

DE and the University - Some FAQs

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While working with new groups, you are guaranteed to receive a number of questions about the use of Dialogue Education and how to overcome specific situations. Here are some questions often asked by professors in the university:

1. How can I use Dialogue Education with large groups?

Easy: invite them to work in pairs, small groups or a few large groups. Of course much time will be taken up by teaching the new content in the large group. However, when it comes time to engage with the content, *divide them up*. Students need time debating, trying, challenging, testing and comparing what was taught in the large group. The small groups can offer this valuable time to students. A Q&A session can be helpful for some people, but in general this is not enough for most people – students need time to interact with the material to learn it and see how they feel/think about it.

2. How can I cover all my course content, if I teach in this way?

First, you need to see your students as accountable for their own learning. You are responsible *to* the students, not *for* the students. By this I mean that they are decision-makers in their own learning and are responsible for themselves. You need to plan the course well so that it contains the right amount and appropriate content, sequence learning and readings so that everything flows well building on itself, and plan ways to engage with the new content in class time. As much as possible, try to have students do the reading and “theoretical work” outside of class, while working on application of the theory and the “practical work” inside of class. Students will soon learn that class time is about testing and trying the theory, and helpful for deeper and more complex learning.

3. How can I teach physics, chemistry or mathematics in this way?

It is important to remember that it is *the principles* that are important, and that Dialogue Education looks different every time it is used and in every situation. Whether you are teaching in the university, training in a bank, facilitating a meeting in an office, or leading a book club in your home, the principles are operative. Ensure individuals feel safe to explore new content, respected enough to join in the dialogue, valued in the learning space, honoured to have input, important enough to plan for, and autonomous enough to learn in the best possible way. In every learning setting, regardless of the topic or area of study, teaching and learning is a collaborative process.

4. How can I ensure an “AWAY” task in courses like mathematics?

Although it is not critical at the end of each lesson, find places within your course when a personal application or plan is natural and possible. Find places for small applications, such as “Circle the questions you will work on tonight that will best use this new theory/model”; larger applications, such as “Select one theory or model we have been studying to use in

the next week. When will you use it in your day-to-day life, how, and with whom”; and final applications, such as “Now that this course is almost completed, we are going to take time planning some possible use of the theories and practical applications we have been learning...”

5. How can I teach *to the heart* in courses such as mathematics and science?

Use personal stories, open questions, real situations, and role play. Invite students to think of real-life examples, challenge theories, and debate concepts. Integrate drawing, music, sculpture, and other artistic expressions. The bottom line is to find ways for students to get out of their text and notebooks from time to time in order to engage different parts of their brain... and their heart. This will make learning more fun, memorable and meaningful.