

Skilled Dialogue Revisited
Joining & Harmonizing: Diverse Perspectives

Isaura Barrera, Ph.D., and Lucinda Kramer, Ph.D.

Melanie Reese>> Hi, everyone. I'm Melanie Reese, the director of CADRE. We are so excited to welcome back Isaura Barrera and Lucinda Kramer. In March of this year, our presenters gave a successful and well-received webinar entitled "Skilled Dialogue: Minding & Mining the Riches of Differences." Many requested a deeper dive into the material, and so we are pleased to bring you today's presented. Isaura and Lucinda will build off of their previous webinar. Today's presentation is called "Skilled Dialogue Revisited: Joining & Harmonizing Diverse Perspective." This webinar continues a series that CADRE began in 2010. The PowerPoint and handouts for this webinar are available on the CADRE website. We are extremely fortunate to have Isaura and Lucinda here with us today. Doctors Barrera and Kramer bring a rich and professional personal history. They have taught diverse student populations at the university level for 20 years. Their model, skilled dialogue, is particularly focused on communication and collaboration across diverse cultural, linguistic, and other boundaries. They have written extensively on skilled dialogue, and have presented on skill dialogue to educators in multiple states. Dr. Barrera grew up on the Texas-Mexico border and learned the challenges of diversity at an early age. She grew up in a Mexican-American dominant home culture and entered school speaking only Spanish until the summer before her entry into first grade. She holds a bachelor's in communication science, and a master's in speech pathology, and a PhD from the University of New York at Buffalo. She is currently Professor Emerita at the University of New Mexico, where she was a special education faculty person for 20 years. Dr. Kramer grew up in the Midwest in a culturally-rich neighborhood and later worked with American Indians in the Southwest. She holds a PhD in special education from the University of New Mexico. Her doctoral research explored the cultural competency and cross-cultural communication in a Navajo preschool. She currently resides in Southern California, where she is a special education professor at the National University in Costa Mesa, California. Welcome to both of you.

Isaura Barrera>> Welcome, everyone. We're so pleased to be sharing this with you again. And we'll start out with a brief overview of skilled dialogue, since it's been some time since our last webinar, and some of you may have forgotten then information. Others of you may not have participated in that webinar. And just a side note, the resources that are provided are really for your use if you want a better screen view or just something that you can print out regarding various pieces, but you just need the slides to follow the webinar. And also, please note our copyright. We respectfully ask that you not use these slides in whole or in part without proper citation and permission. Okay. Skilled dialogue is a field-tested relational and creative approach to communication between two or more people with significant differences in how they see and understand a particular situation or concern. [Inaudible] differences are almost always present between any two people even when there are no overt sources of diversity such as culture. Whether intriguing, frustrating, challenging, or even threatening, these differences can pose significant challenges that are difficult to ignore. These challenges may not be negative ones, however. They can, in fact, offer incredible opportunities for positive and productive

communication and collaboration. And it is these opportunities that skilled dialogue is designed to discover and leverage. This slide shows the elements of skilled dialogue, which we identify through the study of actual interactions. There are two dispositions and six strategies. The first disposition, choosing relationship over control, addresses the relational dimensions of skilled dialogue. The second, setting the stage for miracles, addresses its creative dimensions. The first four strategies -- welcoming, allowing, sense-making, and appreciating -- are support strategies that establish the framework for skilled dialogue's two key strategies, joining and harmonizing. To discuss this more concretely, we'd like to provide a sample scenario.

Lucinda Kramer>> So, let's take a look at a scenario we'll be using throughout this webinar to examine joining and harmonizing of diverse perspectives through the use of skilled dialogue. This is a typical situation that challenges special education teachers in their daily practice. So, we've got Mr. Jacoby. He's an elementary special education teacher who wants to talk to Mrs. Ricardo, Patrick's mom, about some of Patrick's behaviors. Mrs. Ricardo has not returned any of Mr. Jacoby's calls. When Mr. Jacoby has a chance to talk to Mrs. Ricardo, she quickly tries to shut down the conversation by saying, "I don't want to talk about Patrick's behavior again. Tell me how he's doing in reading." Mr. Jacoby tries again and asks, "What makes it so difficult for you to talk about Patrick's behavior?" This time, Mrs. Ricardo does not change the subject. Her eyes tear up and she says, "I feel like you're always picking on Patrick. I'm sure he's not the only one acting like that in your class. What am I supposed to do? I can't do anything about his behavior at school. I can hardly manage it at home." So, let's look at some of the procedural steps. We want to caution you. Skilled dialogue is not a step-by-step recipe or directions for harmonizing and joining diverse perspectives. But let's look at some of the cautions. Even though for the purposes of this presentation, skilled dialogue's various steps are discussed in a linear fashion, they are, in fact, cyclical and reiterative. Steps often need to be revisited depending on how many times the interactions progress. If you find it difficult to appreciate the others' views, for example, it may be that you need to allow more time for them to express those views, or perhaps you even need to give more attention to making sense of their views. Similarly, if one disposition seems difficult to set in place, it may mean that others need to be strengthened. So, [inaudible]

Isaura Barrera>> So, let's look at [inaudible] let's look at the actual process starting with step one. Step one is to set our dispositions, to consciously decide how we're going to approach the interactions we'll be undertaking. The importance of dispositions to the quality and outcome of communication and collaboration cannot be overstated. As put by one scholar, human dimensions are internal dependencies, beliefs, commitments, and meanings that underlie our external language and behaviors. The same actions and words can communicate quite different things depending on the disposition underlying them. For example, even positive words like, "I'm so proud of you," can communicate negative sarcasm if the disposition underlying them is not one of respect. Research into perception and interactions has shown, in fact, that individuals can actually perceive consciously or unconsciously what another is disposed to do before any action is actually taken. Skilled dialogue's unique identity and power is shaped by two particular dispositions. Choosing relationship over control, which is designed to leverage the power of the relational field that exists between individuals, and setting the stage for miracles designed to leverage the power of complementarity between differences through tapping into paradox. Let's

look at each of these a little bit more closely. Let's look at choosing relationship over control first. This disposition, the defining characteristic of this disposition is the prioritizing of relationship over agenda or control. It embodies the explicit affirmation of the power of relationship to shape and influence the beliefs and actions of two or more people as they interact. In skilled dialogue, we are looking at both interpersonal relationships and the relationship between peoples' perspectives and views. So, this is the interpersonal relationship. This disposition is about placing our focus on the other person with whom we're interacting rather than on our desired or preset outcomes or agendas. These are important, of course, and are not neglected. They are, however, understood as being secondary rather than primary. Choosing control as meant within skilled dialogue means entering into an interaction with a singular focus, with a singular view focused on and invested in only one perspective or outcome.

"This is what I want. This is what I believe needs to happen." In contrast, choosing relationship involves entering into an interaction recognizing the dignity and power of the other, and invested in how that other might add to or enrich our interaction. "We're here to work together to identify the best response to the situation or concern." These immediate relationship between diverse perspectives and views, choosing relationship over control is about holding a more general understanding of the universe itself as relational. That is, as a reality in which everything is a part of everything else rather than apart from everything else. This aspect of choosing relationship is particularly critical to the strategies of joining and harmonizing as we shall see. Let's look at how this might work in a scenario we've set. Choosing relationship over control would mean Mr. Jacoby would enter into his meeting with Mrs. Ricardo focusing on strengthening his relationship with her so that they could jointly address the concerns he wants to discuss rather than primarily focusing on those concerns and his proposed solution to them, which would, in effect, leave Mrs. Ricardo without a voice. He might, for example, want to express his focus on relationship by saying something like what is shown in the example. "Thanks for coming. I'm really looking forward to learning more about your views and your concerns regarding the situation." Or, "So good to see you. I'm really looking forward to learning more about your concerns and ideas on how we can best support your child. Your experience as a parent is an important asset to us as we look at what we might be able to do." And as we state earlier, it doesn't necessarily have to be expressed verbally, but this approach would be communicated regardless. The two examples contrast with the non-examples which reflect Mr. Jacoby going immediately to his agenda and concern. The first one, for example, says, "Thanks for coming. As I mentioned before, we have some concerns about your child's level of progress. As you know," and then he goes on to repeat what his agenda is and what his view of the situation is. He could also say as a non-example, "I'm glad you're here. As you know, we want to make sure that we have explained available options to you." And he presents those options as preset, again leaving Mrs. Ricardo without a voice in the interaction. So, that's choosing relationship over control. The second disposition, setting relationship, I'm sorry, setting the stage for miracles has the defining characteristic of openness to new ways of seeing, interpreting, and responding to concerns. It communicates a willingness to step outside the box, so to speak. Additionally, it involves two other characteristics. Non-dual thinking, which understands diverse perspectives, opinions, and outcomes as complimentary rather than contradictory, and acceptance of paradox, which joins diverse perspectives to form a larger

whole that's inclusive of both. Being disposed to set the stage for miracles promotes the creation of conceptual and interactional space within which two or more diverse beliefs or perspectives can be integrated without needing to blur or erase the differences between them. These differences are not treated as obstacles. Instead, they're actually used as a springboard for going beyond familiar either/or distinctions and interpretations. More will be said about this as we discuss the strategies that express this disposition. For now, let us briefly look at the examples and non-examples shown on the slide. To communicate his openness to new ways of seeing, interpreting, and responding to the concerns about Patrick, Mr. Jacoby might say something like, "Let's talk for a while. I'd like to learn more about what you believe we need to focus on." Or, "How you see this situation's important. I'd like to think that we could come up with something that would work for you and Patrick as well as for what we'd like to see here at school." These words are in sharp contrast to the words shown in our non-examples which focus exclusively on what already is and leave no opening for something new. "It looks like we have a choice here. We can do X or we can do Y. Maybe if we listed the pros and cons that would help." "Do you think we might find a compromise between what you think is best and what we're proposing?" And both of those, again, close the door to anything new and focus on what already is. So, let's move on to the next step.

Lucinda Kramer>> Step two is about honoring others' identity. What does that look like in our daily interactions? And what does it look like when you honor someone else's identity? Let's look at the next slide. When we greet children or colleagues or friends every day, we're welcoming them. But what does real welcoming look like and how does it lay the foundation for connecting with someone? In skilled dialogue, the hallmark of welcoming is the other person's sense of being welcomed. Not ours, theirs. Does the other person feel truly welcome? That you are really interested in seeing them and hearing what they have to say? The teacher in this scenario is looking forward to meeting with the mother. Welcoming is a critical strategy of skilled dialogue. Why is it so critical? Here, let's talk about some of the understandings that underpin welcoming. It acknowledges diverse perspectives and behaviors that have been developed in response to a particular life experience environment. Meaning it's based on our past experience, and evidence we have from those experience environments. Both people are exercising equally competent abilities. That would be the teacher and the mother. The teacher is expecting and has understanding that Mrs. Ricardo is capable and is equally as competent as he is to interpret their experiences, yet they may end up with very different conclusions. It's the recognition that differences do not make people wrong, that it creates respect. It's ensuring that everyone whom we interact regardless of their differences or level of skill is recognized as someone worthy of our respect because he or she, like is, is negotiating their circumstances and experiences the best they can. So, let's look at some of the examples and non-examples on this slide. So, we have Mrs. Ricardo in our examples being welcomed. So, something that Mr. Jacoby might say is, "Hi, Mrs. Ricardo. I'm so glad that you were able to come. How has your week been?" He is open to finding out how she's doing, how she's feeling, what other incidents or stories may be going on this week. He is being open and showing true interest. Another one might be, "Thanks for coming, Mrs. Ricardo. I'm really looking forward to your thoughts about Patrick's progress." Again, really asking what's going on in her life right now. Another example might be, "So good to see you, Mrs. Ricardo. I hope you didn't have any problems finding this room. I'm really looking forward to hearing your ideas in how we can work together. I am just so

glad we were able to meet." All three of these are examples of Mr. Jacoby being opening and welcoming, of respecting her ability to share in the future conversation. Non-examples might be, "Thanks for coming. Have you thought about Patrick's behavior I mentioned on the phone?" Already it's on his agenda. As Isaura mentioned before, there's no opening here. There's no true welcoming. It's a very narrow, targeted welcome. Getting down to business. Not showing respect for her. Second one, "I'm glad you're here. As you know, it's been a rough week and we need to get started as soon as possible. I have another parent in 30 minutes." Really closing down and limiting the conversation and the discussion. "Hello, I'm sorry I'm late. I got hung up in another meeting, running behind all day. Okay, let's get to the point. Patrick's behavior is just getting worse." Again, these are not welcoming statements to the parent to open the door for collaboration and shared thought. So, let's look at these again. What does welcoming look like? You know, it looks like relaxed body language that expresses a willingness to be present to and with the other person. You're not hurried. You're slowed down. You're relaxed. Use of affirming or neutral comments that express interest without judgment like, "I see," or, "Tell me more about." You're acknowledging the other person's perspective. Their perspective with no need to discount or devalue. You're not judging them. You just want to open it to explain or to explain or defend our own. You're not defending your own. You're open and listening to them. So, attentive listening, relaxed body language, general countenance and leave room open for the introduction to the other's views and opinion. Listening with a willingness to learn something about the other person that we may not already know about without saying how we need or to fix the situation. The use of direct responses -- responses that are directly tied to what the other person has said -- communicate the others' perspective is welcome into the conversation. These responses do not need to express agreement with them or affirm the reception of their message. It would be statements like, "I see," or, "That's an interesting point." Which leads us to sense-making. As skilled dialogue, the hallmark is sense-making is understanding how the other person's concerns or perspective makes sense in a given, particular context. It's a critical aspect of skilled dialogue. You might ask yourself, "Why is it so critical? Why should I strive to understand someone's diverse perspectives? And how do I make sense of it?" First, you need a sense of curiosity. Curiosity about their stories, their interpretations that support and maintain their perspective or behavioral choices. So, in this case, what does Mrs. Ricardo story? How does interpretate Patrick's behavior? It is the belief that the mother's perspective as an experience make as much sense and have as much value within their context as our own experience. Sense-making does not mean the other person's right, but their behavior makes sense to you. You understand it. It makes sense because it's based on their life experiences and their resources. And then if we were given the identical experiences, context, and resources, we would in all likelihood make similar choices. When we acknowledge their position, make sense of it, it demonstrates our belief in the other person's capacity to learn and change. So, to see through the world through their eyes. That is giving as much sense and value to their views as our own. It's appreciating its strengths, though, that we can access it and use it as a resource rather than a hindrance to solving this [inaudible] problem. So, if you were thinking, "What might be within this behavior or belief that might support learning or change?" So, as you listen to her to try to make sense, you're looking for a kernel of information that might make sense and can be leveraged for future understanding. If we do not shift from the expert or the teacher's attitude or mindset to the learner's attitude or mindset, we might never truly make

sense of the behaviors and the choices of others with whom we interact. Perspective-taking is the ability to take on another's perspective in order to better understand their perspective and see things through their eyes. So, let's take a look at some examples and non-examples here and see if we see a pattern of sense-making. So, remember, our goal here is to understand the other person's perspective based on their experience in the context of the situation. So, we have Mr. Jacoby saying something like, "Can you tell me more about what you think we're picking on Patrick?" What is her interpretations? She'll give you some examples or he could say something like, "Well, I never thought of it that way. Can you tell me more?" Again, he's striving to make sense of her behavior and her perspective, and the only way you can do that, making sense, is hearing the other person's story. "I'd like to hear more of why that you don't want to talk about Patrick's behavior." That could be a very opening question to understand what's going at home and why she's so sensitive about Patrick's behavior. Again, she'll provide a context for it. Non-examples of sense-making might be the teacher saying something like, "I don't understand why you believe we're picking on Patrick. We're only trying to help." He is closing the door and letting her tell her story or her interpretation or her perspective of why she thinks Patrick's being picked on. He's closed the door, saying, "We're only trying to help." So, she's probably not going to respond to that. Another non-example might be, "I think it might be better if we continue to talk about Patrick's behavior." Okay, again, not listening to her interpretation, focusing it back on Patrick and his behavior. Or, "I'm sorry it's difficult for you to talk about Patrick's behavior." Again, closing the door, making a decision, not trying to find out why it's difficult, just stating it's difficult. So, the use of direct and indirect questions, when done of the context of curiosity rather than being intrusive. "Tell me about," trying to get the parent or the other person to tell their story to receive as much information as we can to make sense of their behavior. An important piece of this is checking for understanding. Don't assume you understand without checking even if the other person's message is clear. Communicate continued interest in understanding as the other person discusses their perspectives, beliefs, or behaviors. The goal here is to communicate an honest desire to understand -- not agree or diminish our own perspective or belief -- but to understand. Okay, we've looked at step one, your disposition in approaching skilled dialogue. Step two, an honoring others' identity through welcoming and sense-making. Now look at step three of how to establish reciprocity.

Isaura Barrera>> Once diverse identities have been welcomed and acknowledged as making sense, the next step in skilled dialogue focuses on two strategies that are designed to promote the reciprocal expression of those identities, allowing and appreciating. Through these strategies, skilled dialogue's third step focusing on establishing equal voice for all participants through explicitly recognizing that each person is equally capable and equally able to contribute to the interaction and its content. While one person may have more expertise or authority, the emphasis at this point is on each person's capacity to contribute equally, not simply to receive what the other person has to say. So, let's look at these strategies a little bit more closely. The first strategy of allowing focuses on establishing reciprocity and equal voice. This strategy is simple to understand but can be challenging to implement. It involves respectful listening -- that is, allowing time for the person with whom we're interacting to express their concerns, ideas, perspectives without interjection or defense of our own even when we may disagree strongly, and the reason it's challenging to implement is that in most of our work the participants found it very challenging to simply listen when what the parent was saying was something that they

strongly disagreed with, and listening is not about agreeing, it's simply about allowing that expression to occur. And it is designed to extend and reinforce welcoming by making time for the expression of the others' identity no matter how different from our own. Welcoming is about what uninterrupted listening communicates. The validation of another's perspective and beliefs as legitimate and evidence-based. These were welcomed in skilled dialogue's first strategy. Now this strategy allows for their explicit as well as their implicit expression. In doing this, allowing creates a context within which the strengths of another's identity can unfold. Let me repeat that. Allowing creates a context within which the strengths of another's identity can unfold. It does not necessitate or mean that my experience or perspectives or beliefs are any less valid or that I would change my mind about the need for change. It simply says that I will listen. This slide shows several examples and non-examples as had the previous one, so let's look at these. We look at the examples. "I hear that you're concerned about what you could do at home? Can you tell me more about that?" So, I'm allowing you. I'm opening the door. I'm allowing you to say, "Tell me more." You could say, "I see. Could you tell me a bit more about how you see this situation?" That's a bit more direct, but it's equally valid. Or, "That's interesting. I'd like to hear more about it." There's no judgment. There's no, "I agree," "I disagree," or, "How could you think that?" There is simply open door. Non-examples, on the other hand, are all about closing doors. For example, "I see. Let me tell you a bit more about what I think is necessary." So, in other words, "I don't want to listen to what you have to say. I'm the expert here and I'll tell you what I think." Or the second non-example, "I think we need to look at things differently." Very subtly undermines the perspective of the parent. [Inaudible] the third with similar, "What do you think about the suggestions I e-mailed you?" All three non-examples focus the attention on Mr. Jacoby and his views and either explicitly or implicitly undermine Mrs. Ricardo's views. The second strategy that supports that is the strategy of appreciating. Let's look at that. The reciprocity initiated by allowing is further strengthened by a companion strategy of appreciating. Appreciating focuses on the explicit acknowledgement that the listener appreciates the speaker's concerns, ideas, and perspectives. That is that he or she recognizes their value for the speaker even though he or she might not agree with them. To say we appreciate something doesn't necessarily mean we value it, but it's based on that understanding that Lucinda talked about in sense-making. So, typically this acknowledgement is based on the information gotten from sense-making. The contrast between the examples and non-examples illustrates such appreciation. In the first example, Mr. Jacoby says, "I see. I can appreciate how it seems we're picking on Patrick." He's not saying he agrees that that's what they're doing, simply that he appreciates it. Alternatively, Mr. Jacoby might respond empathically by saying, "You know, I think I'd be concerned too if I felt we were picking on Patrick." He's, again, not agreeing, but saying, "Yeah, I think I get it. I appreciate that you might think that." In the third example, Mr. Jacoby expresses his understanding of Mrs. Ricardo's confusion about her behavioral focus by saying, "I can see how focusing on Patrick's academics has helped in the past." You know, it's saying, "I appreciate your focus on academics over behavior because that's worked in the past, and so why have we switched that now?" As with allowing examples demonstrate a focus on Mrs. Ricardo and her perspective on the current concern. In contrast, the non-examples clearly communicate that Mr. Jacoby appreciates only his own bias and has little if any appreciation of Mrs. Ricardo's opinions or views, though he does acknowledge their difference. "I hear what you're saying. I just don't think it's helpful in this situation," clearly

communicates that he sees no value in her perspective. The second non-example is similar, though less direct. "I'd never respond that way." In other words, "Why on Earth would I?" The third non-example is a clear redirect. "Have you thought of paying more attention to Patrick's behavior?" In these few words, Mr. Jacoby explicitly asserts who has the power and control in this situation, thus invalidating both this strategy and the disposition of choosing relationship over control entirely. And so, he derails skilled dialogue with the non-examples. When the examples are used, then it becomes very natural to move on to the fourth step.

Lucinda Kramer>> Step four is about being responsive, and let's take a look at step four and what does responsive look like, and it's important. Responsive is about identifying and affirming the connections that you now discover through sense-making, appreciating, and allowing between those diverse perspectives, and there's two strategies for being responsive -- joining and harmonizing. Let's look at joining first. Joining is often identified as uniting two things in part. Sounds simple. In skilled dialogue, the hallmark of joining is more complex understanding of joining. It's the other person's confidence and your understanding of their concerns and their outcomes. Joining is a critical skill for skilled dialogue. What does the other person truly feel that you understand their perspective? That's when joining occurs. What are some of the understandings that what does it look like? What does responsiveness and joining look like? All behavior is socially jointly constructed. We interact with each other. My behavior is a reflection and response to your behavior. It's a willingness to examine our behavior in negative or positive interactions. It's a way to identify a common context that shapes the behavior and together. We are in this together on a joint problem and we're looking for similarities [inaudible] difference. Let's look at the slide on joining for the examples and non-examples. So, here we have our scenario again, and let's look at how the joining might look. So, an example might be Mr. Jacoby saying, "I think I understand. It can't be easy to feel like there's nothing you can do about his behavior in school. I'd be frustrated, too." So, here we have Mr. Jacoby not only reaching out to Mrs. Ricardo, but actually joining in her perspective. Saying he understands. He may not agree with her, but he understands and he's stating confidence in her perspective. "I understand. I can identify with it." Another example might be, "It sounds to me like you're feeling pretty powerless at this point. I felt that way too, and it's never easy." It's about connecting. It's about joining. Put yourself in Mrs. Ricardo's place. Wouldn't you feel more open about sharing and working with and collaborating with a person who said, "Hey, I'd feel frustrated, too if I was going through that." Or, "I felt that way, too." You'd be much more open and willing and feel more respectful by the other person. A non-example might be Mr. Jacoby with a, "Here's how I understand what's happening." Again, not identifying, not respecting her opinion or her perspective, but saying, "It's all about me. I understand. This is what we're going to do. This is what's going on." There's a total lack of respect in this non-example. Another non-example might be, "As I've said, I'm concerned about Patrick and I've talked to several other people and they all seem to think he's having a problem with his behavior." Again, there's no opening the door to his personal connection. There's no understanding that all behavior is socially and jointly constructed. We're interacting with each other. In the non-examples, he is not interacting with her. He is not reflecting her behavior. "We are in this together on this joint problem." Even though we're looking for there are differences, we're looking for the similarities in the stated problem. We're looking for the we-ness, the connection between your behavior and the other person's behavior. "I can see we're both concerned about the situation," is a key statement.

You're joining together. It's important to reference experiences which you may have behaved in a similar way to how the person's behaving now. "Boy, I remember feeling pressured and confused in a situation like that." To verbally acknowledge of how one's behavior and the other person behavior compliments each other. Something like, "You know, what you're doing can actually support the goal I'm describing," or, "I just realized I'm asking you to listen to me, but I'm not really sure I've been listening to you. Could you please repeat that?" As joining is one of the focus strategies of this presentation, let's ask ourself a few self-reflective questions about joining. Ask yourself these questions. "What am I doing or saying that promotes or sustains the current interaction? Am I modeling the same resistant behaviors that I'm asking the other person to change?" or, "To what degree do I truly believe that the other person can change?" Or, "What common context do each of our perspectives share?" Again, you are looking for joining together, the we-ness connecting your behavior to the other person's behavior. Now, let's look at the second strategy for being responsive, harmonizing.

Isaura Barrera>> The strategy of harmonizing is the culminating point, and actually the whole goal of skilled dialogue. We have often talked that if we could get to harmonizing without any of the others that that would be all we'd need to work with. But unfortunately harmonizing is the outcome of a cumulative process, and so it's after all the other strategies have been put in place. The relationship has been established, it's been validated, the person has been welcomed. You understand and make sense of their perspective. You've joined and appreciated where they're coming from. Then everything gets ready then to harmonize. So, once diverse perspectives have been joined and all parties truly believe that they're on the same page -- that's what happens with joining -- skilled dialogue's final strategy is to harmonize them. That is, to craft a cognitive space within which each compliments the other, just as do the notes in a musical chord. We use the example of playing different notes, but if you play them at the same time you don't choose between one or the other. They don't contradict each other. If you play them together, you have a musical chord that's deeper and richer than any individual note alone. We also use the example of colors. When you put blue and yellow together, you get green, and green requires both colors. So, it's an integration of what might appear to be contradictory but in fact it's not. The goal of harmonizing thus is the creation of what we call third space, a space that integrates rather than divides diverse perspective. Now, third space has several distinct characteristics that shape how harmonizing's achieved. First, third space is non-dichotomous. That is, within third space, reality is perceived on a spectrum rather than on a continuum where reaching one end means leaving the other. So, it's not an either/or continuum. And this mean that it has no side and therefore no pressure to choose only one because both can be included. Second, third space is based on the understanding that there are always more than two choices in any situation. When there's only two choices, you have dual space and an either/or kind of situation. But third space, there's always more than two choices. And third space reflects an understanding of borders between different perspectives as distinctions, as points of contact rather than as absolute points of separation or division, reinforcing that connection. Finally, in third space, it is understood that the whole is greater than its parts, and thus harmonizing is about creating or finding that whole. The scope of this presentation prevents further discussion of third space, unfortunately, however our book does contain a variety of practice exercises to better illustrate third space. Moving more directly to the specific strategy of harmonizing, the intent of harmonizing is to general third space, an inclusive and paradoxical

space within which the individual strengths of diverse perspectives can be leveraged toward a common goal without eliminating or devaluing either. Let me say that once again. The intent of harmonizing is to generate third space which is an inclusive and paradoxical space within which the individual strengths of diverse perspectives can be leveraged toward a common goal without eliminating or devaluing either. It is important at this point to note that third space is difficult to illustrate outside of an actual dialogue. It's dynamic. It's jointly crafted, and it's unique to each situation. With that thought in mind, the example shown in the slide above which, yes, in the slide show initial comments that can only hint at what harmonizing might look like when fully actualized. In concrete situations, harmonizing is co-created by all participants and may take multiple interactions across several meetings. So, with that [inaudible] let's look at the examples. In the first example, Mr. Jacoby emphasizes the possibility of complementarity between his views and those of Mrs. Ricardo. In other words, he shifts perspective from, "We have to choose one perspective here," to saying, "Mrs. Ricardo, we could do both." And he could say something like, "What if we could promote behavior change and also focus a bit less on Patrick's behavior, as you would wish?" He then encourages Mrs. Ricardo's participation by adding, "What do you think that might look like?" So, he's getting her to focus on we don't have to divide this. We can see what putting it together would bring us. In the second example, Mr. Jacoby also emphasizes [inaudible] although he does it a bit differently, a bit more indirectly, by saying, "I think we can find a way to focus less on Patrick's behavior while also helping him to learn more appropriate behavior. One could actually help the other." And this statement, this is a paradox. It's a statement that sounds contradictory, but very often we use it as a springboard into third space. When he says, "Focus less on behavior while helping him to learn more appropriate behavior," Mrs. Jacoby might go, "Huh? What did you just say?" And that's the opening into third space that we're looking for is to break the typical thought pattern. And so, through these examples though no definitive solution has yet been reached, the likelihood that one responsive to both Mr. Jacoby's and Mrs. Ricardo's concerns will be reached has become more likely. In contrast, the two non- examples are quite different. In the first, Mr. Jacoby explicitly drove attention only to his agenda. As we discussed, we believe that we really need to focus on Patrick's behavior so that he can work better in the classroom. So, again, he's emphasizing one perspective -- his -- over Mrs. Ricardo's. Similarly, in the second, he explicitly states an unresolvable contradiction between his views and those of Mrs. Ricardo. "I understand you'd like to focus less on Patrick's behavior. Unfortunately, I don't see how we can do that at this time." So, again, he says, "You can only choose one of these. You can't do both." So, by looking at how we can take the individual strengths of different perspectives and different opinions and different outcomes, we have begun to establish third space and move into harmonizing, and when we do that, skilled dialogue has achieved its goal. We'd like to conclude with two quotes that we believe are relevant. The first comes from Shapiro and says, "I therefore recommend that you and the other side establish a brave space -- a learning environment that emboldens you to embrace differences, take personal risks, and reconsider perspectives." The second quote come from Zaiss. "Dialogue is not about trying to change anyone's opinions but is about--"

Isaura Barrera>> "Understanding that people's opinions -- their truths -- can actually be a contribution to a collective truth. This is perhaps the fundamental purpose of dialogue -- to create a shared understanding beyond our individual points of view." In the spirit of these quotes, it is our hope that skilled dialogue will help you to establish brave spaces from which to

create shared understandings that contribute to collective truth that can enrich us all. The material in this presentation has been adapted from our book. Given the time and format constraints that we had, we could only summarize much of the information contained in the book. And [inaudible] itself is information to explore skilled dialogue in greater depth and specificity. It also contains multiple resources for greater understanding of third space, and so we would refer you to the book, which we wrote from a very practical perspective to further your information on skilled dialogue. You may also contact us directly at any time to ask questions, get further information, and/or request presentations. We are available for a limited number of both online and onsite presentations each year, and you can see our contact information on this last slide. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen and we hope to hear from you soon.

Melanie Reese>> That was a wonderful information with such broad applications. Thank you both for participating, and thank everybody for joining us. Please feel free to contact us with your questions or comments at any time. Thank you.