

Creating Meaningful Engagement in Academic Libraries Using Principles of Intergroup Dialogue

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Engaging one another across difference to address social injustice is one of the biggest challenges we are facing as a society. Especially in this era of divisive rhetoric, superficial one-way monologues (asynchronous message threads, 140-character strings, and anonymous posts), and a twenty-four-hour news cycle that provides a barrage of information—often biased—with little depth or context, how do we come together to engage in authentic and meaningful conversation that can lead to social justice? How can libraries play a role in facilitating that kind of engagement? Social responsibility, one of the core values of the American Library Association (ALA), is “defined in terms of the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society,” which includes “support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem.”¹ Acknowledging that social injustices are critical issues librarians face is only the first step for libraries to operationalize the core value of social responsibility. Recent efforts such as *Libraries Transforming Communities: Models for Change Initiative* demonstrate how libraries can develop dialogue-based programming

to increase community engagement, especially during politically charged and socially divisive times.² While that initiative focused on the model of deliberative dialogue, there is another dialogue model, intergroup dialogue (IGD) that explicitly connects dialogic praxis to social justice outcomes. IGD, therefore, offers libraries a useful framework for meaningful engagement that fulfills the core value of social responsibility.

Intergroup dialogue was originally developed in the 1980s at the University of Michigan during a period of heightened racial tension on its campus. This method encouraged intergroup communication as a means of mitigating conflict that occurred as a result of social group identity differences.³ IGD is presented as a form of social justice education and has since been implemented at many universities around the United States in curricular and cocurricular programs.⁴ IGD also brings students from different social identity groups together in sustained, facilitated learning experiences in order to advance social justice, equity, and peace. IGD is unique among other dialogue frameworks because it is intentionally surfaces issues of power, privilege, and systemic oppression around social identities as being central to both the content and process of dialogue. By combining IGD principles with broader forms of dialogue, academic libraries can provide the people and the places needed to support civil discourse in a time of deep political polarization and to spur positive social change.

In this chapter, I introduce the IGD framework, providing an overview of the model and some of its critical components. I then demonstrate how IGD concepts can be integrated into two specific cases. In the first case illustration, I talk about a professional development workshop that was held for my library's faculty and staff that focused on awareness of social identities. In the second case, I discuss a proposal for creating a physical space in the library dedicated to dialogue that involves stakeholders from around our campus.

I was first introduced to IGD at an on-campus workshop at the University of Dayton hosted by the Division of Student Development and led by two experts in IGD from the University of Michigan. Although the workshop was targeted at people on campus who typically support students in nonacademic areas, such as Housing and Residence Life and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, I received an invitation as someone who has been involved with broader diversity and inclusion efforts across campus.

Based upon what I learned at the workshop, I recognized the powerful potential of IGD as a way of developing not just awareness of diverse social identities and their intersections with power and privilege, but also the skills necessary to engage in challenging conversations around related issues. After that on-campus workshop, I had the privilege to attend the weeklong National Institute for Intergroup Dialogue at the University of Michigan with a small cohort of people from my university. Although I was the only librarian in attendance at the institute, I was inspired to think about how IGD principles could be used at an academic library and, more specifically, at the University Libraries at the University of

Dayton. I saw the value of thinking both internally and externally in terms of the potential audiences for IGD-related programming.

Internally, IGD could be used for professional development for my library colleagues, to develop their awareness of identity, power, and privilege, which we typically do not talk about in our day-to-day work. Understanding these issues that impact all of us, including the people who use the library, has tremendous implications for how we can rethink our services, spaces, and collections in order to be more inclusive and anti-oppressive. Externally, the library could serve as an important hub for dialogue-related activities, from research to the practice of dialogue. The library offers diverse information resources that can support dialogue work and people with research expertise who are committed to creating an inclusive library environment.

The Intergroup Dialogue Model

The formal intergroup dialogue (IGD) model was developed as a key component of the Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR) at the University of Michigan, which was founded in 1988. The program “blends theory and experiential learning to facilitate students’ learning about social group identity, social inequality, and intergroup relations.”⁵ IGD as a process utilizes a critical-dialogic approach to encourage diverse participants to engage across difference, build relationships, address intergroup conflict, and build capacity to enact positive social change.⁶ IGD combines the cognitive work of critically examining the intersections of social identity and power relations with the affective work of individual reflection and group interaction in specifically designated dialogue spaces.

Traditionally, IGD brings together students from different social identity groups to understand both their commonalities and their differences, to examine larger social inequalities and forms of oppression that impact particular social identity groups, and to explore ways to build coalitions to resist and undo oppression at multiple levels, from interpersonal interactions to larger systems and structures.⁷ For example, intergroup dialogues might occur between men and women, whites and people of color, Christians and Muslims, or people from lower socioeconomic and upper socioeconomic class backgrounds. Participants are asked “to actively explore the meanings of singular ([e.g.,] as men or as women) or intersecting ([e.g.,] as men of color or as white women) social identities and to examine the dynamics of privilege and oppression that shape relationships between social groups in our society.”⁸ These interactions take place in confidential settings, are limited in size (typically twelve to eighteen participants), require two cofacilitators (carefully chosen to reflect identity group membership similar to the dialogue participants), and occur over long periods of time (usually several weeks) in order to develop trust and encourage relationship building.⁹

Participants in IGD move through four stages of learning and engagement, and each stage builds upon the skills and knowledge gained in the previous stage. The four stages are

1. Group beginnings: creating a shared meaning of dialogue
2. Identity, social relations, and conflict
3. Practicing dialogue: getting to the roots of intergroup conflict
4. Alliances and other next steps

These stages are connected by three pedagogical processes that reflect a critical-dialogical framework: sustained communication, critical social awareness, and bridge building.¹⁰ *Sustained communication* refers to the importance of participants engaging in face-to-face conversations that continue over extended periods of time and that allow them to develop reciprocal and committed communication that incorporates active listening and inquiry techniques.¹¹ Critical social awareness is connected to theories of social identity development and how different social identities are enmeshed in systems of oppression.¹² Participants learn to recognize and reflect upon their own social identities and how their social identity group memberships are impacted by historical and contemporary factors. IGD provides participants with the opportunity to examine the impact of difference on personal, interpersonal, and systemic levels and to question beliefs or behaviors that perpetuate social stratification and oppressive relations between different social identity groups.¹³

Through these sustained conversations around identity and oppression, participants also highlight and explore conflicting perspectives. These interactions provide ample opportunities for the third component of the IGD framework: bridge building. Bridge building occurs when participants use dialogic skills they have learned to engage in challenging conversations, seek commonalities over the course of those conversations, and begin to find ways to work together to combat the social injustices they have unearthed and examined as a group.¹⁴

The Four Stages of Intergroup Dialogue

Participants in IGD move through four stages of development that build upon each other (see figure 1.1).¹⁵ The design of each stage is deliberate, and the sequence of the stages moves participants through an experiential learning process that takes them on a journey with their facilitators that begins with initial group formation, proceeds to an examination of social group identities, progresses into dialogue around specific topics, and ultimately closes with action planning.

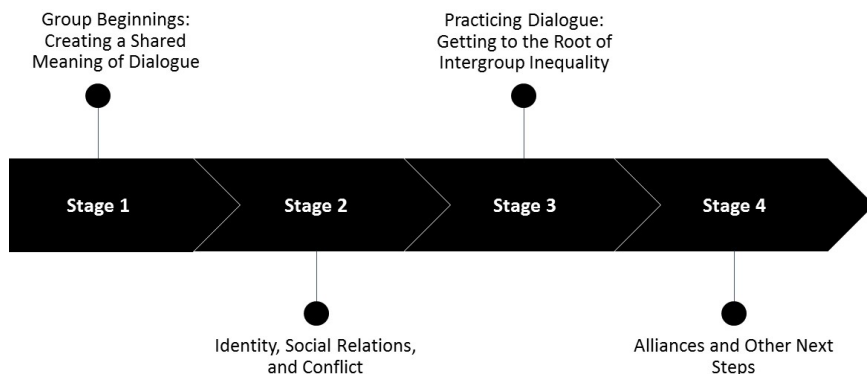


Figure 1.1

The four stages of intergroup dialogue

Stage One—Group Beginnings: Creating a Shared Meaning of Dialogue

The first stage of IGD sets the foundation for dialogue by creating an environment that encourages honest interactions and builds trust among the dialogue participants. Stage one activities usually take place over the first few sessions. During these sessions, participants and facilitators get to know one another, develop group guidelines and norms (such as confidentiality, speaking from one's own truth, and monitoring airtime) in order to create a space where participants feel empowered to engage in dialogue, and learn about specific skills that enable dialogue, such as active listening.¹⁶ Participants also explore the differences between dialogue and debate, engage in team-building exercises, and start to examine their own social identities and how those identities impact their lived experiences.¹⁷

Stage Two—Identity, Social Relations, and Conflict

Once the members of the group have established trust, learned basic dialogic skills, and begun the lifelong process of examining their own individual social identities, they move into the second stage of IGD, which is connected to critical social awareness. Expanding upon the work around consciousness raising by Paulo Freire and others, the work done in stage two is designed to help all participants understand the history of oppression, privilege, and social stratification.¹⁸ Participants examine socialization around various social identities, explore commonalities and differences among social groups, and consider how intersectionality impacts lived experiences around various social identities. As

participants dig deeper into understanding these concepts, “members of both privileged and disadvantaged groups begin to understand their roles in maintaining systems of social discrimination and oppression.”¹⁹ As participants engage in dialogues around these issues during stage two, the power dynamics of social stratification that are present outside of the dialogue space often become manifest within the dialogue space itself. Since different participants come in with varying levels of power and privilege reflective of their social status, some individuals may speak more than others, may try to silence others by influencing the direction of the discussion, or conversely try to withdraw from the conversation or disengage from particular activities.²⁰ Facilitators have to be attentive to these potential issues and may encourage the large group to practice dialogic methods such as active listening in smaller groups, such as dyads, triads, or affinity groups (members of the same social identity group engaging in dialogue with each other around a topic).²¹

In order to mitigate the impact of power differentials in these group settings, facilitators engage in a specific facilitation technique called *multipartiality*. Multipartiality as a tool “simultaneously identifies inequities perpetuated during discussion and raises awareness of how these inequities have an impact on the lives of people who experience privilege and oppression.”²² Social justice educators have long recognized that “society provides us with a myriad of assumed truths that privileges some social groups while marginalizing many others.”²³ These assumptions are referred to as *dominant narratives* or *master narratives* and can be expressed by members of both privileged and marginalized social groups. In contrast, *counter narratives* “act to deconstruct the master narratives, and they offer alternatives to the dominant discourse.”²⁴ Typically in facilitation, impartiality (or neutrality) is often treated as a stance that avoids enabling unequal power dynamics in a group setting. However, in IGD experiences, dominant narratives can easily enter the conversations, and if facilitators hold a neutral or impartial stance, they are actually maintaining the power of the dominant narrative. An example of a dominant narrative that could surface in a dialogue would be a statement like “In the United States, everyone has an equal chance of success if you work hard.” A possible counter narrative to this statement would surface issues around economic injustice and unequal access to high-quality education and job opportunities that would push back against this assumption. Multipartial facilitators actively work to surface counter narratives within dialogue spaces while naming and challenging participants to examine the dominant narrative (thus giving some power to those counter narratives), even if no individual participant has openly stated a counter narrative over the course of the discussion. Furthermore, participants are encouraged to examine how their lived experiences and social group membership are impacted by the presence of dominant narratives and how such narratives contribute to systemic oppression or privilege.

Stage Three—Practicing Dialogue: Getting to the Root of Intergroup Inequality

During the third stage of IGD, participants engage in dialogues around controversial issues or “hot topics.” These are typically issues that generate tension between people from different social identity groups, and the specific issues are chosen in accordance with the focus of the particular IGD.²⁵ For example, a dialogue focused on race might center on discussion about racial profiling on campus, or a dialogue focused on gender might examine sexism in the workplace. Facilitators may include readings, videos, data sheets, or other activities to propel the dialogue.

Facilitators also work to ensure that participants continue to engage in dialogic methods of communication and not debate, stressing the point that the purpose of the dialogue is not to determine which is the right position to take on an issue; rather, the purpose of the dialogue is to deepen understanding of different perspectives.²⁶ Participants continue to raise their own consciousness around social identities, oppression, and privilege. During the third stage, they have the opportunity to explore deeply the historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal contexts that shape experiences around oppression and privilege.

Finally, facilitators often provide an opportunity for participants to have a “dialogue about the dialogue,” where the focus of the dialogue moves from content to process in order for the participants to identify what aspects of the process are going well and what communication issues require attention.²⁷ Again, this is a unique feature of IGD, ensuring participants are gaining not only content knowledge and understanding of other perspectives, but also dialogic skills that they can use in other potentially conflict-centric situations.

Stage Four—Alliances and Other Next Steps

In the final stage of IGD, participants shift their focus from reflection and dialogue around specific topics to action planning and alliance building on individual and group levels. Through the work the participants undertake in the first three stages of IGD, they “understand more about the personal and social costs of discrimination and privilege, and their own enmeshment in these systems.”²⁸ Participants are often inspired to develop action plans and next steps to work toward a more socially just future. Although some may consider actions on an individual level, such as challenging individual and interpersonal discriminatory behaviors, many consider work to combat oppression at the institutional or system level. Work at that level typically requires collaboration in and across social identity groups, and in stage four, attention is paid to creating and sustaining those alliances once the formal IGD process ends.²⁹ During

this last stage, facilitators ensure that all participants acknowledge both the individual contributions of each person and the overall collective effort of the group. The cohort typically closes the dialogue on a positive, and often celebratory, note.

Incorporating IGD into Library Professional Development

IGD is a powerful tool for social change because it helps participants connect their own lived experiences to the broader reality of societal oppression.³⁰ Participants learn how to engage with their own discomfort when talking about challenging topics, which in turn enables them to deconstruct the many dominant narratives that shape and affect their individual and collective lived experiences. IGD provides a structured process that allows participants to understand their own individual identities, situate those identities in larger group identity membership, recognize the larger systems of privilege and oppression that impact different social identity groups, challenge each other's assumptions around those systems, and strategize ways to enact positive social change in response to their new knowledge of these systems of inequity.

Although few academic libraries have the capacity to implement a full IGD program, aspects of IGD can be incorporated into stand-alone workshops, classes, professional development, and other individual programs.³¹ These activities can be rich experiences that introduce participants to IGD and that lead them to attain some IGD learning outcomes, such as increased critical social awareness, the ability to engage in positive intergroup collaboration, and the formation of positive intergroup relationships. However, it is important in such contexts for facilitators to be clear that participants are not engaging in the distinct experience that is a full IGD.

Although true IGD implementation requires sustained participation in a four-stage, facilitated learning process over many weeks, the underlying theories, processes, and practices can inform work that academic libraries do to promote social justice actively. This case illustration at the University of Dayton demonstrates how IGD concepts were incorporated into a professional development workshop for library faculty and staff.

In June 2017, the University Libraries at the University of Dayton held a professional development workshop for library faculty and staff that incorporated IGD concepts and activities in order to increase their understanding of social identity, privilege, and oppression. A new president for the university, Dr. Eric F. Spina, had been appointed in July 2016, and he immediately began laying out a new vision for the university, which he called "The University for the Com-

mon Good” in his inaugural address. As part of that speech, Dr. Spina stated, “By definition, excellence requires greater diversity, as it enriches our learning environment and expands our institutional intelligence and creativity.” In order to achieve that level of excellence, he emphasized the need “create a more diverse, welcoming, and interculturally inclusive campus.”³² Members of two library committees, the Professional Development Team (PDT) and the University Libraries Diversity and Inclusion Committee (ULDIC, of which I was a member), recognized a need for developing greater intercultural skills among the faculty and staff to support this new vision for the university. This new vision for the university provided both the rationale and the impetus for the PDT and ULDIC to develop a professional development program that would help the library faculty and staff develop some of the skills needed to create a more inclusive library environment.

The PDT and ULDIC recognized that facilitators with IGD training and experience would be crucial to developing and facilitating the library professional development workshop. I had already completed IGD training at the 2016 National Intergroup Dialogue Institute with a small cohort from my university: Merida Allen, Associate Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs; Robert O’Hara, Community Coordinator in Housing and Residence Life; and Chanel Wright, Program Director for Campus Engagement in the Center for International Programs. The four of us had worked previously together on a training session for housing and residence life graduate assistants and staff to introduce them to dialogue skills that could be used to manage conflict, particularly around social identity issues, in residence halls. We expanded that work to develop a three-and-one-half-hour workshop that introduced the library faculty and staff to the overall framework of IGD, with a primary focus on diverse categories of social identities.

Entitled “Finding Common Ground for the Common Good” (short title: The Common Ground), the workshop took place in the classroom space (known as the Collab) within Roesch Library, the main library building for the University Libraries. The libraries typically host a full day in the winter and a half-day in the summer of professional development for everyone in the libraries. Individual sessions during these days usually cover a broad range of topics, such as emerging library technologies, wellness activities, and team-building exercises. The Common Ground workshop was the first time an entire half-day session was focused on one specific topic. Library faculty and staff were invited via email to attend. The facilitators provided a brief description of the workshop ahead of the actual event (see figure 1.2). The Dean of the University Libraries also strongly encouraged participation, emphasizing in an email to all faculty and staff how the workshop connected directly to the mission of and new vision for the university.

Figure 1.2

Excerpt of University Libraries professional development workshop description

Wednesday, June 21, 2017
 Continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m.
 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**University Libraries Professional Development 1/2 Day Workshop
 “Finding Common Ground for the Common Good”**

Facilitated by:

Merida E. Allen, Associate Director of Multicultural Affairs (she/her/hers)
 Ione T. Damasco, Coordinator of Cataloging (she/her/hers)
 Robert M. O’Hara, Community Coordinator, Housing & Residence Life
 (he/him/his)
 Chanel P. Wright, Program Coordinator for Campus Engagement, Center
 for International Programs (she/her/hers)

As Dr. Spina recently stated in an email to campus, “to be truly excellent, the University of Dayton must deeply commit to—and achieve—improved diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus.”

- How can we ensure we are contributing to inclusive excellence at UD through our work at the Libraries?
- How are we personally and professionally prepared to welcome our most diverse class of incoming students this fall?

Finding Common Ground for the Common Good is a workshop designed specifically for the University Libraries to help faculty and staff develop a better understanding of each individual’s social identities, including their own, as well as the complex identities, backgrounds and experiences that library users contribute to the community. Participants will be introduced to Inter-group Dialogue (IGD), a framework adapted at UD that encourages people to engage in dialogue across their differences, and hopefully gain a better understanding of diverse life experiences. Through personal reflection and small group activities, we will explore the ways in which our identities intersect and interact with one another. At the conclusion of the workshop, we all will be encouraged, supported and challenged to continue to contribute to Dr. Spina’s vision of a “University for the Common Good” through our work.

Learning Goals:

1. Develop a foundational understanding of different social identities
2. Increased awareness of social identity and privilege
3. Greater empathy for others’ experiences
4. Understanding of dialogic principles
5. Make connections between inclusive excellence and library work

The facilitators of the workshop spent considerable time discussing how best to create a dialogic space for the session, both physically and intellectually. One of the design elements of IGD is the explicit attention paid to both content and process.³³ Since all participants were required to RSVP for the session, the facilitators decided to assign seating to address the physical aspect of the learning experience. Round tables were set up in the Collab, and the thirty-nine participants were split into groups of six or seven individuals. Since I was a member of the library faculty, I undertook the task of assigning individuals to specific groups. In a formal IGD, participants are chosen in equal numbers from the social identity groups that are the focus of the dialogue—so, for example, a dialogue focused on gender would have equal numbers of men and women as participants. In this case, no single social identity group was the focus of the session, and the facilitators could not be selective about who would participate. For those reasons, based upon my firsthand knowledge of specific, visible markers of social identity, I assigned the faculty and staff to sit at tables in a way that ensured as much diverse social identity representation as possible at each individual table. As facilitators, we held a diverse range of social group identities (one African American woman, one white male, and one white female, and myself, an Asian American woman) that reflected some of the social identities of the participants. Furthermore, I also ensured no participant sat at a table with someone else from their immediate workgroup for two reasons: (1) since IGD encourages participants to embrace discomfort, mixing up the workgroups ensured work “cliques” would not form in the dialogue space; and (2) as facilitators, we hoped participants would form new relationships across work areas and deepen the sense of community among all of the library faculty and staff.

We designed the workshop to flow through both content and process in a way that moved from consciousness raising to action planning, similar to the progression outlined in formal IGD. Our hope was to take the group on a journey that moved from personal reflection to collective problem solving. We began with introductions of ourselves as facilitators, and we reiterated the rationale for doing the workshop. We felt it was very important to connect the workshop to the larger university vision of diversity and inclusion so participants would understand that the work we were undertaking together was mission-critical.

Participants then engaged in an icebreaker activity to start forming connections with the individuals at their tables. Once the activity was completed, we worked with the whole group to agree upon ground rules for discussion during the workshop. Once those guidelines were set, the facilitators introduced an important dialogue skill known as affirmative listening, a technique often used for conflict resolution.³⁴ We then introduced conceptual differences between debate and dialogue as modes of communication. Once these foundational concepts were covered, we provided an overview of the four stages of IGD to the participants to make explicit the framework that would shape their workshop experience. The

rest of the workshop was a combination of lecture, individual exercises, group activity, and small-group dialogues.

Attention to process was just as important as delivery of content. Throughout the morning, breaks were provided not just for typical reasons (stretching, restrooms, food or drink), but also to allow individuals time to process each segment of the workshop and to check in with facilitators if they were feeling anxious about a particular topic or activity. As facilitators, we stressed the importance of balancing self-care during the workshop and accepting the discomfort that often occurs when learning about identity issues. Participants were encouraged to leave the space at any time if they felt the experience pushed them beyond discomfort to a sense of mental or emotional distress. Since there were four of us present, we were also able to rove around the room during exercises to answer questions or guide conversations at tables that seemed to be having difficulty engaging with each other or a particular topic. We also made note of individuals whose body language conveyed rising discomfort or anxiety so that we could check in with those individuals during breaks to ensure the mental discomfort they were experiencing was due to the typical challenges of learning something new and not to their being triggered by whatever was happening in the session. We also used one of the walls in the Collab as a live feedback space, encouraging participants who did not feel comfortable speaking up in the larger group to put sticky notes with questions or concerns on that wall. Our plan was to address those notes as needed after breaks, although it turned out that no one put any sticky notes on the wall.

As mentioned previously, most of the workshop content focused on diverse categories of social identities. Participants first explored their own individual social identities, learned more about their colleagues' social identities, and then examined how privilege and oppression affected each of them in different ways based upon their intersecting identities. We then took the participants on a deeper exploration of the different levels of oppression, from individual to systemic. We guided the group through a challenging exercise, referred to as "Four Corners," that asked each person to name specific times when they (1) experienced oppression, (2) oppressed others, (3) witnessed oppression, and (4) acted as an advocate for someone else being oppressed. The advocacy aspect of that final exercise flowed into the closing section of the workshop, in which we challenged the whole group to find ways to work together to identify existing library practices, processes, and policies that contribute to oppression of all individuals who use library spaces and services. We also challenged everyone to come up with new ways of doing library work that would actively push back against oppression and create a more inclusive library experience for the campus community.

To reiterate, the workshop was not a true IGD, as we did not have successive sessions over several weeks to take the participants through all four stages of IGD. Much of the time in the workshop was spent on content and activities that are usually covered during the first two stages of IGD. We did not provide a "hot topic" for participants to talk about with each other during the session, but we discussed

the third stage of IGD briefly to give participants a sense of what it might entail. Finally, we left the group with some closing questions to encourage the group to work on action planning (stage four) after the conclusion of the workshop and to engage in ongoing personal development around social identity issues. These questions included the following:

- How can we create a more inclusive community at our university?
- What can I/we continue/start/stop to create an inclusive environment at the Libraries?

We also gave attendees a list of campus resources for continued professional development and opportunities for further dialogue that included places such as the counseling center, the Center for Leadership, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The Dean of the Libraries also spoke up at the end of the workshop, stating her expectations that every person would have to demonstrate their active commitment to diversity and inclusion as part of their annual review process moving forward and that the workshop was a good starting point upon which that commitment could be built. I followed up on the dean's statements by recommending library division directors incorporate the closing questions as part of regular divisional meetings as another way of extending the learning outcomes of the workshop. Although it was clear that attendees had a lot of information to process—and that it would take time to figure out ways to use what they learned in their day-to-day work—one participant did share an important takeaway with the whole group. She stated the skills of affirmative listening and multipartiality would be very useful for meetings in general because they remind each person in a group setting to be mindful of power dynamics and to consider marginalized perspectives. Therefore, despite the fact that participants did not experience a true IGD, they were able to achieve some of the IGD learning outcomes because of this workshop experience.

Creating Future Spaces for Dialogue: The Dialogue Landing Zone

As previously stated, the facilitators for the University Libraries professional development workshop represented various units on campus. We had undergone IGD training in the summer of 2016. Shortly after our experience at the University of Michigan Institute, the University of Dayton (UD) hired a new Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Lawrence Burnley. Dr. Burnley had experience with IGD at a prior institution and was interested in finding ways to incorporate IGD across campus at UD in both curricular and cocurricular ways. We connected with Dr. Burnley, and as a result of informal conversations and

networking opportunities, we realized collectively that a handful of individuals across diverse areas of campus were either already using dialogue or interested in incorporating dialogue into their work. During the summer of 2017, faculty and staff from the following areas came together to form an ad hoc working group to explore ways that dialogue could be used on campus with more intentionality: the Center for International Programs, the Department of Communication, the Department of Religious Studies, Housing and Residence Life, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the University Libraries (myself and another staff member who chaired the Libraries Diversity and Inclusion Committee). Members of this new working group attended another IGD training institute at Hope College in June 2017, and that experience has since driven our work. We recognized a need to create a centralized body focused on different forms of dialogue, including IGD, that could coordinate dialogue efforts across campus. Since Roesch Library was also scheduled to undergo a substantial renovation of the first and second floors (to be completed by fall semester 2019), we seized the opportunity to locate some of the work around dialogue within the physical space of Roesch Library, the main library on the UD campus. As a result, the working group created a high-level proposal for an initiative entitled the Dialogue Landing Zone (DLZ) that we presented to the Dean of the University Libraries.³⁵ As part of the proposal, the group requested that dedicated space be included in the library renovation plans for dialogue activities.

The working group crafted a vision statement for the Dialogue Landing Zone as a key part of its proposal:

Utilizing a local-to-global approach that blends dialogic skills and theory with experiential learning, the Dialogue Landing Zone (DLZ) is an inter- and trans- disciplinary curricular and co-curricular initiative that brings together faculty, staff, students and community members to engage in research, learning and practice focused on **facilitated dialogue** as a primary method for understanding different perspectives that are essential for developing empathy and resolving conflict which can facilitate decision-making, peacebuilding, and reconciliation through nonviolent means.³⁶

The working group provided a broad rationale for the DLZ, connecting it to the mission and strategic vision of the University of Dayton. The proposal then addressed the specific reasons for housing the DLZ within the University Libraries, and more specifically, the physical space of Roesch Library, citing the recently issued libraries' strategic plan as a foundation.³⁷ Several of the libraries' stated core values in the plan align well with the vision of the DLZ: collaboration, curiosity,

inclusion, and respect. Specific key strategic directions and goals in the libraries' plan also intersect closely with the proposed work of the DLZ. These goals focus on collaborations with campus and community partners to expand student learning beyond the classroom experience, and the Roesch building renovation is a key part of making that co- and extracurricular experience meaningful and impactful by providing dynamic and flexible learning spaces. One goal under "Leveraging the Renovation" in the strategic plan explicitly connects to dialogue: "Goal 2. Create spaces that facilitate and enhance dialogue among members of our campus community."³⁸

As stated in the DLZ proposal, the University Libraries, and more specifically Roesch Library, can function as a locus for dialogue work. Roesch Library is a multi-, trans-, and interdisciplinary space that supports the learning, teaching, and research endeavors of the university.³⁹ In addition to making available information resources that reflect diverse perspectives, the libraries also provide access to library faculty and staff with research expertise who are committed to ensuring an inclusive environment for anyone who uses library spaces or resources. The libraries also regularly collaborate with campus and community partners to provide cocurricular programming (film screenings, exhibits, book discussions) that encourages engagement with diverse topics and perspectives that are often challenging and could easily be enhanced with the integration of dialogic methods such as multipartial facilitation.

Because of the proposal, the Dean of the Libraries agreed to incorporate a space dedicated to the DLZ into the renovation plans for Roesch Library. At the time of this writing, a designated space is being constructed on the first floor of the library called the Dialogue Landing Zone. The space is essentially a room with a mix of opaque and glass walls that can be configured flexibly to host individual, small-group, or large-group dialogues. The room can be closed to maintain the confidentiality of any conversations taking place in the space. There are also much smaller private "huddle rooms" that are located near the DLZ that could be used for one-on-one dialogues or as processing spaces between facilitators and individual participants of a group dialogue who might need to step away from the large-group conversation if the participant is feeling triggered by the discussion. On the second floor of the library, an open space (called Concourse D) is also being created to encourage inter- and transdisciplinary research activities among faculty and students. The working group hopes that the proximity of the DLZ on the first floor will inspire research across diverse disciplines around different methods of dialogue, such as IGD, to take place in this space. While the working group is still trying to determine what a formal dialogue program at the University of Dayton should be, existing dialogue-based programming on campus can now be located in a dedicated, and prominently featured, space.

As different communities contend with divisive rhetoric and increased tension due to a highly polarized political climate, there is great potential for aca-

ademic libraries to incorporate dialogic models into spaces, services, and professional development in order to mitigate these conflicts. Although the University of Dayton clearly states values that show a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and social justice, as a college campus it is not immune to tensions and problems that arise from conflict around race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and other social identities. Most often, these conflicts emerge in non-classroom spaces such as the residence halls, but at times evidence of these problems has emerged in the library—racist graffiti in bathroom stalls, vandalism of library posters that promote inclusivity around LGBTQ issues, xenophobic comments on social media about international students in the library, just to name a few incidents.

The University of Dayton has committed to using dialogue as a means of creating connections across difference, and the libraries fully support this work. Through the framework of engaged dialogue, particularly intergroup dialogue, the libraries can become a key component of an overall dialogue model at the university that explores diverse social identities, examines power and privilege, and challenges oppression around these identities that shape the human experience.

NOTES

1. American Library Association, *Core Values of Librarianship* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2004), <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/corevalues>.
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