dialogues were implemented in the fall of 2011, some applicants have participated in a session of New Student Dialogues and some have not. Peer Dialogue Facilitators are selected from a pool of applicants. Successful applicants are those who have an interest in social justice and research and who demonstrate potential in the capacity to speak about theirs and others’ social identities in conversations of difference. Peer Dialogue Facilitators are both paid student employees and students engaged in a 3-semester Creative Inquiry.
Staff members from Residential Life and Diversity Education, as well as a faculty member in Counselor Education, work in partnership to manage the Creative Inquiry team responsible for constructing, implementing, guiding and assessing the Peer Dialogue Facilitator role and New Student Dialogue program.

The curriculum and pedagogy from which New Student Dialogues were constructed includes frameworks of intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and communication processes (Zúñiga, 2003; Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). These frameworks are evident in their most concentrated form through the first semester of Creative Inquiry. During the first semester, Peer Dialogue Facilitators receive instruction in intergroup dialogue facilitation by being engaged themselves in a semester-long sustained dialogue. They learn about the critical-dialogic model of intergroup dialogue through modeling of instructors and through direct instruction. Peer Dialogue Facilitators then utilize their understanding of dialogue processes and understanding of campus culture to construct curriculum for New Student Dialogues.

Facilitation of New Student Dialogues occurs during the second semester of Creative Inquiry for Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Participants in the pilot study were Peer Dialogue Facilitators in Cohort 2, who facilitated New Student Dialogues during the fall semester of 2012. Ten total facilitators (5 pairs of co-facilitators) participated in this study.

**Data Sources and Collection**

The pilot study served a dual purpose of evaluating Peer Dialogue Facilitators in their role and also understanding more about the knowledge, skills and behaviors that they displayed. Despite instruction provided in the first semester of Creative Inquiry on dialogue facilitation, many facilitators in Cohort 1 struggled during the first few weeks of
facilitation to understand what dialogue facilitation “looks like,” or more concretely, how it was performed. They were unable to articulate specific actions that they engaged in during the facilitation of New Student Dialogues. We began to construct a method to observe their dialogues and share direct feedback with them about their performance. Portions of the second semester Creative Inquiry course (in which Peer Dialogue Facilitators were enrolled while facilitating New Student Dialogue sessions) were also set aside to debrief with instructors and peers. The observations, feedback and peer review began to have an effect. As the semester progressed, Peer Dialogue Facilitators began to articulate the skills and knowledge that they were utilizing in dialogue for themselves.

Members of the Creative Inquiry team relied on several sources to generate a picture of what dialogue facilitation should look like. Materials were borrowed from the University of Michigan after attending The National Intergroup Dialogue Institute that was hosted annually by the Program on Intergroup Relations. Creative Inquiry team members also relied heavily on Facilitating Intergroup Dialogues: Bridging Differences, Catalyzing Change (Maxwell, Nagda, & Thompson Eds., 2011) and particularly the research conducted by Nagda and Maxwell (2011) as standards were created for dialogue facilitation within the New Student Dialogue program.

Creative Inquiry team members derived competencies for Peer Dialogue Facilitators by refining those established by Nagda and Maxwell (2011) through research and practice. Competencies that had been divided into three principles (see Appendix A) were reduced to match the goals and objectives of the New Student Dialogue program. The competencies established for Peer Dialogue Facilitators, as well as operational examples of behaviors that may occur related to a specific competency, are outlined in Appendix C.
Peer Dialogue Facilitators in Cohort 2 were then observed to determine how they demonstrated these competencies in the dialogue setting. Detailed field notes were taken during the dialogue as handwritten notes and were typed later for further analysis. Field notes were utilized to develop a rubric for each dialogue facilitator that provided a qualitative rating based on how many of the competency descriptors were addressed and a qualitative description of specific behaviors or skills that were observed during the dialogue.

The first round of observations occurred during the fourth week of facilitation. Peer Dialogue Facilitators received feedback derived from these observations during the sixth week. This feedback was shared with a supervisor by the researcher, in order for the supervisor to then relay feedback directly to the Peer Dialogue Facilitator. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were observed again during the tenth week of dialogues and were provided with this feedback as well.

Data Analysis

This pilot study included a quantitative rating that was loosely based on the number of behaviors listed in each competency that were observed during the dialogue facilitation. Behaviors that were observed during the dialogue were highlighted on the observation rubric. Numbers equated to the following ratings:

- 1 = undermines the competency/counter to tenants of dialogue
- 2 = aligns with some but not most of the competency (< half)
- 3 = aligns with most but not all of the competency (> half)
- 4 = mastery in all areas of the competency
Field notes were then coded to identify specific instances where a dialogue facilitator demonstrated a facilitation competency. A paragraph description was written to highlight specific behaviors or skills associated with a dialogue competency. The rubric also included suggestions to enhance specific competencies to address the evaluative purpose of the observation.

**Findings and Discussion**

The original intent for including a numbered rating on the facilitation rubric was to measure change in performance through a tangible number that moved across the scale, but in almost all cases, the rating fell within the 2-3 category. No facilitator acted counter to the tenants of dialogue. Only in the case of a second-time dialogue facilitator (who had served in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2) was a rating of 4 assigned. The rating then became an arbitrary number, very closely divided between the two middle categories. The numerical rating system further implied that competency was a finite finishing point that must be accomplished in order to successfully facilitate dialogue. A rating of 1, which implied that facilitators acted or behaved in ways that were counter to the tenants of intergroup dialogue were not noted at any point in the semester. Peer Dialogue Facilitators did develop and hone their facilitation skills over the course of the semester. While these observations and changes in scoring may indicate growth, Peer Dialogue Facilitators did not appear to reach a finite point in their competency as a facilitator. Additionally, Peer Dialogue Facilitators utilized different skills and behaviors at different times, based on what was needed with a particular dialogue facilitation or particular group of students. For example, Peer Dialogue Facilitators used different skills and behaviors to address
participant groups where resistance was high than with those who were overall demonstrating engagement and active participation in the dialogue.

I coded specific moments where a facilitation competency occurred, yielding a much richer description of how facilitation competency occurred in the dialogue setting. Peer Dialogue Facilitators cultivated facilitative engagement by redirecting questions that were asked of them. Rather than respond as an expert, a Peer Dialogue Facilitator would often reframe the question and ask if anyone in the group would respond. Peer Dialogue Facilitators shared power with their co-facilitator by carefully dividing the portions of the dialogue curriculum where a facilitator lead an activity or began the deeper reflection of the dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated their use of social identity in dialogue by balancing times when they shared from their own experience, often in an effort to draw similar experiences from group members. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also modeled dialogue across difference when a co-facilitator shared a juxtaposing viewpoint from their partner. Rarely, however, did a Peer Dialogue Facilitator demonstrate “bridging dialogue into action.” This is a key component of dialogue, particularly in sustained dialogue experiences. The nature of a two-hour dialogue, though, was more to ‘plant a seed’ than to move students towards roles as social justice allies. A focus on alliance building will be removed from the current study based on the pilot study.

The terminology of “competency” utilized in this pilot study was derived from the work of Nagda and Maxwell (2011). Based on the above findings, and the finite nature of the word “competency,” the researcher deemed that this language was counterproductive to a true understanding of intergroup dialogue facilitation. The word “competency” implies that one is not competent until certain measures have been attained and that there is a
finite end point. Intergroup dialogue and dialogue facilitation, based on my observations, is more fluid and dynamic than this. I noted differences amongst facilitator styles and also differences in dialogue settings based on the make-up of participants within a particular dialogue group. It was then necessary to reevaluate a framework that would best capture what the pilot study indicated was occurring in dialogue facilitation.

Returning to materials from the National Institute on Intergroup Dialogue, and reflecting on my own facilitation experience, I began to re-conceptualize how facilitation may occur. The PASK assessment (PASK, University of Michigan Press, 7 June 2011), which I was introduced to during the Institute, requires facilitators to reflect on areas of knowledge, skills and personal awareness. Items related to personal awareness spoke to particular behaviors of facilitators. Therefore, the terminology of “knowledge, skills, and behaviors” was put in place for the current study in order to provide a broader picture of how dialogue facilitation may occur.

Additionally, the results of the pilot study were fed back into practice by making adjustments to the curriculum for the first semester of instruction for Cohort 3. A greater focus was placed on what dialogue facilitation “looks like” while guiding Peer Dialogue Facilitators through the semester long sustained dialogue experience. Instructors utilized concrete terminology and gave specific descriptions to skills and behaviors that were modeled during each week of facilitation. Peer Dialogue Facilitators in Cohort 2, who were now better able to articulate how dialogue facilitation occurred, were also invited to facilitate a Cohort 3 class dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators in Cohort 3 were able to directly observe peer facilitation based on the specific curriculum established for one of the Fall 2012 New Student Dialogue sessions.
DISSECTATION RESEARCH STUDY

Research Question

This research study addressed a gap in the body of literature by seeking to understand the knowledge, skills and behaviors that are necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. The following research question guided this study:

- How do peer dialogue facilitators demonstrate and articulate knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation?

Utilizing a single-institution case study approach, I collected data through dialogue observations, class discussions where dialogue facilitation was debriefed, two-on-one interviews with co-facilitation partners, and one-on-one debriefing interviews with individual Peer Dialogue Facilitators. The case study approach allowed me to probe deeper into the ways that Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated and then described how they used knowledge, skills, and behaviors to effectively facilitate peer-led sessions of intergroup dialogue. The level of depth in a single case served to provide a rich description of Peer Dialogue Facilitators in the current program and has implications for pedagogy in both the training of dialogue facilitation and the construction of experiences for undergraduate student participants.

Research Participants

The participant group in this study is the third cohort group of undergraduate Peer Dialogue Facilitators who began the third implementation of New Student Dialogue curriculum in the fall semester of 2013. Cohort 3 includes both returning and new facilitators, who come from a wide range of major disciplines and identify with a broad range of social identities. Appendix D shows demographics of Peer Dialogue Facilitators in
this study. Each co-facilitator team was intentionally paired based on target and agent identity group membership.

While each facilitator is a participant, it is difficult to separate the roles of two facilitators who made up a co-facilitator team. Co-facilitated dialogue sessions are predicated on the joint roles that co-facilitators play in the dialogue setting. It was necessary to give attention to the knowledge, skills and behaviors displayed by individual Peer Dialogue Facilitators while also attending to the ways that Peer Dialogue Facilitators worked together in a co-facilitation relationship. Therefore, I observed 5 co-facilitator pairs (10 total Peer Dialogue Facilitators) during the course of the semester. Each co-facilitator pair was responsible for implementing two sessions of New Student Dialogues per week, each with a different curriculum constructed around one or more specific social identity categories. The researcher's observations captured one of the specific dialogue curriculums implemented by a co-facilitator pair at four times spaced throughout the fall 2013 semester.

Cohort 3, however, was comprised of eleven total Peer Dialogue Facilitators. The eleventh Peer Dialogue Facilitator was paired with a graduate student intern for the purpose of facilitating New Student Dialogues. An undergraduate and graduate student pairing was not considered a true peer relationship, and therefore, observations of this pair did not occur. I did, however, include the eleventh Peer Dialogue Facilitator in class discussions that included large portions of time for Peer Dialogue Facilitators to debrief their dialogue facilitation experiences. Appendix D includes demographics for all eleven members of Cohort 3.
Data Sources and Collection

Observations

I observed Peer Dialogue Facilitators in co-facilitation teams at intervals throughout the semester. Co-facilitation teams were observed a total of 4 times beginning during the first week and then spaced about 4 weeks apart. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were therefore observed on a monthly basis, which included the first week of New Student Dialogues and the last regularly scheduled week of New Student Dialogues. (An additional week of New Student Dialogues was made available prior to final exams for any new student who had not yet attended.) Based on the pilot study, as well as my own subjectivities and experiences with dialogue, I felt it was necessary to observe dialogue facilitation throughout the entire semester. Glesne (2011) encouraged researchers to “stay long enough to get a full description and a deep understanding” (p. 66).

I took detailed field notes (Glesne, 2011) during each observation. Due to the sensitive nature of communication in dialogue, all jottings were hand-written in a quiet and discrete manner. Field notes carefully captured the actions of facilitators, but they did not include specific statements made by participants. Participant actions and statements were noted when they were in reference to actions and statements made by Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Hand-written field notes were later coded based on the process described in data analysis.

Participant Interviews

Previous observations of Cohort 2, during the pilot study, also served to evaluate and provide feedback for Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Observations serve simultaneously as research and feedback. Two-on-one interviews between the researcher and the co-
facilitator pair occurred directly following the first and third observations. One-on-one interviews between the researcher and an individual Peer Dialogue Facilitator occurred within no more than 7 days after the second and fourth observation. In each interview, Peer Dialogue Facilitators were asked to debrief their experience in the particular dialogue observed, noting knowledge, skills, and behaviors that were used. Additionally, Peer Dialogue Facilitators were asked to describe their overall experiences with dialogue facilitation throughout the semester, and in their dialogues as a whole. These debriefing interviews served as an opportunity for member checking (Merriam, 2009), providing Peer Dialogue Facilitators with an opportunity to clarify or expand on what they believed was taking place in the dialogue setting. I often noted particular things that had stood out to me, after Peer Dialogue Facilitators provided their own assessment, and asked for them to provide clarification or more details. All two-on-one and one-on-one debriefing interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed. Transcriptions of interviews were coded according to the description in data analysis.

Class Discussions

Finally, Peer Dialogue Facilitators were enrolled in the second semester of the Creative Inquiry during the time period that New Student Dialogues were implemented. A portion of each week’s class was dedicated to sharing about the dialogues and debriefing with one another. Peer Dialogue Facilitators shared their experiences with one another, asked questions of one another, and shared ideas about how to address particular things that happened in the New Student Dialogue setting. I participated in these class discussions where Peer Dialogue Facilitators dialogued about dialogue. Each session was audio-taped.
These class discussions therefore served as focus group data for the current study. Transcripts of class discussions were coded according to the description of data analysis.

Also, because of the inclusion of this data, an eleventh participant was included in the data analysis and results. This participant was previously excluded because she was not paired with another Peer Dialogue Facilitator, but rather she was paired with a graduate student intern, based on the uneven number of available facilitators. Statements contributed during class discussions assisted in addressing the research question and were therefore included in the results.

**Data Analysis**

Saldaña (2013) presents a variety of coding methods in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Second Edition). He described coding as “a method that enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or “families” because they share some characteristic – the beginning of a pattern” (p. 9). While coding serves as only one method of analyzing qualitative data, two types of coding methodology are primarily used in the analysis of data for this study.

The first method, provisional coding (Saldaña, 2013), utilized a predetermined list, or set, of codes that were established at the beginning of the study. This predetermined list was derived from the work of Nagda and Maxwell (2011) that has been previously cited as a part of the pilot study description. See Appendix C for a detailed list of themes that were used, which have been labeled as “descriptors” under each of the main categories, or “competencies.” Field notes, as well as transcripts of debriefing interviews and class discussions, were coded for data that fit within the description of each of these competencies.
The second coding method, termed In Vivo coding coding (Saldaña, 2013), intended to capture the specific actions of Peer Dialogue Facilitators that could be categorized within the established categories of knowledge, skills and behaviors used for intergroup dialogue facilitation. In Vivo coding, whose root word means ‘in that which is alive’ “refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). Field notes, as well as transcripts of debriefing interviews and class discussions, were simultaneously coded using In Vivo coding. The use of In Vivo coding is important to this study, as it utilizes the words of participants to articulate and describe dialogue facilitation. Peer Dialogue Facilitators, who are consider the experts of their own facilitation, have given specific meaning and life to the themes in this study through the use of their own language derived from the data.

All field notes, as well as transcriptions of audio recorded interviews and class discussions, were coded using provisional and In Vivo coding. Coding was done by hand to allow me to immerse myself within the data. I transferred specific quotes into a separate document where they were grouped and categorized. I began to tag groupings of data with quick description words that alluded to the type of data that was arranged in each. For instance, data that was coded using In Vivo coding were originally assigned words such as “managing time,” “triggers,” or “reading a room” to provide a description of quotes within a particular grouping. Data that was coded using provisional coding used the specific descriptors that were provided from Nagda and Maxwell’s (2011) study. (See Appendix C.)

I chose to code data one co-facilitator pair at a time. I worked through all four observation field notes and interviews for a particular pair before moving to the next pair. I initially coded the first of the audio recordings that served as focus group data, from a
retreat that occurred at the beginning of the semester, and then coded the remainder of
class discussions when coding of co-facilitator pair data had been completed.

I had coded approximately one-third of the data (or two co-facilitator pairs and the
retreat transcript) when the date of my scheduled member checking activity arrived. I
printed large 11 x 17 sheets of paper with the quick description that I had used to label
groupings of data at the top and listed quotes underneath. I asked Peer Dialogue
Facilitators to check that the quotes matched their descriptions and fit within that group. I
also asked them to re-name any description that didn’t seem to accurately describe that
particular data grouping.

A second portion of the member checking activity involved splitting Peer Dialogue
Facilitators into two groups to arrange the groupings of data under the main categories of
knowledge, skills, and behaviors that had been established in the research question. Each
group of Peer Dialogue Facilitators was given a set of notecards with the data grouping’s
description on the card. These cards were similar to ones that I had attempted to arrange
on my office wall as data analysis progressed. During my own process, I struggled to place
the cards into discrete categories. It was not surprising then that one group came to me
with the same problem. “A lot of these seem to overlap,” Virginia said. I indicated that I
shared her experience and asked what that might mean. “Can I just arrange them in a Venn
diagram then?” she asked. I gave permission for Virginia and her group to arrange the
cards in whatever way they saw fit. As the Venn diagram came together, the complex
nature of the data began to emerge in a much more meaningful and powerful way.

The member checking activity pushed the data to new places that significantly
impacted the remainder of the data analysis. The work that Peer Dialogue Facilitators had
done crossing out, moving, and renaming groupings and specific quotes on the 11 x 17 sheets of paper allowed me to clarify and recalibrate how I organized the data. I reviewed data that had already been coded and also used these insights in coding the remaining two thirds of the data. Though I had only completed one third of data analysis prior to the activity, there were only a few additional groupings of data that emerged in the analysis. I had also noted when removing note cards from the member checking activity where they had been placed. Both the group that used the Venn diagram and the group that tried to discretely organize cards into knowledge, skills, and behaviors had arranged cards in similar places, which aligned with my own interpretation of the data.

A few data groupings were ultimately excluded from the final data analysis. Quotes that were not well supported in the data were culled out of the final data analysis process. Quotes that were grouped around themes that did not address the research question were also set aside and can be seen in suggestions for future research in Chapter 5. For instance, several themes more aptly described and addressed the experience of Peer Dialogue Facilitators or the type of relationship that was formed between co-facilitators.

Data groupings that were retained in the final data analysis then became themes, which were arranged within the main categories of knowledge, skills, and behaviors and sub-categories that emerged from the overlapping nature of the data analysis that was driven by the Venn diagram. These sub-categories were aptly named to describe what was happening in each of these intersections. Specific definitions of each main category and sub-category can be found in Chapter 4, Results. These definitions were co-constructed by the researcher and the participants before, during and after the study. Further, once data analysis was complete, themes that had been derived from In Vivo coding were named with
quotes specifically chosen to highlight these themes. For instance, the theme formerly named “reading a room” was named “I gave the room a look around,” drawing directly from a quote made by Sandra Lee.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is utilized in qualitative research rather than traditional methods of reliability and validity in quantitative analysis. The highly debated nature of reliability and validity in qualitative research (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009) necessitates that studies be “rigorously conducted” and that they “present insights and conclusions that ring true to readers, practitioners, and other researchers” (Merriam, 2009, p. 210). Researchers who may serve to critique the work must have confidence in the investigation and its findings.

Creswell (1998) recommended ways that qualitative researchers can increase credibility of trustworthiness. Among his recommendations are several suggestions that were employed in the current study. These recommendations included peer review and debriefing, clarification of researcher bias, member checking, and external auditing. A benefit of the Creative Inquiry team is the ability to review and debrief research design with individuals who understand the program intimately and can ask thoughtful questions that might not be intuitive to someone on the outside. I checked in with other team members throughout the process of shaping the research design and during data collection and analysis. Additionally, I focused on an exploration of my own subjectivities, which could serve to both enhance and limit this study, throughout the study. Additionally, committee member(s) served to “audit” field notes and debriefing transcripts to provide an outside perspective on analysis and results.
Finally, I utilized a detailed member checking activity with participants to enhance trustworthiness, which has been described in full detail in the data analysis section. When approximately one-third of the data had been coded, I presented groupings of data with their assigned quotes (stripped of any identifiers) to participants. Participants were asked to check assumptions that may have been made by indicating if descriptions and quotes matched or how participants might describe them differently. Participants were also placed into two groups and given a stack of notecards containing the grouping descriptions that had been established. Participants were asked to categorize these data groupings under knowledge, skills, and behaviors, which had been established as the main categories in the research question. Commenting on the overlapping nature of the theme, one participant group arranged the notecards in a Venn diagram. The feedback shared by participants, as well as the formulation of a Venn diagram, highly influenced the direction of remaining data analysis.

Member checking assisted in more clearly identifying quotes and themes, as well as organizing data to provide a description of how knowledge, skills, and behaviors interacted in intergroup dialogue facilitation. But more powerfully, the member checking activity aligned with the conceptual framework of appreciative inquiry that was established in this study. Appreciative inquiry emphasizes the expert nature of participants. I have confidence in the assumption that Peer Dialogue Facilitators are best equipped to articulate what they do. This was proven many times throughout the data collection and analysis process. Peer Dialogue Facilitators reinforced and clarified key points in the member checking activity. Their analysis of the data enriched the data analysis process and gave further credibility to ways that data were co-constructed by the participants and the researcher.
Role of the Researcher

I must acknowledge how the roles I play and the assumptions that I hold may influence this study. Subjectivity is the recognition on the part of the researcher that the one investigating affects the results of the investigation (Peshkin, 1988). Peshkin uncovered within himself what he termed “Subjective I’s” in his evaluation of the community-school relationship of several different school settings.

Subjectivity Statement

In this section, I discuss how the embedded nature of my role with Peer Dialogue Facilitators and the New Student Dialogue program has shaped, and will likely continue to shape, this research. My role as insider allowed me to gain a more in depth view and understanding of how Peer Dialogue Facilitators facilitate intergroup dialogue. With careful monitoring, I was able to manage my subjectivity in ways that enhanced rather than inhibited the data collection and analysis.

I have worked as a higher education administrator for almost ten years. Working with students on a college campus often required me to learn more about particular student populations that I serve (for instance, transfer students, athletes, or international student populations). I have also participated in training sessions around diversity and multiculturalism and more than once received training to be an Ally for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. All of this learning helped me to place different types of students in different types of contexts, but I did not fully put together the words social justice until I read Learning as a Way of Leading: Lessons from the Struggle for Social Justice for a national conference book club. A fire was lit for me around the concepts
and principles of social justice, and I began to look for ways to learn about and further social justice ideals on Clemson’s campus.

I was presented with an opportunity in May 2010 to participate in a workgroup that was formed to evaluate the current One Clemson program and to make recommendations for future evolutions. One Clemson had been instituted several years prior to address issues of diversity and respect on campus (“One Clemson: Yours, Mine, and Hours”, http://blogs.clemson.edu/barkers-blog/2008/03/march-10-2008). The program’s primary aim was to encourage respectful interactions among Clemson students and to increase awareness of different cultures and backgrounds. A single workshop, broken into smaller groups, and requiring hundreds of briefly trained workshop facilitators, was implemented in the few days before classes started each fall. I seized the opportunity to be a part of the evaluation process. I strongly felt that I was a natural fit for this workgroup based on my desire to evaluate challenges and opportunities within programs, as well as my burgeoning passion for social justice.

The group was led by the Associate Director for Diversity Education, who was alumnae in a graduate higher education and student affairs program and former Student Affairs professional in Housing at a larger, Research I Midwestern university. The Associate Director returned to Clemson University in his new role as a diversity educator. He brought knowledge that allowed him to quickly recommend the critical-dialogic method of intergroup dialogue as an opportunity for us to teach the campus community (students, faculty and staff) how to engage in dialogue with one another across different social identities. The new model, using the critical-dialogic method of intergroup dialogue, was named New Student Dialogues.
My primary role in the development of a new program was to conceptualize the roles and responsibilities that must be put in place for the successful implementation of the program. I lent my expertise in the development of staff positions to create and develop the role of Peer Dialogue Facilitators to support New Student Dialogues. I also suggested that we link our program to Creative Inquiry, which is a Clemson-based program that engages any group of faculty, staff, and students around a topic of interest by using systemic inquiry (Creative Inquiry and Undergraduate Research, http://www.clemson.edu/academics/programs/creative-inquiry/index.html). The use of Creative Inquiry allowed us to structure training and coaching of the Peer Dialogue Facilitator role and also hardwire opportunities for research into our practice. Finally, a faculty member was found to help us tie in critical pedagogy and research. New Student Dialogues were implemented for the first time in the fall of 2011 after a year of planning, recruiting, teaching and training.

When I began this process, I had great enthusiasm for the changes that we were implementing, but I knew very little about intergroup dialogue. I was emboldened by the descriptions that the Associate Director of Diversity Education shared about his work with intergroup dialogue at a previous institution. Yet I had no actual experience with intergroup dialogue and didn’t fully understand how it worked. I applied in the fall of 2010 for the first semester of GOODTalk in an effort to understand what we were attempting to achieve on a more personal level. As I previously indicated, the Associate Director for Diversity Education sought to educate individuals at all levels. GOODTalk was established as a 10-week sustained intergroup dialogue experience designed for faculty and staff (GOODTalk, http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/diversity-education/good-talk.html).
The program sought to engage participants around topics that are relevant to understanding and facilitating dialogue. The curriculum offered opportunities for personal growth through learning about self and learning from others and also provided a basic understanding of social justice concepts. GOODTalk is where I learned more about my own social identities; deconstructed power, privilege, and oppression; evolved my understanding of what it means to be an ally for social justice; and began to understand how dialogue could be used as a way to communicate with others beyond a specifically defined dialogue setting. The knowledge and awareness that I gained from GOODTalk influenced how I have helped to teach and train facilitators, as well as how I have observed the facilitation of their dialogues over the past two years.

The Creative Inquiry team responsible for Peer Dialogue Facilitators and New Student Dialogues included the Associate Director for Diversity Education, the Graduate Assistant for Social Justice, the Associate Director for Residential Life, and a faculty member from the Department of Leadership, Counselor Education, Human & Organizational Development. As Associate Director for Residential Life, I served as the Residential Life liaison, assisting with selection processes and encouraging ways for us to infuse intergroup dialogue into residential curriculum. I also chose to engage in research through analyzing of video log assignments, observing of intergroup dialogue facilitation, coaching the research projects engaged in by Peer Dialogue Facilitators during their third semester, and conducting exit interviews at the end of the third semester.

I consider myself to be a mentor and coach to members of each cohort of Peer Dialogue Facilitators. I know many Peer Dialogue Facilitators very well, perhaps even calling myself friend through the close relationships that we have developed. Glesne (2011)
speaks to the role of friend when quoting an article by Busier, Clark, Esch, Glesne, Pigeon, and Tarule (1997) that argued intimacy could be a “route to understanding” (p. 165) “but that it carries with it responsibilities and considerations, including reflexivity on the nature and influence of the relationship, analysis of the role of power in the relationship, and attunement to relational ethics” (Glesne, 2011, p. 171). I may see more than another researcher would due to my embedded nature with the individuals in this role; therefore, I was cognizant of my preconceptions and engaged in debriefing with other researcher(s) to ensure that what I see is really there. For example, I regularly debriefed with other members of the Creative Inquiry team to check assumptions that they may have also observed from class discussions or in one-on-one conversations with Peer Dialogue Facilitators. I also sought feedback from outside researchers who were a part of my doctoral candidate cohort. These outside researchers challenged me to more clearly articulate the data.

I studied the first and second cohort of Peer Dialogue Facilitators without ever serving as a dialogue facilitator myself. I recognized that I could see from the outside what was occurring, but I had no knowledge of what facilitation looked like and felt like on the inside. I applied to be a GOODTalk facilitator for in the spring of 2013 and co-facilitated a 10-week session of GOODTalk with two other facilitators. I personally reflected on my own facilitation during each session, debriefed with my co-facilitators after each session, and attended weekly debriefing and training that included facilitators from other GOODTalk circles. These debriefing sessions allowed us to unpack what happened in each week’s facilitation to strengthen our facilitation capacity. I began to catch myself implementing knowledge and skills that had been taught and trained through facilitator pre-training and
our weekly training sessions. However, there were other things that came naturally and were harder to articulate and define. For example, I found that I naturally drew out prompting or clarifying questions without ever referring back to the list of prompts that we had been provided. Or, for instance, that I could literally feel changes in participants in the room, cued by observations of body language, tone of voice, etc. I began to understand that these were behaviors that I was exhibiting or noting in my other co-facilitators. My insider perspective was now complemented by a personal understanding of how I articulated knowledge, skills, and behaviors that were critical to my own success as a dialogue facilitator. These insights made a positive contribution to the way that I observed Peer Dialogue Facilitators, while being careful not to assume that my experience was their own. I always asked Peer Dialogue Facilitators to clearly articulate their experiences so that the words were their own, but often found them using language that was reminiscent of my own experiences.

I strongly believe that the competency of Peer Dialogue Facilitators has increased from one cohort to the next. Evaluative feedback that we gathered from Cohort 1 was used to tweak and redesign the first semester training course for Cohort 2 and likewise for Cohort 3. This has allowed instructors to be more intentional and more specific in the ways that we provide training and coaching for intergroup dialogue facilitation. As a result, I believe that Cohort 3 has shown amazing promise and potential for dialogue facilitation. I attribute this to the work that we have done as a Creative Inquiry team to evaluate our own practice and to engage in data-driven decision making. I have practically chosen to frame this research as a single-institution case study so that we can continue to delve deeply into our practice. The strength of this work is in its specific focus, but this is also a story that can
be applicable to the understanding of dialogue facilitation in other contexts. Institutions with similar programs, or perhaps institutions that are looking for ways to address goals of social justice and inclusion, may benefit and learn from our findings. Moreover, the Peer Dialogue Facilitators, who are the experts of their own experience, bring life to the ways that facilitation occurs that will be useful overall to the training, coaching and evaluation of dialogue facilitators.

**Challenges and Boundaries**

Researchers experience a variety of challenges and limitations when delving into questions of interest through a research study. I have great curiosity and interest in the topic that I have chosen to investigate. Through my own practice, and through data collected in the pilot study, I have begun to see the emergence of a number of areas that could be studied. I have narrowed the current study to ensure a focused and detailed analysis of the case. Merriam (2009) encouraged researchers to discipline themselves not to pursue everything, but rather through simultaneous data collection and analysis, to force oneself to make decisions that narrow the study. I can note, but then set aside, interesting things that emerge for the focus of subsequent studies. Additionally, the embedded nature of my participation in the Creative Inquiry provided subjective knowledge that was both helpful and may have implications for the study. Yin (2006) encouraged case study researchers to “master the intricacies of the study’s substantive issues while also having the patience and dedication to collect data carefully and fairly” (p. 113).

There are expected boundaries within the scope of this research study. A case study design limits transferability or generalizability to other studies. Hess et al. (2010) has already cautioned that one-shot assessments do little to determine the lasting effects of
dialogue. Dessel and Rogge (1998), noting the prevalence in current studies of convenience sampling, encouraged future researchers to focus more on quasi-experimental and experimental designs. However, “generalization is not a goal in case studies, for the most part, because discovering the uniqueness of each case is the main purpose” (Hays, 2004, p. 218). I feel that it was necessary to go deeper due to the limited research available in the area of dialogue facilitation. Also, I have a particular interest in the evaluation of this case. The rich description that can be gained from this case may bear important implications for the current case and for future research.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter established the research design for the current study, provided institutional context for the site, and highlighted pilot study design and findings which have informed the design of the current study. Qualitative case study design informed the current study. Yin (2008) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). The bounded system is Peer Dialogue Facilitators within the New Student Dialogue program at Clemson University. An in-depth look at this case allowed the researcher to evaluate the current program and to inform how knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation were demonstrated and articulated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators. The researcher’s subjectivity was addressed, as well as the challenges and boundaries that were anticipated in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the current study. Specific themes are shared with a description that provides additional explanation. Specific quotes are also included to represent individual themes. Results indicate that Peer Dialogue Facilitators utilize a variety of knowledge, skills and behaviors to effectively facilitate dialogue. Knowledge, skills and behaviors are not discrete but overlap in ways that strengthen and enhance dialogue facilitation.

MAIN CATEGORIES: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND BEHAVIORS

Knowledge, skills, and behaviors served as the main categories for data analysis. During the pilot study, I leaned on the terminology of “competency” that was derived from a study of facilitation by Nagda and Maxwell (2011). The finite nature of the word “competency,” appeared to be limiting within the context of the current study and framework of appreciate Inquiry that serves as the grounding conceptual framework. Instead, drawing on experiences from the National Institute on Intergroup Dialogue, I evaluated how the PASK assessment (PASK, University of Michigan Press, 7 June 2011) could serve as an additional framework. The PASK assessment (PASK, University of Michigan Press, 7 June 2011) requires facilitators to reflect on areas of knowledge, skills and personal awareness. Items related to personal awareness spoke to particular behaviors of facilitators. Therefore, the terminology of “knowledge, skills, and behaviors” was put in place for the current study in order to provide a broader picture of how dialogue facilitation may occur.
Knowledge

Knowledge encompasses the basic instruction that Peer Dialogue Facilitators were provided in advance of beginning dialogue facilitation as well as information that Peer Dialogue Facilitators sought on their own. Peer Dialogue Facilitators received one semester of pre-training through the Creative Inquiry three-semester series prior to beginning dialogue facilitation. This semester served to teach Peer Dialogue Facilitators about intergroup dialogue, by engaging them in a facilitated dialogue setting, and provided them with information about social justice concepts. Peer Dialogue Facilitators described that much of their knowledge about social justice and about dialogue facilitation came from this training. They also described going out and getting additional information as a result of...
valuing the pre-service training that they received. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were then able to use this knowledge in their dialogue facilitation, such as having the ability to describe the cycle of socialization. Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated and described why the set-up of a room was important, as well as how researching a dialogue topic or simply understanding Clemson students were useful to dialogue facilitation.

"We are in this together"

While basic, Peer Dialogue Facilitators described how they physically set up space that was used to facilitate New Student Dialogues. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were taught
during their training that dialogue should occur in a circle, where all participants were facing and could be visible to one another. Each dialogue room was equipped with moveable furniture to facilitate this process.

Some facilitators set up chairs before participants arrived, based on the number of participants that were expected. In one observation, James noted that several chairs were empty when the dialogue began. He asked participants to scoot in their chairs and push the extra chairs out of the circle. Other facilitators enlisted participants to help set up the space. In another observation, I noted that Sandra Lee invited participants to join her in pushing tables to the side and making a circle in the middle with the chairs. Virginia further described how this process had an impact on the dialogue setting:

I kind of try and explain to them the nicest way possible how we’re going to do this. That was really hard the first time because I thought I was giving very clear instructions on how to move the furniture and it was just not working. Now I know exactly what to say to get the exact goal of how I need to do things and the exact tone. If I say, "You guys are going to do this thing," their body language says "no" and they do whatever. If Jessica and I are going to help you and we just touch one chair, they are a lot nicer to us after the dialogue. If we are setting up something else rather than just standing there, they are a lot more apt to think we are in this together with them.

Nagda and Maxwell (2006) paid keen attention to the conjoint learner-educator roles that every participant (and facilitator) plays in dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were trained to intentionally set up spaces where the hierarchy of a traditional teaching environment with a teacher in the front was flattened. Participants were seated in a circle
where everyone could see one another. Therefore, authority or position was not determined by one’s placement in the room. Virginia’s quote helps us to understand how the simple act of moving furniture in the room began to create an inviting space for dialogue.

“Researching and preparing for the dialogue”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators were responsible for creating the curriculum for each of the dialogues that they co-facilitated. Dialogue curriculum was drafted around one or more social identity topics. Social identity refers to “group memberships based on physical or social characteristics ascribed by self or others that located people within societal structures that confer advantage/privilege or disadvantage/oppression” (Maxwell, Chesler, & Nagda, 2011, p. 163). For instance, New Student Dialogues were often centered on race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, etc. as their primary focus. These social identities served as the foundation for talking about larger societal issues, such as interracial dating, gender equity in the workplace, or even white privilege.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators researched information about their individual topics in order to create the curriculum. This knowledge helped them to guide the conversation in the dialogue. Virginia described reading Tatum’s Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And Other Conversations About Race to prepare for her dialogue on privilege. Franz also reflected on how researching his topic had been helpful in a particular dialogue. Franz said, “...the person sitting to my right mentioned a demographic statistic that was readily available. I had actually looked that up today as part of my own personal preparation to make sure that I knew those.”
“Understanding who comes into Clemson”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators were responsible for facilitating two dialogues per week over a 15-week period. Dialogue groups held no more than 30 participants. Over the course of a semester, Peer Dialogue Facilitators facilitated a large number of dialogues and saw many participants. Different participants shaped and reshaped the dialogue setting each time. Peer Dialogue Facilitators articulated how knowledge of participants, meaning what backgrounds and experiences participants may be able to share, was needed to navigate the dialogue space. Henry said,

I think it's good to know who your, I don't want to say audience, but your dialogue participants are, as maybe a collective. So understanding the university perspective, understanding kind of who comes into Clemson, what kinds of backgrounds most of them have, because a lot of times we'll be looking for that perspective that would really make a dialogue great and we're just not going to get it. Because, there's no one to give it, or those that do identify with that feel like such a minority that they don't really want to say anything.

Jessica also articulated how having different participants impacted her perspective of dialogue. She said, “I guess what I’m learning so far is that you can’t treat every dialogue the same. And that has so much to do with the people who are in it and what they want to talk about.” Jessica learned that understanding her participants helped her to shape conversation in the dialogue.

Skills

Skills can be taught. Peer Dialogue Facilitators described skills as tools for dialogue facilitation. They received instruction on how to create a safe space for dialogue and how to
elicit a variety of responses from participants. Peer Dialogue Facilitators said that they used skills in every dialogue, regardless of group dynamics or a particular make-up of participants. Skills could also be developed, and Peer Dialogue Facilitators got better with practice. Skills are different from behaviors, which were described as being more natural and intuitive.

“Encouraging participants’ voices”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators employed a number of strategies to draw out participants’ voices during different points in the dialogue curriculum. For instance, Peer Dialogue Facilitators often asked participants to read something “popcorn style” in order to encourage participants to speak at their own comfort rather than going around the circle.
Preston also described another strategy that he used to try to ensure that multiple voices were shared in the dialogue.

That’s why we started doing this with the social identity wheel. We used to have people share their own [identity wheel] but it would take a while and I didn’t think a lot was coming out of it. Now I pick randomly and ask the group who had that identity in their top two or three and why. And then I ask who didn’t, and why not. The participants can see other people actually care about something they might not have thought was even important, that another student might even have been persecuted for an identity. We’ve seen a lot of good come out of doing it in that way. I wish we could do it with all the identities on the wheel, but hopefully even the small bit we do helps the group to break down some of those preconceived barriers they might have coming into the room.

In this way, Preston ensured that multiple perspectives were shared that could offer opportunities for participants to learn from one another.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators frequently used strategies to break participants up during the dialogue. The purpose of breaking participants up was often for the purpose creating opportunities for small group sharing. Peer Dialogue Facilitators used these pair and share, or small group, activities to help participants feel more comfortable with sharing personal experiences. To pair and share, participants were sometimes asked to turn to a neighbor beside them or they might be counted off by the total number of participants in the room divided by two so that they were matched with someone across the room.

Breaking up participants was also sometimes necessary to ensure that participants were exposed to new people. During observations, I noted that sometimes individuals
would introduce themselves as roommates, teammates, or otherwise indicated that they had a previous relationship. Christina described using the counting off strategy to mix participants up and expose them to someone new.

It’s something we do to further change-up the space... if we still think there is that bit of apathy. We have them count off, get up, move across the room, and then meet somebody new. It separates those groups that we sometimes get ... People have been coming in with roommates a lot lately. Counting off also helps get those students to meet someone new and experience different perspectives. I think not having their buddy as a crutch beside them helps to break people out of their shells. They come in with somebody they’re comfortable with, and we want them to be somewhat uncomfortable in the space. The people who don’t know anybody in the room are already uncomfortable, but then you’ll have a group of two or three friends sitting right next to them.

Altering participant interactions ultimately exposes participants to more and different viewpoints that can encourage learning across difference.

“You feel that sense of vulnerability”

The creation of a safe space for dialogue was articulated several times during the data collection. Peer Dialogue Facilitators used the words “safe space.” They shared the importance of a space being safe for dialogue and the negative impact of a space not being safe. Jessica talked about the delicate balance of establishing an environment where students should not feel fully comfortable in order to stretch their learning but that they must feel safe to do so.
I think I like the feeling of the dialogue being comfortable but right on that line of being uncomfortable. Because we want everyone to be comfortable and want to share, let everyone know their feelings, but we also want that piece of being uncomfortable where you kind of challenge yourself. You feel that sense of vulnerability that you may not have wanted to feel.

Preston articulated that there were particular points during the dialogue where the foundation for a safe space could be established.

One of the biggest things is that deep lead-in activity and how that transitions into dialogue. And I think that's a really fragile space at first, because you can go to asking something in a joking tone afterwards that can kill it or you can say something really profound and really stimulate the folks for the next forty-five minutes.

Finally, James described the negative impact to the dialogue if participants were not in an environment that promoted safety.

If a space isn't safe, I'm not going to blame the people who are not sharing because they aren't feeling safe. Because if it's not safe, I don't want to share, so I know how they feel. I try to figure out why the space is bad. If I would be able to share in that moment, is the group resistant or is it something else? If I would not share after what one person said based on the response that they got, that dialogue is clearly not safe for anyone.

If the dialogue is not open to authentic sharing, participant (and even facilitator) voices may be silenced. A primary goal of dialogue is to create a space where participants are
willing to share perspectives and personal experiences. Therefore, establishing a safe space is essential for dialogue facilitation.

**Behaviors**

Behaviors are largely intuitive and sometimes unconscious actions. Peer Dialogue Facilitators indicated that behaviors could be learned or coached but that they were more often associated with feelings. Peer Dialogue Facilitators indicated that they drew on a set of natural inclinations when they were in the process of facilitating dialogue. This sense of intuition guided them and gave them a better perception of the dialogue space, as well as prompted them to direct the dialogue in a way that aligned with where participants were at that moment.

![Figure 5: Themes within the main category of behaviors](image-url)
“I could speak up in front of people with different identities”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators, in their facilitative role, must be present and active participants in the dialogue. Several female identified facilitators articulated the struggle in finding their voice and asserting themselves in dialogue facilitation, particularly if paired with a male identified co-facilitator. Hope, who identifies as an African-American female, described the struggles she experienced early in the semester. Her statements (bolded) also provide an indication of how her target racial identity impacted her ability to find her voice as a facilitator at a predominately white institution.

At the beginning of the semester I was really afraid to do a dialogue by myself, because I think I knew I couldn’t, that I needed Henry there with me. I did not have that confidence to go it alone, and the reason I got that feeling is because of the group dynamics. I realized that at Clemson I am a minority and in some of our dialogues that really played out, where I was the only voice like myself that could project my feelings or perspectives. I guess that made me a little bit more shy, made me a little bit more timid. Reluctant to speak out. ... Like one day I presented the group norms, and I usually don’t do that. And then dialogue-debate-discussion which I had also never presented before. So when we tag teamed a debrief I felt really empowered, that I could speak up in front of people who are not similar in their social identities to myself. I discovered things were great, then just building off the foundation and be the one to ask thoughtful questions, which made me more confident, until I eventually did a dialogue by myself this past Thursday. Henry had an emergency but no one else had
time free to do it with me. So I did it, and it actually turned out pretty well. I was happy.

Hope’s co-facilitator, who identifies as a White male, later commented on the changes that he saw in Hope as the semester progressed. In his statement, the importance of having her voice present is emphasized.

I can tell she’s a lot more confident in the dialogues now, which is another big strength. I have really enjoyed seeing that growth, because she started out so timid and more in the background. It’s something noticeable in each dialogue that we do. Everyone can tell when a facilitator has that confidence in a dialogue session.

Hope’s statements appear to be consistent with findings from a study by Maxwell, Chesler, and Nagda (2011) that explored the role of social identity in facilitation. Forty-nine trained facilitators responded in an interview setting to a prompt asking “whether and how social identities affected or might affect their dialogue facilitation approaches and behaviors” (Maxwell, Chesler & Nagda, 2011, p. 165). Maxwell et al. (2011) found that identity had a relationship to the level of credibility that facilitators established in their facilitative role. Women and persons of color felt that their target group identity lent credibility to their life experiences; however, they also reported challenges and fears regarding how negative stereotypes about their identity could impact credibility.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators who identified as male and/or White were more likely to articulate confidence with their own dialogue facilitation. This is also consistent with Maxwell, Chesler, and Nagda’s (2011) findings. Maxwell et al. (2011) reported that study participants indicated that their Whiteness was core to their credibility and that being male afforded them power and privilege in the dialogue space. Preston, who identifies as a White
male, acknowledged that while training was needed, he felt confident in his ability to facilitate dialogue. Preston said, “I’d like to express gratitude for our instructors and the curriculum …even though social justice is lifelong learning I definitely felt empowered in our situations. I felt capable to lead and facilitate dialogue.”

“They are engaged if they look engaged”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators described having an ability to recognize when participants were engaged in the dialogue. The word “engaged” was used often to describe participant’s body language or how they interacted with others in the dialogue. Hope described how she identified engagement from participants.

I usually know when they are engaged first of all if they look engaged. When something enlightening is said and they show interest with their face or they show it with body language, that’s when I know that they’re engaged. Then I feel they are more engaged when they speak and share something they just experienced. Hope portrayed being engaged as being positive and productive for dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators assessed the level of engagement early in the dialogue in order to determine strategies that might be needed to jump start a group that first appeared more hesitant.

One goal of New Student Dialogues is to provide participants with an understanding of dialogue as a tool for communication with others across difference. The ultimate measure of engagement might include whether or not participants engage in dialogue outside of the New Student Dialogue setting. Sandra Lee knew one of the participants in her New Student Dialogue and recounted what he shared with her before and after attending.

But he came to me and when he told me which dialogue he had gotten on the schedule, I told him if he talked it would go well. But if he didn’t, it would just be like
“Why am I here?” for the time. He went in, and he immediately started talking. He was engaged, and he stayed with it, just had a ball. And when he left the dialogue, I guess this girl he had been sitting next to in there...he told me they talked about the dialogue until almost three AM.

In this case, participants’ engagement in the New Student Dialogue extended beyond the New Student Dialogue experience.

“Making some time to talk with my partner”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators were paired with a co-facilitator for each dialogue. Co-facilitators interacted with one another in different ways. Peer Dialogue Facilitators shared the importance of having opportunities to check-in with each other at various times during the dialogue to evaluate what was happening in the dialogue and to adapt as needed. Franz learned the importance of pulling his partner aside early in the semester.

Something else I try to do now, especially in most of the dialogues, and this was after week two when Sandra Lee and I had our issue come up, is make some time to talk with Sandra Lee. Whether it’s in the beginning, in the middle, multiple times, whatever it is. I think that we both have a system now where we understand the importance of that. It makes it easier to create those instances but there is still a conscious effort. We’ll cut out a moment like maybe where we split the dialogue participants into groups, so her and I can talk off to the side, and throw that out the window just so they can have more dialogue time with the entire group.

I observed this co-facilitator pair conferring with one another multiple times when facilitating dialogue. This was often done while participants were engaged in a pair and
share or small group activity. During one observation, Franz and Sandra Lee used this time to adapt an activity to meet the needs of the current group.

It was also important for co-facilitators to be on the same page throughout the dialogue. Co-facilitators emphasized the importance of presenting a united front and modeling cooperation across identity groups. While processing dialogues in class, Olivia noted that pulling your partner aside could be an opportunity to “check” each other for something that may have happened without doing so in front of participants. She was able to provide immediate feedback to a partner during an intentional check-in.

...unless [what happened] is really offensive I don’t think you should ever correct your co-facilitator on the spot. Because then everyone’s going to pick sides and there’s not going to be any sort of common ground. You always have to trust them and know that they know what they’re doing. And then, I just really like having those check-in times, especially in the middle, for an instant good or bad critique. Because if you stop to indicate they were totally wrong – let me do it my way – then people are not going to respond well to that. It’s something you can just check in on later.

In addition to times to check in with one another during dialogue, I also observed that almost every pair spent 10-20 minutes doing an immediate debriefing with one another after the dialogue had concluded. This time was used to provide one another with feedback and affirmation. Co-facilitators also strategized about things that worked well and things that could be changed in the next dialogue.
SUB-CATEGORIES:

INTEGRATION, ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, AWARENESS AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Throughout the data analysis process, it was evident that some themes could fit into
more than one of the main categories for knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Figure 2
provides a visual representation of the Venn diagram that best describes the overlapping
nature of the data. Each of the sub-categories which overlap knowledge, skills, and
behaviors have been named to address the actions of Peer Dialogue Facilitators associated
with the assigned portion of the Venn diagram.

![Venn Diagram](image)

Figure 2: Main Categories and Sub-Categories
Integration

In this section, themes overlap the main categories of knowledge and skills. Knowledge encompasses instruction provided to Peer Dialogue Facilitators while skills are things that Peer Dialogue Facilitators were taught to do in dialogue facilitation. I noted that Peer Dialogue Facilitators integrated knowledge that they had learned about social justice and intergroup dialogue facilitation with skills that were used to create an effective space for dialogue. Figure 6 shows themes that display integration in dialogue facilitation. These themes include ways that Peer Dialogue Facilitators created space for learning to occur and the specific tools that were necessary to accomplish this.

“Opportunities to surface learning about social justice”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators learned about a variety of social justice terms during the first semester of training on dialogue facilitation. This terminology was used to describe
things in the dialogue setting, such as the differences between debate, discussion, and dialogue as three communication styles. Observations captured the ways that Peer Dialogue Facilitators defined specific terms for dialogue, which was honed and refined during the course of the semester. For instance, salience was described early in the semester by posing the question “when you walk out of your room in the morning, what do you think about the most?” Later in the semester, additional descriptors were provided, such as: the things most important to you, or the things you do most often, or what most affects your daily life.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators also recognized something that occurred in the dialogue and chose to name it, such as when a participant’s story provided an example of a microaggression. Franz described with great enthusiasm a moment when he recognized the cycle of socialization in a participant’s statement and was able to describe the cycle of socialization for the group.

Some of them may be perpetuating the cycle of socialization. I did want to bring that up tonight and I was on the edge of my seat with the guy. I really loved his input. He was all into it, loved it. He was giving all sorts of experiences. But everything he said came back to “but that is kind of the way it needed to be.” And I just wanted to give him the verbal punch in the face that was the cycle of socialization, and say that this is how the world is at times, and what he was saying lined up with that.

Opportunities to surface and share social justice terminology were used to increase participant learning and understanding. Sandra Lee elaborated on the importance of having this knowledge by saying “...having the knowledge is like being able to spread it. Being able to offer it if someone needs to know, or would like to know."
“It’s really difficult to get stories without the identities represented”

Dialogue works best when there are multiple perspectives that can be shared between and amongst participants and facilitators. Surfacing multiple diverse perspectives often proved challenging at a predominately white institution where heterosexual and Christian identities are also prevalently identified by participants. Olivia articulated the challenge that Peer Dialogue Facilitators experienced when trying to surface multiple perspectives within relatively homogenized groups.

People at Clemson need dialogue, but what they need is dialogues with people who aren’t from Clemson. Because they need a less homogenized population, but it’s the homogenized population that needs dialogue.

She went on later to indicate that

I’m realizing more and more that it’s because we don’t have that identity representation to share those life experiences. I’m finding that it’s really difficult to get those stories without the identities presented to them.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators presented different experiences by integrating their own research on the dialogue topic with things that had been shared by participants in earlier dialogue settings. Henry described the delicate balance of ensuring that something was shared that could feel like personal experience rather than coming across as facilitators providing instruction.

It’s something we really talk about in our group norms, and when we had no one who identified as Catholic in our one dialogue someone brought it up anyways and then others were talking it down without anyone to refute those points. I had to be the one to share those experiences that I’ve learned from other dialogues of what
people say in general. But I think I’m in there in a teaching role, so when I say things it’s more a feel of I’m teaching this idea, and now they’ve learned it too. Whereas if someone else is sharing their experience they’re sharing something personal, and some of it could refute me because I’m basically still a teacher at that point. And it’s just not as impacting, me sharing things is just not the same. Hope and I talked about it, but there are some things we can share but we’re always going to be seen as a teacher. So a lot of times I will avoid sharing just because I want the room to share their own personal experiences so mine isn’t seen as a “well, here’s how it is” thing. Different perspectives were often not present or perhaps not shared. Preston described that it was necessary for a Peer Dialogue Facilitator to gently point out a perspective that might be missing from the dialogue.

I was trying to help them see past the initial stuff and asked were there possibly any voices not being heard. We usually try and get that in during that topic, pointing out that a lot of us in that space identify as white, and from the South. I’m trying to get that new perspective out to the group that may not be present within the participants. Instances like this were opportunities for facilitators to point out that additional perspectives might exist, even if they weren’t present or shared in that dialogue setting.

**Creating an inclusive space for differences and dialogue**

Nagda and Maxwell (2011) shared a framework for intergroup dialogue facilitation that served as the basis for provisional codes cited in this study. “Creating an inclusive space for differences and dialogue” is the first of several competencies described by Nagda and Maxwell (2011) to be presented in this chapter. A full list of competencies and their
descriptions are provided in Appendix C. To fit within the current study’s framework, “creating an inclusive space for differences and dialogue” can best be categorized within integration.

First, Peer Dialogue Facilitators were taught how to create the environment necessary for dialogue through the first semester pre-training class. I observed Peer Dialogue Facilitators utilizing skills in their role that allowed them to create a space that allowed for and encouraged personal sharing. Peer Dialogue Facilitators encouraged the sharing of many voices and minimized the sharing of those who might serve to speak often enough or in ways that overpowered the space. James articulated the challenge of minimizing oversharing in a dialogue.

Another difficulty was we had one student who was a talker, and it was difficult handling that because there were times where his voice was heard so much that it felt like other people’s voices were being drowned out. Not having enough time to speak and say what they wanted to say, some of these voices we hadn’t heard yet. I tried to address that in the best way that I could, at least two or three times. [when he said] “I can talk all night,” that was when I just jumped in there and affirmed him for recognizing that everything he had shared. And then kind of turned to the rest of the group to look for more voices.

This area of competency also requires facilitators to establish and regularly visit group norms. Group norms were established based on a set standard during the beginning of each dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators asked participants to make meaning of these norms and often highlighted areas that could be particularly important. I observed Peer Dialogue Facilitators call participants back to the norms when participants spoke over one
another or when "I statements" were not used. Peer Dialogue Facilitators articulated that the importance of doing this was related to ensuring that the environment was safe for dialogue to occur and for participants to feel comfortable sharing personal experiences.

Each New Student Dialogue provided opportunities for participants to learn how to speak to one another across areas of difference. Peer Dialogue Facilitators are aware that multiple perspectives exist and worked to create environments where convergent and divergent experiences could be shared. Henry tried to tap into specific opportunities where new perspectives could be shared.

And really just, maybe being able to recognize when you have a perspective other than the typical one you keep getting in most dialogues. Hopefully being able to tap into that, pull out what’s important from that. I always try and pull as much as possible from the people who do offer those different perspectives. I don’t think originally I was as good at recognizing that, realizing the chance it offered to get something new out in the open for the group, and trying to get as much out of it as possible. It’s really important at that moment to speak about it.

This statement reflects Henry’s awareness of multiple perspectives. Over time, Henry has become more adept at recognizing when these perspectives were present and drawing them out to ensure that a multitude of voices were present in the dialogue.

**Integrating content and process**

“Integrating content and process” is another competency that was described by Nagda and Maxwell (2011). Content includes all of the structured or experiential activities that dialogue facilitators may use to guide participants to reflect on their own lives and pertinent social issues. Attention to process requires that facilitators utilize group process
and group dynamics to guide participants in reflecting on the dialogue and the intergroup dynamics. Nadga and Maxwell (2011) emphasized the need for dialogue facilitators to integrate content and process. Appendix B provides additional description for this competency, which includes an emphasis on content and process areas as well as the importance of recognizing the conjoint learner-educator roles that all participants play.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators consistently used icebreakers and an activity around the differences between debate, discussion and dialogue to set the tone for participants. Videos, articles, continuum activities, or other reflection activities were often used to help participants connect their personal experiences and understanding to the social identity focus of the dialogue curriculum. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also attended to group process and dynamics to encourage participants to reflect on the dialogue process. Jessica noted this about how the dynamics of the space affect the dialogue.

I think sometimes the number of people in the room can have an effect, because you can have a lot of people with a lot of different opinions, different experiences, and they talk more. Or you have like a small room and only three or four people talk to every question.

Other Peer Dialogue Facilitators noted how what was shared or how questions were posed affected what was shared or learned during the dialogue. Christina reflected, “It’s not all about me.” She went on to describe that sometimes the topic needed to move in the direction that participants moved it rather than based on her thoughts for the dialogue. This aligns with Nagda and Maxwell’s (2011) assertion that facilitators must recognize the conjoint learner and educator roles that every participant plays. Olivia paints a picture of
what happens when participants realize that they have an opportunity to teach as well as to learn in a dialogue.

It’s that moment where someone in the dialogue says something that maybe not everyone in the room agrees with, or they say something that seems sort of offensive, and everyone looks at you. And that is when Jessica and I kind of looked at each other and indicated we weren’t going to answer, which took a minute for everybody to process. Then instantly people are fired up about answering; they want to respond. They realize that you're not the teacher, they're the teacher. And you're the learner and they're the learner.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators voiced several times the desire they had to minimize their role as “teacher” to ensure that there was a common ground for all participants and facilitators to learn from one another.

**Acknowledgement**

Themes presented in this section overlap the main categories of knowledge and behaviors. Peer Dialogue Facilitators developed knowledge through course instruction and personal research on dialogue topics. Behaviors, however, were often intuitive and allowed Peer Dialogue Facilitators to “read” participants and the dialogue space. Peer Dialogue Facilitators described concepts that had been presented to them during their facilitation training. Peer Dialogue Facilitators observed instructors use the elements described in these themes as tools in their own dialogue setting, and therefore, were able to recognize them when they occurred. Knowing these concepts and being able to recognize them, however, was not enough. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also had to tune their emotions to “feel out” these elements in the dialogue space. Ultimately, the following themes best
describe how Peer Dialogue Facilitators acknowledge and work with group process and group dynamics in dialogue.

“Having space and time to contemplate”

Silence was used many times as a facilitative tool for dialogue. Silence provided an opportunity for participants (and facilitators) to reflect on what was being shared in the dialogue before speaking. Jessica emphasized the role of silence in providing opportunities for participants (and facilitators) to reflect on what was being shared in the dialogue before speaking.

I like silence. I feel as though it’s necessary for a dialogue. Because I think that if we just keep it going sometimes it's just hard to sit there and think and actually go deep mentally in your mind. So that is something that I do, like pretty much every dialogue, is I'll sit there for a few minutes and look around. I kind of like address to them that I'm comfortable with silence because sometimes people are internal
processors, or sometimes like myself, I have to like kind of sit there and think about it. So, I just want to give people who aren't verbal processors time to kind of think about it.

Henry articulated the need to provide space and time for participants to process what was happening in the dialogue.

There are some people who have to think about things before they'll say something, and there are some people who will think about it and still never say it. But at least they're contemplating it, and they have that space and time to contemplate. Think about whatever to the effect of what we're discussing, and they need to, and they have that space. ...if they aren't going to say anything they can at least think about it.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators often let participants sit in silence until they were ready to move on, or until someone felt comfortable to speak.

Silence was used as a tool by Peer Dialogue Facilitators to encourage students to speak, indicating that it was up to them to fill the space and keep the conversation going. Otherwise, participants had a tendency to rely on Peer Dialogue Facilitators to fill the space and keep conversation going. Peer Dialogue Facilitators articulated throughout their interviews that it was more important for participants' voices to be heard. Silence became a tool for emphasizing that participants should speak. James stated,

There are times where the students were talkative when they want to be, and then when they are posed a difficult question they're not too comfortable with they tend to get really quiet. And so Emily has gotten pretty good with owning the silence and letting it ride. There are times we have to sit ten or fifteen seconds before someone will say something but with our body language we convey that we're going to sit
there until somebody says something. Kind of leaning forwards, eyebrows up, looking around the room trying to make eye contact with everybody. Giving the impression that if they don’t talk we’re all just going to keep sitting there in silence. Silence was also used a tool to address resistance. Peer Dialogue Facilitators recognized a difference between silence that was needed to process and silence that was linked to a lack of engagement. Preston called attention to the resistance that he recognized in participants as they sat silently during one observation.

Preston called “time out.” Preston asked, “Who has friends that have come to dialogue? What did they say? These have the ability to be boring, long, and awkward but you can make it better – if you participate…” [Preston essentially left the success of the dialogue in their hands.] Christina also indicated that she and Preston were comfortable sitting in silence. Christina referred that in a few minutes they would learn about speaking discomfort, so if something was awkward, they could say that. Preston and Christina addressed the silence directly in order to challenge participants to speak up and engage in the dialogue. They prompted participants to take charge of their own experience in the dialogue by actively speaking and participating.

“So disrespectful”

Resistance is something that Peer Dialogue Facilitators recognized in their participants. Peer Dialogue Facilitators recognized resistance through statements made by participants or the body language that participants displayed. Henry described his observations of resistance in the following statement.

It’s about body language. There were two guys in the room ... he was making gestures the whole time like ‘Why are we even here?’ He was throwing his hands up
in the air. I would consider that some resistance. And then there was another guy who just stared at me, while I was panning the room. I tried starring back but he just kept starring and I eventually looked away because I wasn’t there to have a starring contest. I don’t know what he was trying to do, but I would consider that some resistance as well because it made me uncomfortable.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators did not simply note resistance but addressed it directly to ensure productive dialogue could occur.

In some ways, resistance is related to reading a room or being attuned to body language. However, resistance has a negative connotation and makes it more difficult for productive dialogue to occur. Peer Dialogue Facilitators cannot simply note resistance (as they would in reading a room) but should address resistance directly to ensure productive dialogue can occur. In one observation, I noted how James and Emily addressed resistance.

Before moving on, James indicated that the dialogue had a small group of people (~17) but would still last for two hours tonight. James indicated that a dialogue can go really well if folks talk and share, or really bad if they didn’t. James and Emily encouraged the small group to stick in with them and participate.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators also noted that the level of resistance seemed to increase as the semester went on. Participants who signed up for dialogues at the beginning of the semester were often described as engaged, while those who signed up later were more often described as resistant. During a particularly late dialogue, Emily said, “I kind of expected a resistance towards the end. That no one would want to be there, no one would want to talk, but I didn’t think it would be an ignorant, mean resistance. So disrespectful.”
Addressing this behavior was necessary to ensure that the space was safe for dialogue to occur and for participants to engage in the dialogue conversation.

“No one understands where I’m coming from”

A trigger, or being triggered, is terminology used in intergroup dialogue that indicates that a participant (or facilitator) has had an emotional response to something that has been shared. This emotional response can be akin to someone being taken aback and can almost shut down an individual. Peer Dialogue Facilitators, particularly those who held a target identity related to their dialogue topic, mentioned being triggered several times throughout the semester. Jessica described moments when she experienced being triggered in a dialogue, which include feelings of being alone and misunderstood.

This week in our white privilege dialogue there was only one minority in there besides myself ...it was kind of difficult, and just some of the things that they were saying, being an all-White group. It really triggered me because they just weren’t getting it. ...there was one minority student who might resonate with some of the things I resonate with, but in the situation he literally, technically, said “I’m white on the inside, black on the outside.” So it was kind of like, OK, so, the way I see it is I’m the only minority in this room and no one’s kind of understanding where I’m coming from. I was just really triggered.

Co-facilitation provides an opportunity for facilitators to navigate the dialogue when one of them becomes triggered. Preston, a White male facilitator, found that he was triggered less often than his Black female partner. He was able to take the lead in facilitation in that moment to allow her additional time to process.
I don't get triggered very much. It can happen because something catches me off-guard, but it doesn’t tend to be that big when it occurs. Because I don't get triggered I think I am able to keep that part-facilitator yet part-participant mindset where I'm not going to overreact. Keep things on dialogue and not escalate to putting people into time out or shutting them down by saying something I shouldn’t say as a facilitator. I think it gives freedom to the other facilitator by not having to worry about me begin triggered along with themselves. I can take things over while they process until they're ready to come back into the space.

The difference in Preston’s perspective of the dialogue allowed him to take over in a moment where Christina required time to reflect or to process an emotionally charged reaction.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators needed to find productive ways to respond to being triggered in order to maintain their focus and to move past difficult moments in dialogue. Christina described how her understanding of the cycle of socialization helped her to put participants’ statements into a different context.

It helps, too, when I get triggered to go back to that where they might not know that what they are saying might be offensive to someone else and then we can explore it deeper because I know it comes from somewhere else.

Hope also spoke about the importance of having patience, while Jessica emphasized how triggering experiences could be surfaced as learning moments for everyone by asking reflective questions such as “Well what do you mean?” or “Talk to me more about that.”

**Embracing a productive use of self**
Nagda and Maxwell (2011) named “embracing a productive use of self” as another competency of dialogue facilitation. (See Appendix C.) A distinctive dimension of dialogue facilitation involves a use of self in ways that is grounded in social group membership and identities (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). “Embracing a productive use of self” is reflective of the self-knowledge that a facilitator brings to dialogue facilitation. In addition, there is need for intuitive assessment of the needs of the dialogue and how use of self or personal examples can provoke learning and sharing amongst participants. I observed James share some deeply personal experiences during one of my observations and then noted how this elicited more vulnerable sharing from other group members. My field notes indicated, “James shared [ ] which brought a much deeper emotion and depth to the concept of vulnerability. Participants started sharing more personal examples, becoming more vulnerable with the group.”

Dialogue facilitators must also have a level of self-awareness to recognize power dynamics and surface these as opportunities for learning (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). I observed how Preston challenged power dynamics within his own identity group by pointing out the role of identity in what was being shared.

Preston called out the majority in the room (which was White) as participants talked about racism’s link to the Confederate flag. Several participants emphasized that how you view the flag depends on what you think the war is about. Participants shared what they learned in history class. Preston challenged who wrote those history books.
Peer Dialogue Facilitators also made space for participants to call out power dynamics. They played a role in supporting participants who bravely called one another out on privilege or how their identities contributed to a certain perspective or experience.

**Building relationships within and across differences**

Nagda and Maxwell (2011) outlined several areas where facilitators could intentionally build relationships within and across differences. (See Appendix C for a full description of “building relationships within and across difference.”) I noted several tendencies or practices during my observations. First, Peer Dialogue Facilitators have a natural desire to learn about others and display open attitudes about understanding others’ experiences and sharing their own. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were often observed affirming others. When asked why this did this, or what difference it made, Peer Dialogue Facilitators indicated that providing affirmation acknowledged what someone had to say, gave value to their perspective, and encouraged others to share similar experiences.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators have also received training and gained knowledge about the ways that our histories cause us to be estranged and have ignorance of one another. Christina processed often about her experiences facilitating a dialogue that touched on race and regionalism when discussing the Confederate flag. She clearly recognized that how participants were brought up or what they had experienced influenced their perspective.

I guess for me, a lot of times what I choose to say is mostly based off what you were just saying. I can understand a participant was raised in a certain way, or in a certain environment, so that is why they think something is OK. I can also understand where they might have been raised in an environment where they’ve never seen something before, or if they have seen it it’s a sign of America being separated. Or
they see it as a symbol of slavery and oppression. I can kind of see both sides, but it's that getting to the cycle of socialization area, getting a common ground of understanding, or even just sometimes an understanding for myself to clarify what a participant is trying to say in the space. Pull out other voices in the process...

While Christina often felt triggered in dialogue by perspectives shared by agent identities, her knowledge of participants’ ignorance and tendency to have misinformation allowed her to step back and understand the impact that could occur through the sharing of voices who had other experiences or perspectives. Christina ensured this happened, even if she was the only voice in the room that was able or willing to share a different perspective.

**Awareness**

Themes presented in this section overlap the main categories of skills and behaviors. Skills are taught and can be developed whereas behaviors are associated with feelings that Peer Dialogue Facilitators described. This intersection of knowledge and skills can best be described as awareness. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were better able to facilitate a particular dialogue and future dialogues when they reflected on and analyzed what was happening in a dialogue. My observations indicated that Peer Dialogue Facilitators became stronger and more confident in managing these elements of dialogue as the semester progressed.
“What this is going to look like”

Every Peer Dialogue Facilitator made some effort to provide a framework for how participants would spend time together in the dialogue. This was different from the group norms activity that was standard in every dialogue observation. (*Group norms established how participants and facilitators would interact with one another. Establishing what a dialogue should look like included sharing common do’s and don’ts and providing participants with an idea of what they would be doing for the two hours spent together.*) Participants
gained a better understanding of what would happen during a New Student Dialogue. Preston articulated the importance of describing for participants how they would spend time together in the dialogue.

    What we try to do is help them to understand a little bit more about what this is going to look like. Because I think a lot of them think they're just going to get talked to instead of being part of the process.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators shared specific information that helped to set the tone. For instance, Franz and Sandra Lee made a point of regularly informing participants of the objectives of the dialogue, such as learning about social justice and how to speak to people who are different from themselves. Henry and Hope also used the introduction of the dialogue as an opportunity to talk about why they had become Peer Dialogue Facilitators and what they personally found beneficial about dialogue.

    Peer Dialogue Facilitators shared tips with one another in class on how to establish specific do's and don’ts for dialogue participants (such as putting your phone away). These strategies were often used by other Peer Dialogue Facilitators in their dialogues. Emily said, “We've totally stolen Preston's cell-phone trick.” I observed Preston’s 'cell phone trick’ several times, which went something like this description from my observations:

    Preston indicated that he and Christina would introduce themselves and by the time they had done that participants should have their phones put away. Preston emphasized that a dialogue required listening and technology could detract from that. Preston indicated that if any participant caught him or Christina texting, then they could as well.
Participants received clear messages about the importance of their attention and participation during the dialogue, as well as what they would expect and what Peer Dialogue Facilitators hoped to achieve.

“Questions that require thinking”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators asked intentional questions. Henry indicated that there was a delicate balance between asking questions that would help to draw out perspectives that were needed without asking leading questions.

I guess it's kind of good for me in a way to not have anything I want them to say, so that might be even better. So I won't really ask leading questions. But at the same times sometimes you do have to ask leading questions to get them to go anywhere.

James went on to explain that posing open-ended questions had some of the best results. He also emphasized the importance of using body language that was open and inviting to elicit responses from participants.

But to deal with that we've been using open ended questions that require thinking and not just yes or no answers. Especially in groups like this, they're willing to cooperate, but they aren't all willing to be the first to speak. We can pose questions and then with our body language show that we’re obviously going to be waiting for them to give us an answer. For example, if I think of something I really want to talk about I'll ask a question and then kind of lean forward, literally look at every single person's face. If they're making eye contact, make eye contact back with them, if not, I just keep going around until someone talks.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators had a desire to understand what participants chose to share in the dialogue. When unclear, facilitators would ask for additional clarification about
a statement that was made. In one observation, Emily asked a student to share more about their icebreaker fact when she wasn’t familiar with the particular topic. Later during that observation, Emily asked students to clarify the meaning of several words, such as “insecure” and “humility” when these words were shared to describe the topic of vulnerability. Sometimes it was also necessary to clarify participants’ statements when something was shared that was potentially offensive or uniformed. Virginia spoke about a participant who had used the terminology “shipped in” to talk about African American students who rode a bus from an underprivileged area to attend a high school in his area that had more resources.

I think probably just asking the student about his word choice and how it is a derogatory connotation and why he would choose to say that as opposed to his colleague who had said, "Bus in." because they were literally on a bus and coming in somewhere. Even though that’s not the best thing to say, it’s a little more appropriate. And ask him why he has these perceptions and why he might have chosen that word and where that comes from.

In this way, Peer Dialogue Facilitators were able to forgive participants for misinformation that they had, which was established in the group norms, while challenging them to think about difficult topics.

Finally, several Peer Dialogue Facilitators often used the terminology “playing devil’s advocate” when they described how they posed questions that were intended to elicit different viewpoints. Christina frequently used this strategy to draw out different perspectives. Christina was often one of few persons who identified with a target racial group in her dialogues. She provided her own perspective, which might differ from many of
the group’s statements, particularly if there was no one else to provide that perspective. Christina used this to spark conversation that might not otherwise occur. She said “What really works well for me is playing devil’s advocate, because I know that is what some people are thinking and refuse to say it, so I say it and put it out there.”

“I gave the room a look around”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators regularly observed what was happening in the dialogue and had a high level of awareness. In their first semester training, Peer Dialogue Facilitators were taught how to “read a room” in order to gauge what was happening in the dialogue space. Reading a room involves being attentive to participants’ body language and recognizing how participants affected the atmosphere of the dialogue. Franz indicated that reading a room allowed him to understand how participants reacted to something that was shared.

...Just taking a quick glance around the room. Seeing if gazes are hitting the floor rather than each other. Listening for sighs, listening for coughs. Things that people might display if they’re feeling uncomfortable, so you know you’ve hit on something. And at the same time, if people are still chatting, people are kind of brushing it off, you know you haven’t hit that nerve yet.

Sandra Lee used her awareness of participants’ non-verbal communication to gauge what participants were learning.

I guess I like to watch people, and watch their facial expression to see how they react to whatever is being said. And when you see a similar reaction amongst varying people you can bring that to the forefront, then talk about how whatever made them react in that manner felt.
Sandra Lee also indicated times when she used reading a room as a way to check the level of engagement of participants.

We did have the same people talking back over and over again, but as I gave the room a look around I could see that even though others weren’t in on it they were there in the moment, just not vocal about it. They were like internally processing, letting it just marinate in how they felt.

Sandra Lee’s observation indicated that learning was occurring for more participants than those who might have chosen to speak.

Peer Dialogue Facilitator also indicated that their ability to read a room helped them to know where to go next. Christina indicated that she looked for non-verbal indications of understanding, like head nods, but also looked with more depth when there was a lull, such as the one she describes here.

Initially when it gets silent, and quiet, that doesn’t bother me because I look at faces I guess, look to see the head down, looking at shoes, into their lap, or up into space, versus a processing look prior to speaking out on whatever was just said. Preston and I have to figure out what we’re going to do with it from there, check body language and facial expression, just kind of see how whatever was just said has sat with everyone.

Hope described having the ability to determine what participants needed. She said, “I can definitely tell when people need things like more interaction, more motivation...” Peer Dialogue Facilitators observed participants during small group activities to know when to move on to the next section. Franz said, “I did notice there was a couple faces that would turn around and indicate they were already done, what do they do know, but I also noticed
that there were peers who pulled them back together.” Overall, ability to read a room contributed to a Peer Dialogue Facilitator’s ability to manage time, which is described in “there never seemed to be enough time.”

“Handling all the things I’m bringing into a dialogue”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators described times when it was necessary for them to manage their emotions. Being triggered, which was described in the previous section, was indicative of deep emotions. The emotions described in this section are different than the deep emotions of being triggered. Emotions themselves appeared to be a behavior that occurred naturally whereas managing these emotions was a skill that facilitators developed. Early in the semester, Sandra Lee described the nervousness that she felt about facilitating dialogue. She said, “I get nervous for a dialogue. But then when I get into the dialogue and everyone is talking, my nerves calm down and I begin to step into that role where I [feel in control].”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators also articulated that there was a need to set aside their own ‘stuff’ to focus on creating the best experience for participants in the dialogue. James said, “I’m still struggling I guess and learning how to handle all the things I’m bringing into that dialogue and still facilitate the dialogue as best I can.” He went on to describe how he tries to flip the switch so that he always brought positive energy into the room.

I think I’m very personable, if I’m not feeling well physically or emotionally, I’m very good at turning off that switch to instead be an upbeat, ready to go, happy dialogue facilitating person. I think I’m good in that too for giving off energy that people can feed off of, bringing in the loud booming voice, big smile, and large mannerisms when participants are kind of down and stuff in a dialogue.

Jessica also made her own observations of how participants sometimes modeled the
facilitators. She said, “Another thing I’ve noticed is that last week me and Virginia were just really chill, very relaxed. And I think that made the space more chill, more relaxed.”

There was a desire from Peer Dialogue Facilitators to separate personal life stresses or the stress of being a facilitator from the dialogue space. Sandra Lee said, “I had been bawling my eyes out less than twenty minutes before the session so I knew I had to put an extra effort in so that I didn’t take away from the experience of the participants.” This, however, was challenging to manage. Dialogue is intended to talk about difficult topics. Emotionally and mentally taxing at times, Virginia emphasized the need to process the emotions and conversations that could linger with a Peer Dialogue Facilitator past the dialogue.

[By processing] I think it helps me not take my dialogue home with me. Because I think a lot of people have problems with that and I do too. I still talk about my dialogues when I get home most of the time. Still feel whatever emotions I was feeling from the group, especially with the seven to nine [o’clock] sessions. Processing helps me get my thoughts off my chest to someone who was there and has that shared experience.

Virginia’s current partner, as well as Peer Dialogue Facilitators who had previously served as her partner, indicated that Virginia was relentless about making sure that the co-facilitator pair processed their experience directly after each dialogue. Virginia would offer to walk someone to their car or drive them home in order to make time for debriefing.

“There never seemed to be enough time”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators were responsible for designing and implementing curriculum that fit within a two-hour period. Facilitators articulated the challenge of
negotiating time during the dialogues. There seemed to never be enough time when
dialogues were meeting their intended outcomes but could go even deeper. Hope said, “I
was watching the clock. It was really bittersweet because I really at the end wished it had
been a three hour dialogue. I just wish it could have kept going, because I felt that at the
moment everybody was just feeling so close to each other.” Timing was just as difficult,
however, when facilitators were rushing to ensure that all of the content could be included
in the allotted time. Christina indicated her frustration, saying “…the time before last we
ran out of time, so we ended up with maybe twenty minutes max of actual dialogue, which
to me was not enough at all. ... We didn’t get into enough deep content conversation.”
Christina did not feel that the time dedicated to dialogue, after completing several
activities, was enough to allow participants to go in depth.

It was then necessary for Peer Dialogue Facilitators to navigate how to deliver
curriculum content to ensure the best experience within the two-hour time period. Peer
Dialogue Facilitators assessed how much time was allotted to particular activities. Emily
noted, “I know for sure that in our dialogue we didn’t give nearly enough time to writing
the words and talking about [vulnerability].” Franz also reflected on how he could ensure
that he and Sandra Lee were better able to manage the time. Franz said,

   Maybe just making mental notes of what went well with certain activities, what
could have been shortened to allow more reflective time, or maybe something that
wasn’t produced clearly. Definitely going back and reflecting on that.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators used some of the opportunities described in “making some time
to talk with my partner” to make in-the-moment decisions about activities or content that
could be offered in the time allotted.
“You have to be a dynamic personality to do this”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators spoke to the dynamic nature of intergroup dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators adjusted their dialogue curriculum to meet the needs of the individual students in the dialogue. Emily indicated that it was necessary for facilitators to take into account the goals that participants had for their New Student Dialogue experience.

We always have a set of questions we know we want to ask but we may not get to all of them because the people are interested in another aspect or topic and not always what we're interested in. I think we've learned the hard way that if we try to cut that off and ask the questions we want [to] they won't because they don't want to talk about that.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators also indicated that it was more important to be fluid than to maintain a strict structure for the dialogue. Franz provided a description of why this was necessary.

You definitely have to be a dynamic personality to do this. If you were someone that went in there and said or laid out what was going to happen every single week and you went in there with that mindset and that expectation, it wouldn't be done. Even on good nights.

Additionally, Christina was attuned to how participants felt during the dialogue and tried to go where participants guided her.

I think every dialogue we do now is kind of up in the air, almost like getting to know a person, but it's getting to know a group. See how they deal with this, see what they say about the Confederate flag. So when I think they are feeling more of hesitancy to
I try to stick with the scripted activities until the group seems more ready to go into dialogue. This statement illuminates the combination of skill and behavior that was necessary to be dynamic in dialogue facilitation.

**Knowledge and use of social identities in dialogue**

“Knowledge and use of social identities in dialogue” is another competency that was described by Nagda and Maxwell (2011). Facilitators must first understand the significance of their social identity in the facilitative role (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). Virginia, who identifies as a White female, noted how participants responded differently to her than to her co-facilitator, who identifies as an African-America female.

There was that student to our left with the curly hair, and he said one statement about acknowledging white privilege, and he said it to Jessica. But his next statement he made to me. So he played with dominant racial groups, kind of like an apology to Jessica, but his questioning type statement on that same topic he would look at me.

Virginia recognized that social identity – in this case each facilitator’s racial identity – played a key role in how each was perceived.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators also challenged privilege and dominance or subordination and oppression that surfaced in the dialogue. Nagda and Maxwell (2011) noted that “facilitators may pause the dialogue process and ask the group for their in-the-moment observations or feelings” (p. 11). Jessica described how she asked questions in ways that attempted to place a topic in perspective for participants.
In all of our white privilege dialogues, we want them to kind of, go deeper as to why this term even exists. Why, you know, do you see those kind of things reinforced on our campus since we’re predominantly a majority white campus? ...we try to ask like I said clarifying questions. We try to ask some questions that may shock them and things that they don’t think about.

Finally, Nagda and Maxwell (2011) spoke about the ways that co-facilitators could use a relationship with one another to model how participants can speak to one another across areas of difference. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were trained to role model sharing and recognition of difference even amongst their own identity group(s). Franz co-facilitated one dialogue where his target Atheist identity was prominent. He indicated that there was a place “for a facilitator to create ally relationships with their own group.” He then articulated why this was important.

...so in your case, you’re speaking to provide a voice for all target identities revealed or unrevealed so that they know they have someone else in the space that can relate, that understands their experience.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators showed through relationships with their co-facilitators that individuals of differing identities could question one another. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were intentionally paired with target and agent identities based on their New Student Dialogue topics. Hope recognized the power of the relationship with her co-facilitator, Henry, and felt that the ways they interacted allowed participants to see how relationships could exist between target and agent identities.

I definitely think for topics like that two facilitators with different social identities and opposed agent and target identities are needed. I think the participants can
sense where a facilitator is trying to go even before they head there, but if they feel it's just us trying to make them think a certain way they'll just shut down and not want to learn anything ... it serves as an example of a relationship that can exist between target and agent identities. The days where me and Henry were on the same page were some of the best dialogues, where we almost had a conversation of our own within the dialogue that the participants could see, and understand how we connected to our partners. Those days have been the best dialogues for me. It made me feel good to know they could see us working like that.

Each co-facilitator pair articulated at some point in the semester how their differences benefited the dialogue, allowing them to support members of their own groups and feel confident in challenging privilege and oppression that was surfaced during the dialogue.

**Interconnectedness**

Themes presented in this section represent the intersection of knowledge, skills, and behaviors. The elements of dialogue facilitation indicated here required development of all three main categories for successful facilitation. Peer Dialogue Facilitators entered their roles equipped with knowledge from the pre-service training semester of the Creative Inquiry. Skills and behaviors were modeled for them during pre-service training. Peer Dialogue Facilitators began to get a feel for these elements and refined their practice during the course of the semester. After several weeks of dialogue facilitation, Peer Dialogue Facilitators were able to clearly articulate the impact of knowledge, skills, and behaviors on their own facilitation. They stressed that all three were necessary for facilitation and merged in ways that were difficult to separate.
“Evolving facilitator capacity for dialogue“

Peer Dialogue Facilitators learned and grew throughout the semester that I observed them. I was able to discern distinct differences between facilitation capacity and style between the beginning and end of the semester. Peer Dialogue Facilitators described a process of learning or evolving in their own facilitation. Classroom instruction, peer sharing, and practical experience led to the development of new skills that allowed Peer Dialogue Facilitators to stretch and grow one’s capacity for facilitation. The following paragraphs describe how this learning and growth occurred.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators learned from the Creative Inquiry course and particularly from instructors who modeled facilitation. James commented on how he learned to give affirmations to participants. He said, “It was seeing [instructors] giving out those
affirmations to people. Seeing basically how that works, because where I understood what [affirmations] were I didn’t understand how to do them effectively.”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators learned from one another by exchanging information about how to facilitate and learning from one another’s styles. Preston indicated that he and Christina had learned new things by facilitating alongside other Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Preston said, “Christina and I have both facilitated now with partners other than ourselves …so we’ve picked up some of these new things from those other facilitations.” Henry described how he developed a better understanding of social identities and salience.

In class we went through what the social identities are, what they mean, so then obviously I have those definitions that we got in class to pull from. And then as time goes on I am seeing how they change in me, what is kind of important, how it’s kind of important. The things that aren’t as important I don’t see as being as important to define me, like with body size. I did a dialogue with Preston where he kind of described it a little bit differently and I could kind of see how maybe someone else could come up with a word to make it more important to themselves or others. And this session I put small in there instead of just height or weight to show how that affected me.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators applied something that they learned in one New Student Dialogue to a future New Student Dialogue session. Self-reflection and intentional processing with a co-facilitator lead to the development of trends and provided greater insight into how to facilitate dialogue. Preston began to pick up on trends in his dialogue.
I think though this is where it helps to do the same dialogue over and over because you see trends and even though everyone is different a lot of times Christina and I can word a question that will evoke a response to then lead us to where we can pursue some question or topic that will hopefully evoke other experiences. Henry spoke about how small word changes or altering activities to elicit a response made a significant difference in participants’ responses. James also reflected on how he and Emily had learned that rearranging the order of some activities created a different experience.

Finally, Peer Dialogue Facilitators developed additional skills as they tested out their new environment. Peer Dialogue Facilitators reflected on things such as learning how to “create a space for dialogue to happen,” how to “sit in discomfort” or how to listen. Christina described how she developed the skill of fully listening to participants.

It’s kind of hard to just sit there and listen to what somebody else is saying from the very beginning all the way through to the very end. That is definitely a skill I think that I’ve acquired since I’ve been here, and want to develop a lot more I guess. Because usually you have something you start to think or form in your mind while someone is speaking, without letting them finish their thought.

Giving attention to participants, while observing and directing the dialogue, proved to be a difficult balance until Peer Dialogue Facilitators learned this skill. There was also a level of intuition and feeling that had to be developed to read a room and respond in sync with participant responses.

“I might show it on my face”

Peer Dialogue Facilitators are attentive to their own body language. (In “I gave the room a look around,” Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated how being attentive to the
body language of participants helped them understand engagement and participation levels and to check for understanding of participants.) Peer Dialogue Facilitators recognized that the way they hold and present themselves can influence how participants perceive their words and actions. Sandra Lee was conscious of how her non-verbal communication might affect participants.

If someone might say something I may not agree with, I tend to lean forward, I might show it on my face but then I remember that I can’t do that, so I quickly fix it. I think when I lean forwards it’s to like engage, I don’t know, I just lean forward.

The objective was to hold an open and inviting body posture. Henry was conscious of this when he said, “One thing I’m very intentional about is not crossing my arms...” Virginia, also conscious of her body language, indicated the challenges that she experienced and the fears she had about how her body language would be interpreted.

The only thing that is difficult for me is that as a small person, I find that I always cross my legs in chairs and I just kind of curl up into a ball because I fit on most furniture nicely that way. I think it gives off a weird nonverbal sometimes, but it literally is uncomfortable for my feet to be dangling. So if I am going to cross my arms and curl my legs up, I try to give them like very positive facial expressions if I am agreeing with that they are saying rather than my body language because I am angry. At least my face is happy that I am receptive to what they are saying, hearing you or acknowledging you and I’m not just in a ball in my own world.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators also used body language and non-verbal communication to signal to their co-facilitator during the dialogue. I noted in several observations that co-facilitators used non-verbal communication to prompt their partner to move on to the next
section of the dialogue curriculum. One co-facilitator pair was in sync in a way that extended beyond simple non-verbal signals. After watching Sandra Lee signal Franz to address a student who attempted to enter the room late, I noted this during our interview:

I caught the non-verbals between you and Franz, because you were leading the dialogue at that time. So I saw you look across the room at him to see if he had it, and I saw him give back a response, without any words being spoken between the two of you. And then he got up and I knew exactly what he was going to do. It seems that you and Franz have created your own shared language.

Franz and Sandra Lee confirmed that they have a way of speaking to one another without talking to each other during the dialogue.

**Cultivating facilitative engagement**

“Cultivating facilitative engagement” is the final competency reported by Nagda and Maxwell (2011) that served as a provisional code in the current study. The primary role of facilitator is to advance the learning of others. “They do so not only by performing facilitator behaviors and techniques, but also by guiding students to develop facilitative mind-sets and behaviors that contribute to relational learning” (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011, p. 11-12). This description highlights the interconnectedness of knowledge, skills, and behaviors in effective dialogue facilitation.

In order for Peer Dialogue Facilitators to advance learning, they must create environments where interactions are less facilitator directed but are jointed guided by facilitators and participants. Emily was elated when this happened. She said with enthusiasm, “One of my favorite parts was when that girl said she had been waiting to talk about this and she just went off for a minute and a half. I was like you just go ahead.” Peer
Dialogue Facilitators also encouraged participants to take a lead role in the dialogue.

Sandra Lee said,

I noticed something that me and Franz did was let the participants know that we’re on their level, so to speak, that we’re students just like you. Don’t feel like you just have to talk to us. This is a dialogue, so there’s no need for hand raising. Just talk the group. Talk to everyone. We just let them know it was very informal. We want to learn from you; and you learn from us.

Allowing participants to take the lead also meant redirecting the attention of the group away from the facilitator. Hope said, “I think I throw it back to the group a lot. For example, when someone says something I say, 'What do you all think?’” Virginia also articulated how redirecting questions to the group could allow them to challenge one another rather than being challenged by the facilitator.

Because a student will say something and you can see the body language in the room, people lean forward as if triggered, so the room will tell you. And then I use phrases I picked up from [instructor] such as “How does the group feel about that statement?” I use that all the time now, because I know if I have a problem with something it means someone else in the room probably does as well so we let them deal with it. I’ve done that so much more this year and it’s so much better than offering something like 'Well, let’s think about it this way.” and tell them what to think. But if we let the other students do it then they all do process together.

Finally, Peer Dialogue Facilitators supported participants’ own naming of issues and intergroup dynamics. James excitedly described how this occurred in one dialogue.
And there was this one guy there who I swear at times it felt like there was a third facilitator, because he was just challenging people left and right. Like someone would say something that we would want to challenge, not even using I statements or respecting group norms at all just because they're one of those people. Saying you know, “This is how it is.” And then that other guy would point out the statement as being a stereotype, came out and said that, it was so cool. Explaining why it was a stereotype, and why we believe that to be true. Then three or four other people got into it...

Peer Dialogue Facilitators put participants at the center of the dialogue.

Chapter Summary

Peer Dialogue Facilitators utilized a combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviors to effectively facilitate intergroup dialogue sessions within the New Student Dialogues program. While distinct in some ways, knowledge, skills and behaviors often overlapped in intentional ways. Knowledge of certain topics and social justice theory, combined with learned skills that were practiced and improved over time, and intertwined with natural intuitions and inclinations created powerful opportunities for learning. Themes shared in this study, which were derived from provisional and In Vivo coding, give lively and in depth descriptions of how dialogue facilitation occurred. (The reader may refer to Appendices F-O for detailed figures.) A more in depth look at the implications of these findings are addressed in the final chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrate and articulate knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. The study utilized a qualitative case study design (Merriam 2009; Yin, 2008) to collect and analyze data within a bounded-case of Peer Dialogue Facilitators who were responsible for facilitating sessions of New Student Dialogues at Clemson University. The study sought to extend the currently available body of knowledge regarding how intergroup dialogue facilitation occurs.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study related to intergroup dialogue facilitation performed by Peer Dialogue Facilitators. The research question addressed how Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated knowledge, skills and behaviors that are necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. Conclusions from the findings of the study are presented, as well as implications for policy and practice. Then, limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are presented.

Conclusions

This study sought to understand how Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated and articulated knowledge, skills and behaviors that are necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. Knowledge, skills, and behaviors therefore served as the main categories for data analysis. Each of these main categories will be discussed in more detail, but the most important description of the research findings will be illuminated through the overlapping nature of these categories.
Knowledge incorporated things that Peer Dialogue Facilitators learned, or areas where they received instruction, in order to facilitate intergroup dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators received instruction in several areas including social justice concepts and terminology, such as the cycle of socialization and microaggressions, as well as what a dialogue is and what is necessary to achieve dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also articulated the importance of having knowledge of the social identity topic that had been chosen for their New Student Dialogue curriculum. Several indicated that they had researched specific facts or information in order to be best prepared to facilitate a dialogue on that topic.

Skills can be taught and were often described by Peer Dialogue Facilitators as the tools for dialogue that they kept in their tool belt. Peer Dialogue Facilitators received instruction on how to create a safe space for dialogue and how to elicit a variety of responses from participants. Skills were something that, when applied, were improved with practice. Skills were often directly tied to the management of the space.

Peer Dialogue Facilitators utilized behaviors in a more unconscious or intuitive manner. These actions required awareness on the part of the Peer Dialogue Facilitator – of themselves, of their participants, and of the space where dialogue occurred. Behaviors often played a role in how Peer Dialogue Facilitators described what was happening in the dialogue, how group dynamics impacted the dialogue, and what they did next to address or work within those dynamics to ensure productive dialogue. Behaviors therefore have a more intangible quality.

Each of the main categories represented – knowledge, skills, and behaviors – have some discrete themes, but many themes overlapped one or more of the main categories.
This speaks to a dynamic and integrated nature of how knowledge, skills and behaviors are combined for effective intergroup dialogue facilitation. During the data analysis period, I often struggled to place a theme in one particular category. The member checking activity that was conducted with Peer Dialogue Facilitators indicated the same concern. One group of Peer Dialogue Facilitators asked for permission to place themes into a Venn diagram, rather than to separate them solely into each of the major categories. Categories and sub-categories that emerged from this data analysis are represented in Appendix G (Figure 2). The understanding that knowledge, skills and behaviors interact became integral to an overall picture of how intergroup dialogue facilitation occurs.

Within this interaction, knowledge appears to undergird skills and behaviors. Peer Dialogue Facilitators spoke about the ability to recognize certain things in the dialogue because of the instruction and training that they had received. Peer Dialogue Facilitators were able to clearly articulate the definitions of social identities when providing instruction to students about how to complete the social identity wheel activity. They were able to name a microaggression and call it out when one was said during a dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also valued having a greater understanding of the dialogue topic that they had chosen for the New Student Dialogue curriculum that they facilitated. Many researched the topic before New Student Dialogues and throughout the course of the semester. Peer Dialogue Facilitators learned new perspectives from participants as the semester progressed, which led to a desire for continued learning about things that came up which were previously unknown to facilitators. Continuing their knowledge, Peer Dialogue Facilitators were able to strengthen the content of future dialogues.
Peer Dialogue Facilitators differentiated between skills and behaviors by separating tools that they regularly used for dialogue (skills) with the things that they naturally did (behaviors) each time they entered a dialogue. It was clear, however, that without knowledge of what intergroup dialogue is and how it occurs, Peer Dialogue Facilitators would have been unable to use these skills and behaviors effectively to facilitate intergroup dialogue. During interviews, I would ask Peer Dialogue Facilitators “How do you know it is dialogue?” Their explanations were supported by a description of how their knowledge, skills, and behaviors were used to create and shape a dialogue.

The overlapping nature of knowledge, skills, and behaviors speaks to the dynamic nature of an intergroup dialogue setting. Hope articulated this in one of her interviews, saying “I definitely think a person needs to know dialogue is always changing. It’s never static, always dynamic.” Facilitation requires that knowledge, skills, and behaviors are integrated to meet the needs of a flexible and changing environment.

Finally, an important conclusion is related to the provisional codes that were established for this study. Provisional codes, drawn from the research by Nadga and Maxwell (2011), were described in the pilot study and are also reflected in Appendix C. Data analysis indicated that Peer Dialogue Facilitators are acting consistently with the competency areas that were established by Nagda and Maxwell (2011), which serve as the primary tenants for providing instruction and training to Peer Dialogue Facilitators. The significance of this is discussed further in the limitations section.

Overall, the findings are significant for the current case and also in establishing that intergroup dialogue settings are dynamic and complex. Dialogue facilitators must use a combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviors in order to effectively navigate this
environment. Further, dialogue facilitators must have opportunities to hone their facilitation through learning from one another, reflecting on their facilitation, analyzing and adapting their practice, and continuing to be ever more self-aware.

**Implications for Theory and Practice**

Specific implications for policy and practice can be drawn from this study. As a case study, these implications are most applicable to the current case. However, these suggestions could be applied to other cases if taken within the context of a particular setting.

**Selection**

The results of this study have some implications on the selection of future Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Peer Dialogue Facilitators are currently selected through a brief interview process that includes a list of cognitive and behaviorally based questions. Candidates are recruited from a cross section of majors and disciplines across campus (as evidenced by the demographics shared in Appendix D). Selection committee members are trained to look for “potential” that exists within candidates to learn concepts of social justice and to be successful as dialogue facilitators. We rely, however, on the confidence in our training and coaching of staff to teach specific concepts and techniques that will allow Peer Dialogue Facilitators to be effective in intergroup dialogue facilitation.

Based on the findings of this case study, selection processes should be designed in ways that draw out relevant characteristics in order to select the best candidates to serve in the role of Peer Dialogue Facilitator. Knowledge and skills can be learned. Behaviors, however, have some intangible qualities. It would appear that it is necessary to choose someone who is willing to learn but also someone who has passion and heart for social
justice and the type of communication that occurs through intergroup dialogue. Olivia
described a particular trait that she saw in herself and her peers. She said, “I just feel like
we all have this deep respect for people and interest in what they have to say.” In addition
to this, current Peer Dialogue Facilitators articulated the importance of being willing and
eager to learn new things, being able to listen, being flexible, and understanding that
dialogue can be difficult.

This section on the selection of Peer Dialogue Facilitators again highlights the
importance of the conceptual framework for this study. Through the lens of appreciative
inquiry, members of the Creative Inquiry team responsible for New Student Dialogue
curriculum have placed a high level of emphasis on belief in the capacity of Peer Dialogue
Facilitators to effectively facilitate intergroup dialogue with their peers. We believe, with
training and coaching provided by the Creative Inquiry model, that Peer Dialogue
Facilitators are the best experts of New Student Dialogue facilitation and can best speak to
the ways that effective facilitation occurs. Leaning on their descriptions of characteristics
needed in successful candidates will allow us to select future candidates with the best
“potential” for success.

Training

Peer Dialogue Facilitators indicated how they learned and from whom they learned
during several of the audio-recorded interviews and class discussions. First, Peer Dialogue
Facilitators learned from instructors. During the first semester of the Creative Inquiry, Peer
Dialogue Facilitators were engaged in a sustained dialogue with instructors serving as co-
facilitators and Peer Dialogue Facilitators serving as participants. Instructors modeled the
skills and behaviors for dialogue facilitation as a means of teaching how this could occur.
Second, Peer Dialogue Facilitators indicated that they learned from their peers through class discussions, or even directly from their co-facilitator partner in the dialogues. James affirmed Emily during one of our two-on-one interviews, indicating that he learned a great deal from watching how Emily interacted with participants. Finally, Peer Dialogue Facilitators indicated that some of their learning occurred through trial and error. Something learned in an earlier dialogue was then applied to a future dialogue.

Bandura (1977), the originator of social cognitive theory, emphasized that much of human behavior development occurs through modeling and is also linked to observational learning. He stated:

From observing others, one forms a conception of how new behavior patterns are performed, and on later occasions the symbolic construction serve as a guide for action. The initial approximations of response patterns learning observationally are further refined through self-corrective adjustments based on informative feedback from performance (Bandura, 1977, p. 192 citing Bandura, 1971).

Social modeling has also been seen to promote society-wide changes in diverse cultural milieus (Bandura, 2006). The principles of social modeling and observational learning appear to be consistent with the ways that learning was described by Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Bandura’s work related to social modeling and observational learning may serve as an important framework in the future design and implementation of training for Peer Dialogue Facilitators.

Coaching

Peer Dialogue Facilitators receive regular coaching during their period of instruction and employment. Beyond traditional supervision, which focuses on ensuring
that individuals meet stated outcomes, appreciative coaching is focused on a strengths-based approach that asks the right questions in order to engage in positive reflection on an individual’s performance and achievement (Orem, Binkert, & Clancy, 2007). This style of coaching is regularly utilized with Peer Dialogue Facilitators to assist them in making meaning of their experiences and building their skills.

Baxter Magolda emphasized the importance of reflection in an individual’s development of self-authorship, which constitutes “the capacity to define one’s beliefs, identity, and social relations” (Hodge, Baxter Magolda, & Haynes, 2009, p. 16). The concept of self-authorship involved how individuals make meaning of their experiences by comparing those experiences to the currently established “rules” or standards that have been developed by that individual. While these “rules” may begin as externally held, individuals create more mature structures by generating internally based belief systems. Attention to self-authorship, by engaging dialogue facilitators in critical self-reflection, could serve to enhance the current coaching that helps facilitators to make meaning of their experiences and thus increase their understanding and capability as it relates to dialogue facilitation.

Ideas of reflection are well-aligned with the narrative and awareness principles in appreciative inquiry (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). The narrative principle offers opportunities for individuals to connect through the sharing of experiences, which mirrors goals of intergroup dialogue. More specifically, awareness requires one to engage in self-reflection and assessment of one’s attitudes and behaviors. Intentional opportunities for debriefing and reflection, in the form of one-on-one coaching with a supervisor or during in-class discussions, are offered through a Peer Dialogue Facilitator’s period of
employment. These opportunities allow Peer Dialogue Facilitators to make meaning of their own experience and the shared experience of the Cohort which advances individual and group learning in powerful ways.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation has been hard-wired into the structure of the New Student Dialogue program through its connection to Creative Inquiry, which emphasizes the importance of systemic inquiry. Little is known however about the experience of dialogue facilitators or the specific educational outcomes that occur for facilitators. Ewell (1999) indicated that “if information on student outcomes is to be used to inform practice, research on the utilization of evaluation results and emerging institutional experience must be of a particular kind and character” (p. 552). *Learning Reconsidered* (Astin & Astin, 2000) also encouraged practitioners to establish clear outcomes prior to the start of inquiry to ensure that we are measuring what we intended to accomplish. The initial inquiry established in this study serves as a foundation for understanding the knowledge, skills and behaviors that may be necessary for intergroup dialogue facilitation. Utilizing these findings as a benchmark, it is more likely that we will be able to evaluate facilitation with greater accuracy and intention in the future.

**Limitations**

**Familiarity**

Acknowledgement of my subjectivities included a description of my embedded roles within the New Student Dialogue program as well as the close relationships that I have formed with many of the Peer Dialogue Facilitators. I believe that my insider status increased the quality of interview data and focus group data collected from class
discussions. I experienced a different level of familiarity and sharing than in interviews or focus groups where I have not had an in-group membership with participants. Overall, the descriptions that were shared with me were richer and deeper than most I had ever experienced as a researcher.

The relationships that I held with Peer Dialogue Facilitators often made our conversation more familiar. In part, this could be attributed to the fact that they were often referencing things in interviews that I had seen during a dialogue observation. It was implied that we had both seen the same things happening during the dialogue. It was necessary for me to ask for more description, or provide what I believed was my interpretation, to check that we had made the same meaning of a particular instance in the dialogue. Additionally, during some interviews, Peer Dialogue Facilitators would state something in a fashion that implied, “well, you know, I do it like this...” I often said, “I do know. I do that myself sometimes. But I’d like to hear you describe it for me and give me some examples from any of the dialogues that you have facilitated this semester.” I carefully attended to the impact of my subjectivity in this area but must call attention to the potential limitation that it bears for the research data.

The chicken or the egg dilemma

Peer Dialogue Facilitators demonstrated a number of actions that aligned with the provisional codes that were established for this study. The Creative Inquiry team relied heavily on the work of Nagda and Maxwell (2011) to construct curriculum for the first semester course that was used to teach and train Peer Dialogue Facilitators on how to facilitate intergroup dialogue. Peer Dialogue Facilitators used specific language and terminology that they had learned, either specifically or generally articulating descriptors
reported by Nagda and Maxwell (2011). For instance, Hope said, “I think I throw it back to
the group a lot,” indicating how she “redirects the questions of participants looking for an
‘expert answer’ to the entire group for everyone’s thoughts on the issue.” Peer Dialogue
Facilitators also referred to their target or agent identity group status, which was done
through intentional pairing established in a review of the research (Nagda & Maxwell,

It is not surprising then that actions demonstrated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators
aligned with practices or study results that were articulated in the review of literature. It
does, however, beg the question of whether or not these actions would have been present
in the data if Peer Dialogue Facilitators hadn’t been explicitly trained this way. Themes
derived from In Vivo coding, which stand apart from the provisional codes, served to lend
more credibility to the research data as a whole. Taken together, the use of provisional and
In Vivo coding provided a rich description of the bounded case of Peer Dialogue
Facilitators. Further, the data would appear to indicate that Peer Dialogue Facilitators are
acting consistently with their training.

**Different dialogues are different**

Each two-hour session of New Student Dialogues is a distinctly different experience. While
the same social identity curriculum is utilized by co-facilitators, the group of
participants is different each time. This is unlike sustained dialogues that happen with the
same group of participants over an extended period, as in the study conducted by Gurin,
Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands (2013). The varying factor of participation may serve as a
limitation.
Data analysis indicated that participants may have an impact on the dialogue and how Peer Dialogue Facilitators navigate the facilitation of particular dialogues. Emily and James both emphasized the importance of allowing a dialogue to address the particular questions that participants posed about the topic. The following response from Franz also indicated that participants altered how he facilitated a particular dialogue. Franz said, “I mean, every group is going to be different, so even if I do find one thing that works I need to have my pocket full of things I can pull out.” More could be understood about how participant groups may have confounded the skills and behaviors that were demonstrated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators in each New Student Dialogue observation.

Implications for Future Research

Merriam (2009) encouraged researchers to discipline themselves not to pursue everything, but rather through simultaneous data collection and analysis, to force oneself to make decisions that narrow the study. Researchers can note, but then set aside, interesting things that emerge for the focus of subsequent studies. The following recommendations for future research address emergent areas of the current study that may serve to bolster subsequent studies conducted on intergroup dialogue facilitation.

Understanding outcomes for facilitators

Educational outcomes have been established for participants. Some of these, including conflict resolution, intercultural understanding, multicultural competency, furtherance of democratic goals, and perspective taking (Dessel & Rogge, 1998) were noted in the review of literature. Specific outcomes have not been defined for dialogue facilitators. Future studies may evaluate the types of outcomes that are experienced by dialogue facilitators.
Statements made by Peer Dialogue Facilitators often alluded to the fact that learning occurred for them in the dialogues. Emily said, “I learn something new from every single dialogue.” She was not the only Peer Dialogue Facilitator that used these words to describe the facilitation experience. The following quote from James also speaks to the potential impact of facilitation on dialogue facilitators.

I think that going through this class and all this stuff that we’ve been learning to try and prepare for has like seriously changed me as a person. But when I talk about myself a year ago, and then now, I am so different. I have such a better handle on myself, like recognizing emotions, recognizing triggers, and being able to handle that when I do recognize it in a manner much better than I would have before.

Gurin, Meier, Nagda, and Gurin-Sands (2013) described the learning environment created by intergroup dialogue as highly reciprocal in nature. While guiding the learning of participants, facilitators often find themselves learning through the practice of intergroup dialogue.

Understanding outcomes experienced by dialogue facilitators could serve to create a more holistic picture of the learning that occurs within intergroup dialogue. A mixed methods approach may be most effective in discerning these outcomes. For instance, Clemson University utilizes a quantitative pre- and post-test survey design to measure participants’ self-reported learning around areas of social justice and difference. This tool could be adapted to capture self-reported learning by facilitators. Additionally, qualitative interviews or focus groups could add rich descriptions and provide more detailed responses to questions about facilitators’ learning.
Social identity’s link to facilitation

Few studies have focused on the experience of facilitators in intergroup dialogue settings. Maxwell, Chesler, and Nagda (2011) studied the facilitative role of social identity in intergroup dialogue. They believed that the exploration of social identity was crucial to a facilitator’s understanding of self, others, and the world. Overall, Maxwell et al. (2011) reported that facilitators did assign significance to social identity in the facilitative role.

The same might be true of the current study. More than one Peer Dialogue Facilitator who identified as a female of color articulated her experience of being the only, or one of few, target identified individuals present in a dialogue that touched on race. Jessica described how difficult it was to facilitate dialogue when participants’ looked to her to share from her target identity status.

At times I get the feeling I have to speak for the Black race when something I may not have experience of is directed at me. It’s just so much pressure on me because I’m voicing my own opinion and experiences, which does not apply to everyone who identifies as a minority. But here are all these students looking to me to answer all their questions while trying to teach them how to see something new that [they] may not ever have thought about.

Jessica’s experience resonated with other Peer Dialogue Facilitators from target race or gender identity groups that shared concerns about being viewed as the “bitch facilitator” or the “stereotypical angry Black woman” when attempting to challenge privilege within majority viewpoints. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also dissected how their White, male co-facilitators appeared to have more credibility with dialogue participants. Emily noted that participants often looked at and responded to her White, male co-facilitator, even when she...
was the facilitator who had posed a question to the group. The current study’s findings therefore appear to support findings by Maxwell et al. (2011).

It is my recommendation that future researchers further explore the link of identity to facilitation. I noted the role of identity in facilitation while conducting observations of New Student Dialogues. However, I didn’t fully understand the impact of identity until I listened to descriptions provided by Peer Dialogue Facilitators during interviews and class discussions. I would strongly recommend that future researchers consider the role of qualitative inquiry, through the use of in-depth data collection methods, to better understand how social identity may be linked to dialogue facilitation.

**Relationship between co-facilitators**

Data analysis revealed the emergence of minor themes that were related to the relationship between co-facilitators in dialogue facilitation. Peer Dialogue Facilitators described how relationships were built with their partners and the value that they assigned to their relationships. Peer Dialogue Facilitators also articulated that partnership was crucial to their success. Having a co-facilitator allowed a Peer Dialogue Facilitator to step back for a moment when they were triggered. Co-facilitators of differing identity groups were able to share opposing perspectives from their own identity groups. Finally, working with other co-facilitators allowed Peer Dialogue Facilitators to pick up on new things that served as important knowledge, skills or behaviors for dialogue facilitation.

Further research could serve to explore the relationships that exist between co-facilitators and the impact that may have on dialogue facilitation. The current study utilized a combination of two-on-one interviews with co-facilitator pairs as well as one-on-one interviews with each Peer Dialogue Facilitator. Powerful statements were shared about co-
facilitation when pairs were together and also when they were apart. Statements were honest and genuine in different ways in both settings. Future researchers should consider the dynamic nature of dialogue facilitation, and particularly of co-facilitation, when designing a study that assesses co-facilitation relationships.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of the study related to the knowledge, skills and behaviors that were demonstrated and articulated by Peer Dialogue Facilitators. Knowledge, skills and behaviors had some discrete themes, but the majority of findings indicated the overlapping nature of these themes. The integration of knowledge, skills and behaviors is essential to the facilitation of a fluid and dynamic environment that must be created for effective intergroup dialogue facilitation. Then, implications for theory and practice were shared. Finally, limitations and suggestions for future research were discussed in order to further enhance future research that may contribute to an overall knowledge and understanding of intergroup dialogue facilitation.
APPENDICES
## Appendix A

Table 1: Facilitation Principles in Discursive Engagement Within and Across Difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Facilitation Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guiding, not just teaching</td>
<td>Creating an inclusive space for differences and dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrating content and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering, not just being empowered</td>
<td>Embracing a productive use of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Framing and naming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultivating facilitative engagement and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending to processes, not just procedures</td>
<td>Building self-other relationships within and across difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connecting personal experiences and structural inequalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridging dialogue and action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix B

Table 2: Demographic Information for Clemson University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total student population</td>
<td>20,768</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate students</td>
<td>16,562</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate students</td>
<td>4,206</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>8,919</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>7,643</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American / Black</td>
<td>1,059</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13,967</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity Not Reported</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In-State vs. Out-of-State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other US States &amp; Territories</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Countries</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Undergraduates Age 25 or Older</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C

### Table 3: Dialogue competencies utilized in the pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Creating an Inclusive Space for Differences and Dialogue  | - Creates learning environments with intention and fosters meaningful engagement, e.g., encourages participants to share personal experiences, acknowledges sharing, reflects and probes to encourage group members to go deeper, encourages quieter voices and minimizes over-sharing, etc.  
- Models and regularly revisits established group norms.  
- Utilizes empathy to support and challenge participants within their own identity groups.  
- Creates environments that allow for divergent and convergent experiences and perspectives. |
| Co-Facilitation                                           | - Shares power with co-facilitator and with members of the dialogue group in ways that make the best use of everyone's aspirations, skills, and abilities.  
- Models with co-facilitator ways for participants to connect across social boundaries.  
- Models with co-facilitator their commitment to intergroup collaboration and mutually beneficial learning. |
| Integrating Content and Process                           | - Pays keen attention to the conjoint learner-educator roles that every participant plays.  
- Meaningfully draws upon content of dialogue by using reading materials and cognitive organizers that provide informational and conceptual foundations to guide participants' reflection on their own lives and social issues.  
- Generates content for dialogue by engaging participants in structured exercises and experiential activities, connecting their individual in-exercise experiences to their lived experiences.  
- Utilizes the group process and group dynamics to encourage participants to reflect on the dialogue process. |
| Cultivating Facilitative Engagement                       | - Interactions in the dialogue group are less facilitator directed or centered, rather they are participant centered and guided jointly by participants and facilitators.  
- Helps participants to understand the role that all members of dialogue play as both learners and teachers; encourages participants to take a role in leading dialogue.  
- Asks for elaboration or more questions to engage participants, and encourages participants to do the same with each other.  
- Redirects the questions of participants looking for an "expert answer" to the entire group for everyone's thoughts on the issue.  
- Supports participants' own naming of issues and intergroup dynamics, as well as encourages participants to own the responsibility of naming power dynamics. |
| Building Relationships Within and Across Differences       | - Recognizes participants' unique histories of separation, estrangement, and ignorance of each other.  
- Models clear communication and connected speaking and listening among participants.  
- Acknowledges the stories of participants and models effects of interest and curiosity.  
- Encourages more sharing from participants and opens the floor to others who may have had similar experiences.  
- Inspires participants to acknowledge and affirm one another's contributions. |
| Knowledge and Use of Social Identities in Dialogue         | - Understands the significance of social identity in the facilitative role.  
- Manages the challenges of privilege/dominance and subordination/oppression in facilitating dialogue groups with both dominant and subordinate group members.  
- Establishes and maintains credibility.  
- Role models sharing and recognition of difference for participants in the facilitators' own identity group(s).  
- Utilizes relationship with co-facilitator to model how individuals of differing social identities can share with and question one another on aspects of social identity. |
| Bridging Dialogue and Action                              | - Advances dialogue beyond building friendships across social identity groups and moves towards redressing inequalities and promoting social change.  
- Pushes to connect critical analysis to actions that promote diversity and social justice.  
- Moves participants into Action by challenging participants to deduce individual prejudice and interrupt misinformation and derogatory comments.  
- Moves participants into Action by challenging participants to educate and engage others in efforts for wider and more sustained impact. |
Table 4: Demographic Information for Peer Dialogue Facilitators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Packaging Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Genetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Lee</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Coded field note from New Student Dialogue Observation

Space set up: room consists of movable tables and chairs, tables were spaced to the outside of the room. Students stood in a circle around the outside of the room. J. & W. led the session. The session was led, prior to students entering the room, the room was relatively empty, people sitting down.

Bell was played, students took their seats. W. introduced the dialogue topic, then J. & W. introduced themselves. [asked students to put away their phones to give their attention]

Dialogue started with connection interactions, W. explained activity and then 1-1-1. Participated in the first connections. Participants returned to their original seats after connections. These interactions can also be used to break up when participants are writing.

Then participants that come in both are attention.

W. posed around laminated copies of debate discussion dialogue [group norms] and social identity wheel. They shared ideas, debate, discussion, and dialogue. W. asked participants to look at dialogue column and read out.Anyways that stand out.

W. then asked why they thought a dialogue was different from debate [questions]

This portion went real smoothly.

J. then introduced group norms stating that this was where they would create a safe space for everyone to learn. J. asked participants to read the group norms peer to peer style.

J. asked participants to cast out what they had heard that was particularly important to them. W. emphasized the use of “I” statements. J. checked in to ask if everybody felt good about the norms and that we had heard about their norms [body language.

W. asked if anyone has anything they would like to add.

W. quickly posed around markers. W. started by explaining the difference between race and ethnicity, providing their own identities as examples. Participants were asked to fill in each of their own identities. W. began drawing their social identities on the board in a pin chart. A participant asked about mental/emotional ability. W. both shared their own identities in this category. W. then referred to the pin chart, asking participants to draw a chart based on identity, or the things they think about the most. [give instructions demonstrating]

As participants finished, W. instructed them to get into groups of three to talk about their social and identity or biggest piece of the pie. J. 9 W. modeled how they would start with one another. W. could them off for groups of J. [demonstrate]

p.1

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Appendix F

Figure 1: Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors

Figure 1: Knowledge, Skills and Behaviors
Appendix G

Figure 2: Main Categories and Sub-Categories
Appendix H

Figure 3: Themes within the main category of knowledge

![Venn Diagram]

Knowledge

*We are in this together*

*Researching and preparing for the dialogue*

*Understanding who comes into Clemson*

Acknowledgement

Integration

Interconnectedness

Behaviors

Awareness

Skills

Figure 3: Themes within the main category of knowledge
Appendix I

Figure 4: Themes within the main category of skills
Appendix J

Figure 5: Themes within the main category of behaviors

- Acknowledgement: They are engaged if they look engaged, Making some time to talk with my partner, I could speak up in front of people with different identities
- Integration
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Interconnectedness

Figure 5: Themes within the main category of behaviors
Figure 6: Themes within the sub-category of integration
Appendix L

Figure 7: Themes within the sub-category of acknowledgement

Figure 7: Themes within the sub-category of acknowledgement
Appendix M

Figure 8: Themes within the sub-category of awareness

- Knowledge
- Interconnectedness
- Integration
- Awareness
- Behaviors
- Skills

- There never seemed to be enough time
- Handling all the things I'm bringing into a dialogue
- You have to be a dynamic personality to do this
- Knowledge and use of social identities in dialogue
- I gave the room a look around
- Questions that require thinking
- What this is going to look like

Figure 8: Themes within the sub-category of awareness
Appendix N

Figure 9: Themes within the sub-category of interconnectedness
Appendix 0

Figure 10: Main Categories, Sub-Categories, and Themes
REFERENCES


