



Dialogical familiarizing – tasks

Task 1 Contributing in extempore (trust)

The aim of the task is that every person participates freely and spontaneously. The crucial point in dialogue is that you are allowed to be developing and not perfect.

Instructions

- introduce yourself to others by telling them your first name
- explain to others, what kind of associations your name creates in your mind
- carry out this task first in small groups of three persons
- after this everyone will introduce themselves to the whole group (for example 15 persons) by telling their name and one association.

The goal of these tasks is to simultaneously familiarize the group members with each other, and to start dialogical co-construction and learning.

Participants become a bit more familiar, and therefore more able to work together in the learning community.

Dialogical familiarizing -tasks

Task 2 Cultural scripts or prints (consciousness)

The aim of the task is that in dialogue you are conscious of your own activities and actions. The purpose is that you begin to train your skills in order to be consciously in the present in the conversation, and look at your actions with awareness.

Instructions

- think about cultural properties; how do people communicate with each other in your country? (the individual part of the task)
- inquire about these properties and select one of them, which belongs also to you
- explain this property to others in small group (4 persons)
- the group should differ from earlier
- finally explain some print in your behaviour to the whole group.

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Participants become a bit more familiar, and therefore more able to work together in the learning community.

Dialogical familiarizing -tasks

Task 3 Giving presents (sharing and receiving)

The aim of the task is that you begin to share your thinking from the very beginning with the group. The purpose is that you, in addition to sharing, also receive “presents” from the other group members.

Instructions

- there are colourful pieces of paper in front of you
- select one piece
- consider what this paper symbolizes as a present to the small group (5 persons)
- give your present to the group, and put the paper on the table
- open your thinking to the group, by explaining why you are giving this particular present.

The goal of these tasks is to simultaneously familiarize the group members with each other, and to start dialogical co-construction and learning.

Participants become a bit more familiar, and therefore more able to work together in the learning community.



Dialogical familiarizing -tasks

Task 4 Perspectives (creating a common understanding, not consensus)

The aim of the task is that the group construct a common understanding. Everyone expresses his or her opinions or beliefs. The idea is that you simply listen to the others' perspectives.

Instructions

- co-construct a “picture” (use flipchart paper) of your group
- describe in the picture, the properties that make your group creative and get you into the flow
- make sure that everyone’s opinion or belief is in the picture
- explain these properties together, to the whole group.

The goal of these tasks is to simultaneously familiarize the group members with each other, and to start dialogical co-construction and learning. Participants become a bit more familiar, and therefore more able to work together in the learning community.



Making dialogue non-fuzzy (preparatory orientation to dialogue)

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Phase 2 : Task 1: Dialogue tickets, taking turns to talk and to listen (taking and giving a turn) preparatory orientation to dialogue II, dialogue scene 12)

Goal: The goal of this task is that the learners learn to regulate their participation in a dialogue so that every participant speaks and every participant listens to the others. The objective is that every participant is given a turn to speak or will speak and that every participant is given a turn to listen or will listen. The participants understand that while engaged in a dialogue, they take turns to talk and to listen.

Instructions

the theme of the dialogue task has been selected on the basis of the needs of the learning situation; the theme must be interesting and appropriate for the learning situation

- the participants work in groups of 3-4 persons
- the participants receive dialogue tickets
- the teacher carefully explains the reasons for using dialogue tickets so that the participants achieve as concrete an understanding as possible about symmetrical participation
- every participant is given 5-8 dialogue tickets which work like entrance tickets into the dialogue
- every time you share your thinking with others, you use one dialogue ticket
- keep your turns short, about three sentences
- put each used ticket into the pile of contributions (one pile per group)
- use all your dialogue tickets
- during your turn to listen, pay attention to what the others say
- take turns to speak and listen in a random order, that is, do not proceed clockwise or counter-clockwise
- the dialogue lasts for about 15 minutes

(cont'd)



Reflection in the learning community: The whole group jointly reflects upon their experiences of the task. One useful question for this reflection is "What did you become aware of through this task?" Another, more demanding question, is "What did you learn from this task?" The purpose of the reflection is that several participants, not only some, share their thinking and experiences. You can engage more participants in the reflection by asking questions such as, "What else can you tell us about your thinking?", "Even thinking that seems insignificant can be useful," "Can someone continue from this?", "What else should be mentioned at this point?" etc. In other words, the common reflection should not be limited to hearing the experiences of a few active participants.

The participants become accustomed to quieter moments during which each participant reflects upon an answer to the questions. When the reflection part is completed, every participant has gained an understanding of how to take turns to talk and listen during a dialogue, which enables them to continue practicing on their own in dialogues of the real life.

Individuals of every age are capable of engaging in a dialogue if provided with an opportunity to do so. Young learners, in particular, benefit from practising dialogue. Learning dialogical actions is easier at an earlier age.



Making dialogue non-fuzzy (preparatory orientation to dialogue)

Phase 2 : Task 2: I am present here and now (being present and concentrating) preparatory orientation to dialogue II, dialogue scene 13)

Goal: The goal of this task is that the participants learn to be present and concentrate on the moment when they are engaged in a dialogue with other people. Knowing how to be present and concentrate enables you to keep your turns shorter and talk in a more concise manner as well as to pay more careful attention to what the others say. In this state of being consciously present, you are more alert to what you and the others say. The objective is to learn to shut off everything that goes through your mind and that might interfere with how you express yourself and how you receive information. If you know how to be present and concentrate, your mind remains clear and tranquil for expressing yourself and receiving others' speech.

Instructions

- this task is performed individually
- sit comfortably and relax
- pay attention to your breathing
- pay attention to inhaling and exhaling
- concentrate only on your breathing
- if and when your attention begins to wander and you start to think about something else, direct your attention back to your breathing
- keep focusing on your breathing and shut off everything else
- when your mind is calm and quiet, you know that you have performed the task successfully
- the task lasts 5 minutes

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Reflection in the learning community: The whole group jointly reflects upon their experiences of the task. One useful question for this reflection is "What did you become aware of through this task?" Another, more demanding question is, "What did you learn from this task?" The purpose of the reflection is that several participants, not only some, share their thinking and experiences. When the reflection part is completed, every participant has gained an understanding of how challenging it can be to be present and concentrate, that is, to be consciously present. This enables them to continue practising on their own in dialogues of the real life. When you find the patience to be present and concentrate, new ideas can be brought to the focus of a dialogue. In addition, it influences the spirit of the dialogue.

Making dialogue non-fuzzy (preparatory orientation to dialogue)

Phase 2 : Task 3 Word-for-word listening (Word-for-word reception and coding, listening), preparatory orientation to dialogue II, dialogue scene 14

Goal: The goal of this task is that the participants learn to receive another person's speech in a word-for-word manner – to listen to every word. The opposite of word-for-word reception is randomly bundling up another person's speech and filling gaps in information on the basis of one's own assumptions. The objective is to learn to listen in such a manner that all the information related by another participant is available to the listener exactly as it is. This will help you steer clear of the drawbacks of assumptions and imagining caused by randomly received information.

Instructions

- the participants pair up or the teacher determines how they form pairs (if there is an uneven number of participants, there can be one group of 3 persons)
- with their partners, the participants practice word-for-word reception of another person's speech
- each pair is given a theme to talk about, for example, "How do I relate to other people"
- first one member of the pair talks and his/her partner receives their speech word for word after which the roles are reversed; that is, both participants get to practice both roles
- relate about two sentences that form a whole after which the listener repeats, using exactly the same words, what they heard
- relate about five such wholes and the listener will repeat each one of them
- one member of the pair will first relate all five wholes after which it is his/her turn to listen and make word-for-word repetitions

(contd.)



stop and concentrate, be present

also as a speaker, remember to concentrate on what you say and keep your turn short and concise

while you listen, empty your mind of all other thoughts

repeat the other participant's speech word for word, because this will help you learn how to receive another person's speech accurately. It will also enable you to use the other person's utterances word for word while engaged in a dialogue.

now reverse the roles

it really is important to repeat everything you heard using exactly the same words; you must not leave anything out from the other person's utterances nor add anything that was not originally there.

Reflection in the learning community: The whole group jointly reflects upon their experiences of the task. One useful question for this reflection is "What did you become aware of through this task?" Another, more demanding question is, "What did you learn from this task?" A third question could be "How did this task go?" or "What happened?" The purpose of the reflection is that several participants, not only some, share their thinking and experiences. When the reflection part is completed, every participant has gained an understanding of word-for-word reception and listening which enables them to continue practising on their own in dialogues of the real life. It must be pointed out that word-for-word reception **is a necessary component of other dialogue-related skills.**

Making dialogue non-fuzzy (preparatory orientation to dialogue)

Phase 2 : Task 4 Imprisoned by preconceptions (Awareness of

one's preconceptions and assumptions), preparatory orientation to dialogue II, dialogue scene 16 **Goal:** The goal of this task is to learn to recognise and become aware of one's preconceptions. Awareness of one's preconceptions is assumed to influence the way one shares those preconceptions with others and the way one views the preconceptions of other people. The behaviour that results from this awareness reflects an opportunity and an ability to use various approaches.

Instructions

The participants are instructed to write down as many preconceptions as possible about a topic that is relevant to their learning at that point, in this context, for example, dialogue, adult learners or young learners

The participants finish a sentence by using as many preconceptions as possible. The sentences could be, for example, "Dialogue is..." or "An adult learner is..." or "A young learner is..."

- each participant concludes this part of the task individually
- the number of preconceptions varies depending on the individual and the topic
- the time used for this part of the task is about 7 minutes
- the teacher divides the participants into groups of 3-4 persons; the groups must be different from the groups formed for the other tasks
- in their turn, every participant reads aloud the preconceptions they used to finish the sentences
- every participant listens to the preconceptions of others without expressing objections or approval
- everyone can silently compare their preconceptions with those of others
- the teacher can continue from this situation in Task 5 (Suspension)

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Reflection in the learning community: The whole group jointly reflects upon their experiences of the task. One useful question for this reflection is "What did you become aware of through this task?" Another, more demanding question is, "What did you learn from this task?" A third question could be "What did you find surprising about this task?" The purpose of the reflection is that several participants, not only some, share their thinking and experiences. When the reflection part is completed, every participant has gained an understanding of how to become aware of their own preconceptions and assumptions which enables them to continue practising on their own in dialogues of the real life. Setting oneself free of one's preconceptions is a result of conscious work. After an individual becomes aware of the fact that their preconceptions and assumptions may be strongly related to the present situation and that they can and may change, they become free to examine matters from various perspectives.

Making dialogue non-fuzzy (preparatory orientation to dialogue)

Phase 2 : Task 5 Suspension (Regulating the expression of and withholding one's preconceptions and assumptions). preparatory orientation to dialogue II, dialogue scene 17)

Goal: The goal of this task is that the participants learn to suspend the expression of their preconceptions and assumptions with others when necessary. In other words, they learn to withhold them if the situation so requires. As a result of learning to suspend the expression of their preconceptions, the learners will be free to genuinely participate in building a common understanding through dialogue.

Instructions

- the participants form a new group which frees them from the dynamics of the "old" group
- the participants continue the process of becoming aware of their preconceptions through dialogue by using, for example, the conversation topics of Task 4
- however, in this task the participants create common understanding of a certain topic, such as "Dialogue is..." while they set their own preconceptions aside
- change the way you participate in a dialogue
- instead of telling the others about your preconception, alter the content of your speech so that it will open new thinking
- while you talk, reflect upon the topic, its understanding and applications
- this will give your speech a positive, wondering tone; what you say will resemble a question. It will also result in you inquiring about the opinions of the other participants or expressing a budding idea that will lead to reflection on a given topic
- when you have finished the dialogue, write down your thoughts about how your understanding of the topic was deepened and expanded
- share these changes with the other participants in your group.

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Reflection in the learning community: The whole group jointly reflects upon their experiences of the task. One useful question for this reflection is "What did you become aware of through this task?" Another, more demanding question is, "What did you learn from this task?" A third question could be "What surprised you in this task?" A fourth question could be "What did you understand through this task?"

The purpose of the reflection is that several participants, not only some, share their thinking and experiences. When the reflection part is completed, every participant has gained an understanding of withholding and presenting one's preconceptions and assumptions which enables them to continue practising on their own in dialogues of the real life. The skill of suspending the expression of one's thinking develops as a result of conscious focus on observing, reflecting upon and evaluating one's actions. In practise, suspending the expression of one's thinking can often lead to a situation where an individual, after having heard what the others think, no longer wants to share their own original preconceptions. This may happen because the new information gained from the dialogue changed the said preconception or added to it or because someone else already expressed the same opinion. *When you learn how to suspend the expression of your thinking, you become free to think in collaboration with different people. Genuine learning from others becomes possible.*



Making dialogue non-fuzzy (preparatory orientation to dialogue)

Phase 2 : Task 6 Stay a little while

Goal: The goal of this task is to learn to sufficiently stay on another person's speech as a situation requires, which enables the participants to continue the conversation about a certain topic of a dialogue for a moment longer. The objective is to learn to slow down a dialogue so that a certain issue can be reflected upon a little longer. The goal is to nurture the budding ideas that emerge during the conversation so that they will survive and can be further utilized.

Instructions

- pair up with another participant
- together with your partner, talk about a topic that is relevant to your learning; in this context, for example, "What did I learn at school today?"
- the teacher can use this task for, for instance, self evaluation and for evaluating what has been learned
- listen to your partner's speech in a word-for-word manner
- choose a point where you ask your partner to pause and tell them that you would like to talk more about that particular issue
- spend a moment talking about that issue with your partner
- both partners take a turn talking and asking for a pause
- write down the new ideas or thoughts that occurred to you because you paused to reflect on the budding idea expressed by your partner
- finish your dialogue by explaining to each other the new ideas or thoughts that occurred to you by staying on each other's speech
- the participants use 15 minutes for this task
- the teacher asks the participants to write the pearls of wisdom gained from this task on the blackboard or flip chart; every participant writes down one such pearl

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Reflection in the learning community: The whole group jointly reflects upon their experiences of the task. One useful question for this reflection is "What did you become aware of through this task?" Another, more demanding question is, "What did you learn from this task?" A third question could be "How will you change your behaviour after completing this task?" The purpose of the reflection is that several participants, not only some, share their thinking and experiences. The teacher ought to repeat his/her questions in order for as many participants as possible to explain their thinking. When you repeat a question, you can keep the dialogue going by using, for example, the following expressions: "What else?", "What next?", "How would someone else express this?", "How would you continue from there with your experiences?" and "What would you add?" When the reflection part is completed, every participant has gained an understanding of staying on another person's speech which enables them to continue practising on their own in dialogues of the real life. The skill of staying on another's speech develops as a result of consciously observing, reflecting upon and evaluating one's actions. When you master this skill, the dialogues you engage in become richer in their content.

Creating a dialogical moment / method card draft

Dialogue tools

Creating a dialogical moment means that certain tools, or dialogical actions, are used in kindling a dialogue and in keeping it going. These dialogical actions can be developed into methods that can then be used for creating dialogue-based learning situations. Dialogical actions can be consciously learned. In order to learn dialogical actions, one must observe, evaluate and regulate one's actions while involved in a dialogue. Dialogical actions are the following:

- ☐ opening one's incomplete thinking
- ☐ compact expression
- ☐ forming unbiased open questions
- ☐ closed questions
- ☐ focused continuation
- ☐ word-for-word continuation from previous utterance
- ☐ responding to inquiries
- ☐ recognising key utterances
- ☐ opening key utterances

This method card introduces methods based on dialogical actions that are used for creating a dialogical moment. In addition to using the method card for practising these dialogical actions, you can use the methods to create dialogue-based learning situations. The methods included in this card are based on those dialogical actions in the use of which obvious deficiencies have been perceived. Closed inquiries, focused continuation and responding to inquiries are not included because it is assumed that the principles of these actions are sufficiently familiar to the users of this method card.



Creating a dialogical moment, a summary

By using the methods meant for creating a dialogical moment, it is possible for everyone to create dialogue-based learning situations. The methods ensure that the dialogue keeps going, and that it is lively and creates new understanding. What is important is that every participant learns to use the methods to focus their attention on their own dialogical actions, one at a time. Observation of this kind enables one to see what kind of development a particular dialogical action requires. Actions for creating a dialogical moment are practised until they become automatic processes.

There are various ways to create learning situations that are based on dialogical methods. Choose a method on this method card and plan how to use it to teach theoretical or practical skills and knowledge. With repeated use of every dialogical action, the desired behaviour will become an automatic process. Vary and combine methods to create dialogue-based learning situations. This is how every learner learns to participate in the activities of various face-to-face and online communities in a manner that respects the principles of dialogue.