INTERGROUP DIALOGUE

Using Peer Facilitators to Promote Social Change

Patrice French

Program Coordinator of Multicultural Education

Saint Louis University

INTERGROUP DIALOGUE

LISTEN. TALK. CONNECT.

PRESENTATION GOALS

▶ Obtain a grounded understanding of intergroup dialogue structures and processes

▶ Understand the role peer facilitators and their contribution to the dialogue process

▶ Explore the capacities of peer facilitators towards promoting social change

WHAT IS INTERGROUP DIALOGUE?

INTERGROUP DIALOGUE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

▶ Developed in the 1980s at the University of Michigan

▶ Response to racial tension and conflict

▶ Now at over 20 institutions across the country

EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF INTERGROUP DIALOGUE

▶ Consciousness Raising

▶ Building Relationships Across Differences and Conflicts

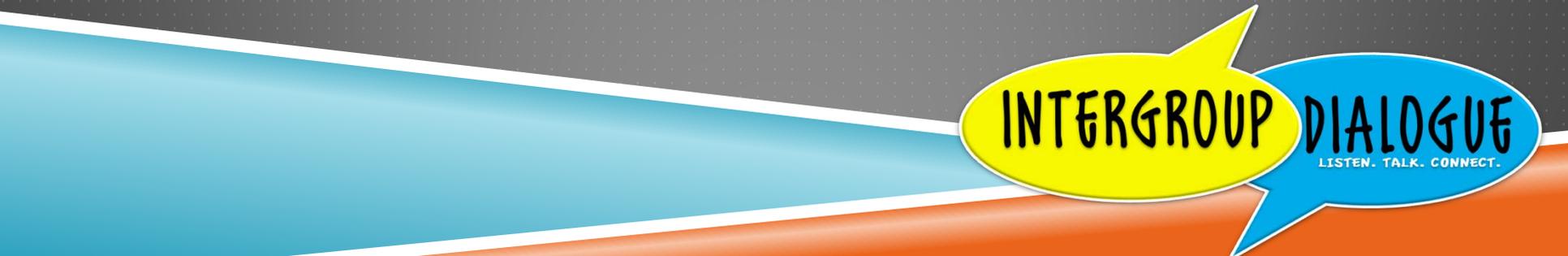▶ Strengthening Individual and Collective Capacities to Promote Social Justice

INTERGROUP DIALOGUE PEDAGOGY

▶ Active and engaged learning

▶ Structured interaction

▶ Facilitated learning environments

THE FOUR STAGES OF INTERGROUP DIALOGUE

▶ Group Formation, and Creation of a Shared Meaning of "Dialogue"

▶ Identity, Social Relations, and Conflict

▶ Issues of Social Justice ("Hot Topics")

▶ Empowerment, Alliances, and Action

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Increased personal and social awareness
- Increased knowledge about other groups and social inequalities
- Greater commitment to social responsibility and action
- Reduced stereotyping
- More complex thinking
- Improved communication skills
- Greater ability to manage conflict

Dessel, A. et. Al. (2006). Using intergroup dialogue to promote social justice and change. *Social Work* 51(4).

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PEER FACILITATORS: ROLES, STRUCTURES, AND IMPACT

THE ROLE OF THE IGD FACILITATOR

▶ To actively help participants move beyond previous and limited understanding of themselves, others, and the structure of relationships among groups in our society (and globally)

▶ To lead participants through activities of personal and collective inquiry that help reach desired goals

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PEER FACILITATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

▶ Creation of safe space

▶ Managing signs of negative processes

▶ Encouraging and modeling deep personal sharing

▶ Engaging Conflicts as teachable moments

▶ Attending to identity difference in awareness and experience

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INSTRUCTOR V. FACILITATOR

Instructor

- Content expert
- One way communication
- Lecture based
- Maintains control of the content of learning in the group
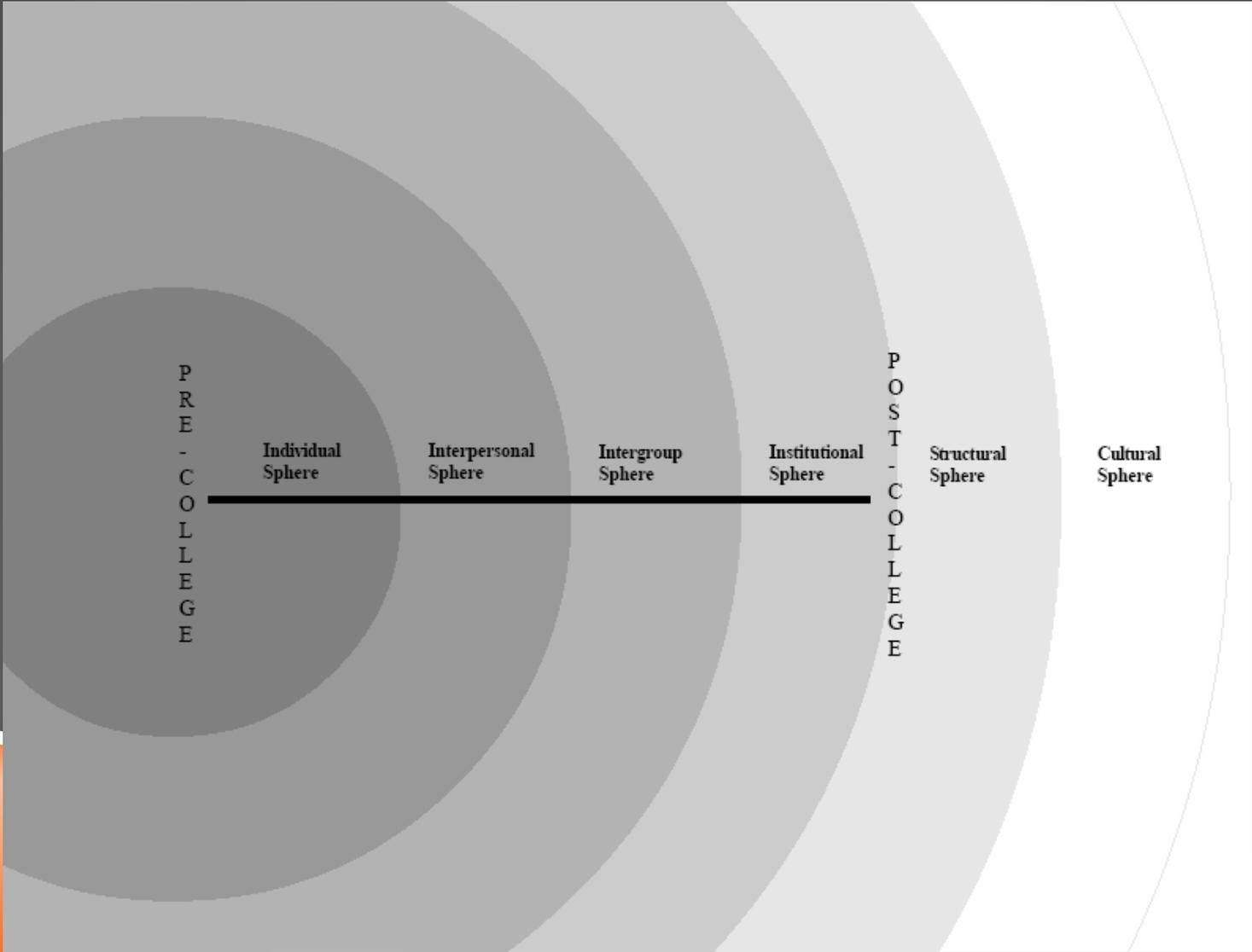- Participant adapts behavior to fit the content that the instructor shares

Facilitator

- Process manager
- Actively engages participants in learning together
- Access prior knowledge
- Participant shares
- Helps to guide a semi-structured experience

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SPHERES OF DEVELOPMENT: FACILITATORS

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENT FACILITATORS

Spheres of peer facilitator development

- Individual
- Interpersonal
- Intergroup
- Institutional
- Structural
- Cultural spheres

Competencies required for facilitators of intergroup dialogue

- Understanding of social identity
- Knowledge of social justice, privilege, and discrimination
- Group facilitation skills
- Increased ability to analyze and understand interpersonal and intergroup relationships

IMPACT OF FACILITATING

- ▶ Empowered to know, to care, and to act
- ▶ Changing Individuals
- ▶ Changing Institutions
- ▶ Changing society

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HEAR FROM STUDENTS

▶ *"My experience as a dialogue facilitator has thought me to become an effective communicator. By truly being a present and active listener, it allows for a fruitful productive community in dialogue. I've learned that it's about being honest and understanding as well as respecting the unique differences and commonality's we all have. Facilitating has also improved my manner of self-reflection. As I work on connecting with myself I am in a better position to connect with others. Ubuntu- I am because we are, my humanity is tied to yours."*
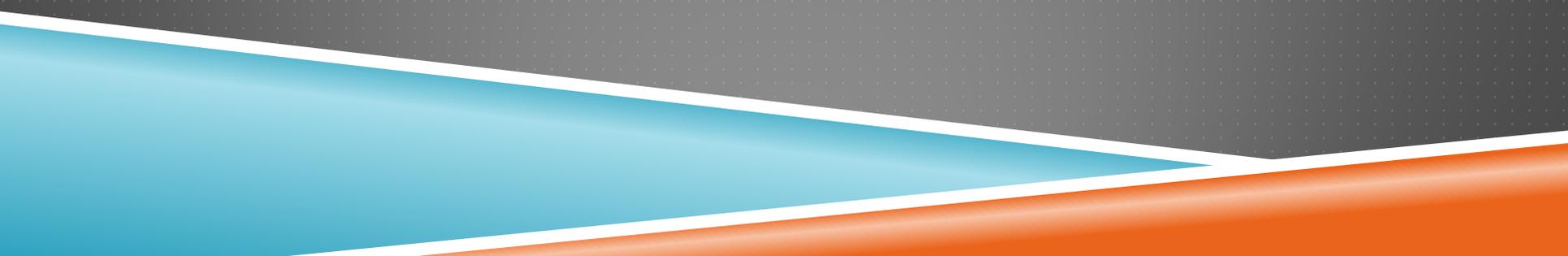
TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

- Mentorship programs
- Leadership development programs
- Student Orientation
- Resident Assistants/Advisors
- Student Government Leaders
- Student Organization Leaders
- Community/Not-for-profit organizations\
- Teacher's Assistants
- Careers

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REFERENCES

▶ Nagda, B.A. (2007). Evaluating intergroup dialogue: Engaging diversity for personal and social justice. *Diversity & Democracy* 12(1). Association of American Colleges & Universities

▶ Dessel, A. et. Al. (2006). Using intergroup dialogue to promote social justice and change. *Social Work* 51(4).

▶ Zúñiga, X., Nagda, B.A., Chesler, M., and Cytron-Walker, A. (2007). Intergroup Dialogue in Higher Education: Meaningful Learning about Social Justice. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 32, 4. 1-128.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Patrice French
- pfrench4@slu.edu
- 314-977-2826