

The Four-fold Frame Called Dialogue Education

by Jane Vella, PhD

Fatemeh is a graduate student at the [Tarbiat Modares University of Tehran](#). After discovering *On Teaching and Learning* on the shelf of the university library, she wrote me an email and we have had a vigorous virtual conversation ever since!

Fatemeh found a copy of *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach* and last year, she translated that book into Persian. She has been using what she learned from the books and from our ongoing dialogue in her teaching and in her preparation of her thesis.

Her thesis advisor asked her: "Does your model apply for guiding the conventional process of curriculum planning/ development leading to a national curriculum framework?"

I responded that what we call Dialogue Education is not so much a model as a system for designing and teaching so that effective learning occurs. I thought this system did not only guide the conventional process of curriculum planning, but actually enhanced that process by being very specific.

I liked the professor's use of the word framework.

How about this?

Dialogue Education offers a unique frame that has been proven effective for learning at many levels. This fourfold frame consists of:

1. [Principles and Practices of Dialogue Education](#)
2. [Learning Needs and Resources Assessment](#) (LNRA) and the [8 Steps of Design](#). The data from the LNRA informs the design.
3. [Learning Tasks](#) including [open questions](#).
4. [Evaluation Indicators](#) The three levels include learning, transfer and impact: these are behaviors anticipated in the "So That" design step.

Essentially, it is a simple system consisting, today, of these four basic parts. However, that simplicity does not preclude the difficulty of designing and teaching faithfully using every single part. It is time consuming to design thoroughly. It is demanding to be attentive to principles and practices that make for effective learning. It is challenging to stand by quietly, avoiding the temptation to steal the learning opportunity from learners by telling them how it is done or



what the correct answer is. It is tough to evaluate constantly so that the system develops through our own learning. This “system” is an ongoing research agenda!

Such congruence in the behavior of designers and teachers is a must. Happily, we and the learners can see, hear, taste and feel the effects of faithful use of this fourfold frame of Dialogue Education.

What other piece would you add to these four as a basic element of Dialogue Education as you use it?

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