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## Applying the Dialogic Method in an Eighth Grade English Curriculum

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APPLYING THE DIALOGIC METHOD IN AN EIGHTH GRADE ENGLISH  
CURRICULUM

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
English and Writing Studies:  
Pedagogy

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by  
Maggie Repko  
August 2022

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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I provide an analysis of Paulo Freire's (1973) dialogic method for language education. I then synthesize his theories with the work of sociocultural and linguistic researchers who have determined the strongest activities to bring about student language development. Finally, I apply these theories to my appendices of created works that might be utilized in an eighth-grade creative writing course. This thesis demonstrates the similarities between Freire's students and our students in the USA today and the ways that a critical dialogic pedagogy will meet their language learning needs while also inspiring their creative, critical conscientização.

Paulo Freire (1973) developed a critical pedagogy while teaching working-class Brazilians in the 1960s and 70s. His teaching framework acknowledged that education exists within economic and social limitations that aim to preserve the status quo. For this reason, the banking model of education was popularized (in Brazil and elsewhere). In this model, teachers deposit knowledge "coins" into their students' brains to provide learning, regardless of student interest or investment in the process. Freire and his colleagues invalidated the banking model by demonstrating the ability of students to teach each other and teach themselves without a "banking" authoritarian. For students to become leaders in the classroom, he proposed the dialogic method. The dialogic method is an educational system where students use collaborative dialogue as the primary means to learn more about the objects of study. Freire theorized that

codifications (culturally-relevant images) and questions are inherent to the method. He also demonstrated that his students would gain self-awareness and a critical, creative understanding of reality through his program, leaving with conscientização. These theories are the basis of critical pedagogy and have inspired language and writing teachers around the globe. Yet, these theories are also supported by sociocultural and linguistic researchers.

Language development depends on both internal and external practice with new ideas and words. Internalizing language and private speech provide language learners with a chance to think their thoughts and create ideas about the topics at hand. This pondering, combined with questioning, reflecting, writing, and sharing, provides empirical support for the dialogic method. Collaborative dialogue represents the connection between students as they share and consider one another's ideas. Through collaborative dialogue, students enter the zone of proximal development where long-term learning takes place. The dialogic teacher finds a balance between safety and tension in the classroom and maximizes student learning through these sociocultural, linguistic, and dialogic activities.

These theories are then put into practice through an eighth-grade creative writing unit centering on science fiction writing. Different than the curriculum Freire used, the appendix works provide a creative possibility for what a dialogic classroom may look like in 2022. Lesson plans demonstrate the detailed expectations a teacher will set for her students. They provide time and space for

students to ponder new ideas and engage in private speech. They prioritize reflection as a daily act and ask for writing so students are able to complete their thoughts after class activities. Collaborative dialogue is carefully designed and facilitated to anticipate any student conflicts that may arise. Additionally, all learning activities are connected back to Common Core standards for English language arts. These words demonstrate the power and feasibility of the dialogic approach and ask teachers to consider how conscientização may benefit their students today in 2022.

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## PART ONE

### PAULO FREIRE'S CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND THE DIALOGIC METHOD

#### Introduction

*The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a ubiquitous book amongst teachers, activists, and organizers hoping to utilize education to achieve social change. This book was produced by a Brazilian educator in the 1970s by the name of Paulo Freire. Freire produced dozens of books, articles, and speeches and served as the Minister of Education in Brazil after his return from exile. He wrote this book for those who consider education as the critical mediating factor in human liberation. Readers of this book will learn about Freire's experiences teaching in Brazil, codifications, generative words, and the process of overcoming oppression. Perhaps most importantly, readers of this book will also learn about Freire's dialogic method. The dialogic method was developed in the classes he taught with working-class students in Brazil. This method, examined in this thesis, involves the facilitation of structured dialogue during class in order for students to actively engage with the new ideas in class. Through this dialogue, students can immediately transfer their learning in the classroom with their lived experiences outside. Throughout this pedagogical exploration, I will demonstrate that the dialogic method is applicable and necessary in K-12 English classrooms in the United States.

Relying on the dialogic method, Freirean pedagogues understand that education is an instrument of social and personal change. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* remains an often-cited work because the cultural and political aspects of (mis)education remain relevant around the world. Within the pages of this book exist timeless recommendations for radical teachers to achieve incredible gains with their students. In fact, Freire theorized that his students would use their newfound literacy and consciousness to “help others to be free by transforming the totality of society” (qtd. in Beckett, 2013, p. 53). Through dialogue, questioning, consciousness, cultural awareness, and problem-posing, Freire’s classrooms changed historically ignored peasants into self-aware and powerful literate citizens.

### Education Exists Within Economic and Social Limitations

With a team of educators, Freire developed a radical program to produce this experience for his students. The theories that he developed, along with abundant resources for class design and curriculum, are present in his written works. When we consider the economic system of Freire’s upbringing, it’s unsurprising that he identified education as a cultural and political institution. Freire’s parents were educators and they were relatively well-off. But it was common for his classmates to go hungry or walk home without shoes. Freire saw the favelas (shanty towns) in Sao Paulo and couldn’t reconcile the gap between

the rich and poor. It was common for huge percentages of the population to be illiterate.

As a young teacher, Freire witnessed the apathy of his students who were unsure if education had any meaning in their lives. Their families, and now they themselves, had predetermined roles to play. These roles were to exist for others; to serve, labor, and sell themselves for the benefit of the wealthier members of society. In their mind, that would never change. But Freire disagreed and was unwilling to teach the status quo. He saw another possibility. Through a new form of education, he “hoped to awaken the critical consciousness of the oppressed” (Shih, 2018, p. 65). His students could begin “being *for* themselves” rather than “being for others” after participating in a new educational method (Shih, 2018, p. 65). Because his method asked students to change their consciousness and their self-perception as members of a society, it has been considered “radical” by some political leaders and has even been placed on banned books list (Shapiro, 2017). The demands of this program require a shift away from traditional education procedures.

### Invalidating the Banking Model of Education

Understanding the dialogic method begins with an understanding of its counterpart: the banking model. In traditional classrooms, students are expected to “docilely and passively [accept] the contents others give or impose on him or her” (Freire, 1973, pp. 100-101). Teachers are all-knowing. Students are the

recipients of this knowledge. Like coins deposited in a bank, knowledge was absorbed by students who carefully attended to their teacher's demands. Their interests, curiosities, and life experiences were not relevant to the learning materials. Without choice or power, students were objects that teachers manipulated. They have little to no autonomy in choosing what to think and what to spend their time working on. Experts share their knowledge and students absorb the pieces of culture, history, science, and language most relevant to their lives. Diving into the dialogic method demands a rejection of the banking model and an elimination of the teacher-dominator model. Teachers cannot work as hierarchical superiors to their students because this prevents students from thinking "dialectically", learning to ask questions, and reaching consciousness (Shih, 2018, p. 67).

As we turn to the dialogic method, we see an alternative. Although teachers are highly trained, student knowledge plays a valuable role in the classroom experience. Pre-packaged curriculum, worksheets, etc. can be educational, but the dialogic method asks for more than passive reception of teacher-driven content. This method asks students to engage with the materials of study and create new knowledge by actively communicating with one another through dialogue. Freire wrote that "knowledge necessitates the curious presence of Subjects confronted with the world" (1973, p. 100). The dialogic classroom demands curiosity, questioning, and thoughtfulness from all who enter. Teachers must expose and unravel what their students already know.

After students are curiously engaged, teachers can then train them in the art of study so that they are able to think, explore, and learn anything they wish to. Unlike banking classrooms, teachers and students work hand-in-hand and nourish “love, humility, hope, faith, and trust” within their classroom (Freire, 1973, p. 45). The roles of student and teacher are more evenly dispersed within this classroom—students become student-teachers, teachers become teacher-students. The dialogic method demands educators to step away from their banking model dependency and facilitate a new classroom experience.

### Introducing the Dialogic Method

The dialogic method, unlike the banking model, involves the facilitation of thoughtful, reflective, ongoing conversation amongst students as the primary method for learning. This is dialogue. Teachers who utilize the dialogic method organize their classroom so that students are prepared for meaningful speech (both intrapersonal and interpersonal). Intrapersonal speech, or inner speech, helps students to gain a “critical attitude” towards the object of study (Freire, 1973, p. 45). This critical attitude continues in interpersonal speech, or collaborative dialogue, as students become “co-investigators” of the objects of study (Beckett, 2013, p. 52). Rather than waiting for teacher guidance and commands, dialogic classrooms require students to actively participate in dialogue in order to think and learn the object of study on their own terms.

Freire and his team of dialogic educators believed that learning can only occur when students have a curious attitude towards the educational topics. Curiosity is rarely seen in banking model classrooms, where students are only wishing to receive knowledge “coins” by passively attending to the demands of the teacher. Curious co-investigation in learning, however, demands that students engage in deep thought about the topics at hand. Through this deep thought, the dialogue amongst students “leads to the development of certain skills and the ability to sustain good human relationships” (Carl, 2011, p.132). These skills include perception, pondering, question making, listening, speaking, reflecting, and writing. The ability to sustain good human relationships, while somewhat ephemeral, may also emerge in dialogic classrooms that emphasize reflection, listening, and respect. Freire, along with hundreds of more recent scholars, have examined and explained the dialogic method and its potential for student empowerment in the language and literacy classroom.

Freire’s advocacy for the dialogic method is reliant on dialogue as a constant practice. Souto-Manning (2008) summarizes dialogue as “the concept that teaching takes place in a culture circle, where teachers and students face one another and discuss issues that are relevant to them and their lives” (p. 98). Teachers facilitating the dialogic method must do more than tell students to share and listen when it’s their turn. These tasks are not self-evident: they require practice and conscious work. Teachers must model and train their students to “produce their own knowledge and then perceive and come to understand this

knowledge in a neverending spiral of action and reflection, ad infin” (McKenna, 2013, p. 450). The teacher must train her students in the art of pondering, listening, speaking and reflecting.

Pondering happens in the time between exposure to a problem and response to a problem. Pondering “is a cognitive tool that helps to structure and organize our own thinking” (Swain, 2015, p. 33) The dialogic method allows ample time for pondering so students can focus on the full development of their thoughts. After pondering, students will enter the listening and speaking phase of dialogue. Listening is a specialized skill that involves “following the thoughts and feelings of another and understanding what the other is saying from his or her perspective” (Katz et al, 1997, p. 1). It indicates a commitment to understand not just the words being spoken but the deeper meaning that is implied. Listening and speaking is thus a process whereby participants “engage jointly in problem-solving and knowledge building” (Swain, 2015, p. 39).

During dialogic encounters, teachers must understand that “when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (Peirce, 1995, p. 18). The simultaneous exchange of information and reorganization of identity reflects the cultural aspects of language development. It is impossible to learn language and literacy without also learning about who we are and what kind of world we live in. Banking model educators may gloss over this reality or hide it with



artificial neutrality, but Freirean dialogic educators understand the importance of awareness and reflection in the process of learning. Speaking, listening, writing, pondering, and reflection are activities that may indeed reorganize a students' relationship "to the social world" (Peirce, 1995, p. 18).

As such, teachers of this method must train students in the art of reflection at all times in their classroom. Not only do students of the dialogic method learn, they also meta-cognitively reflect on their learning in order to clarify their ideas and transfer their thoughts into long-term learning. The recursive, unending dialogic process helps students become self-aware and learn how to think their thoughts. Through the dialogic method of literacy education, students will effect a "change in [their] former attitudes, by discovering [themselves] to be a maker of the world of culture" (Freire, 1973, p. 47). Students who see themselves as a "maker of the world of culture" are accountable for their work. They have transgressed the banking model because they understand the importance of education for their lives and their culture. Students within the dialogic method learn to teach themselves and to teach others with any and all tools they possess. They learn that their position in the social hierarchy is not destiny— that their entire life can change. Thus, the dialogic method serves students in their quest to transform as individuals who transform society.

## The Dialogic Method Relies on Codifications and Questions

The functionality of a dialogic classroom depends on the careful preparation of the teacher. I preface this section on Freire's classroom design with the reality that his expectations are specific to the lived reality of their students in Brazil in the 1960s and 70s. Yet, we learn much from his teachings. Freire's peers worked intensely to develop a program plan that was flexible to the demands of each unique student group. As they began their classes, the first topic or concept they focused on was the "anthropological concept of culture" (Freire, 1973, p. 46). This topic was revealed to students through codifications, which are carefully selected images that possess an element of culture that can be revealed through dialogue.

Freire (1973) defines codifications as "representations of typical existential situations of the group" (Freire, 1973, p. 51). These pictures allow students to consider the anthropogenic aspects of their lives and ask them to go beneath surface level understandings of their cultural experiences. The codifications that Freire used included pictures of life in Brazil in the 1960s and 70s: families on farms, hunters with bow and arrow, a verse of poetry in Portuguese (Freire, A. M. A, 1997). These pictures precede organic question-asking and conversation amongst students. With the objects and problems depicted in codifications, "students examine the relationship between themselves and the [objects] as well as what they feel about what they see; they also articulate the [problems] illustrated and propose solutions" to those problems (Souto-Manning, 2008, p.

98). The teacher acts as a facilitator to show the pictures and give students space to ponder and analyze the pictures before reaching conclusions through dialogue. The use of codifications aids in the dialogic method because they require students to question what they see. Freire believed that “questions should be the core of the dialogue” in the classroom which lead seamlessly to reading and writing development through generative words (Shih, 2018, p. 64).

Codifications are helpful in language classes for students at all literacy levels because of their impact on deep thinking, curiosity, and increasing cultural awareness. For students without a strong grasp of spelling and writing, they are also important because they reveal the words with which the students describe their reality. These generative words, like the common “favela” in São Paulo, would be the first words taught to Freire’s students in their program. Becoming literate with the Freirean method is thus much more than memorizing spelling words. Through codifications, dialogue, and generative words, students and teachers engage in the cycle of education. Giroux describes the elements of the dialogic method as “combining theoretical rigor, social relevance, and moral compassion” to make classroom spaces open up “the space of critique, possibility, politics, and practice” (qtd. in McKenna 2013, p. 453). Freire’s dialogic method was anchored in his student’s lived experiences. They were learning more about what they already knew, intrinsically, and crafting personal literacies that directly translate to their lives.

Students working within the dialogic structure can quickly learn that they are capable of learning and changing through thoughtful work. They may also have a surface level understanding of their ability to effect change in the world around them. Yet Freire and his counterparts wanted their students to explicitly understand the habits, beliefs, traditions, and possibilities within their culture. Thus, Freire described the “first dimension of our new program” as being their students' awareness of the anthropological concept of culture (Freire, 1973, p. 46). Understanding culture requires various dialogues to help students grasp diverse ideas. These ideas include the distinction between the world of nature and of culture; the active role of [humans] *in* and *with* their reality; culture as the addition made by men to a world they did not make; culture as the result of [human's] labor, and more (Freire, 1973, p. 46). The ideas would be exposed through the study of codifications and created through the ponderings, thoughts, and dialogue between students.

### Dialogic Students Reach Conscientização

As we learn in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, “dialogue is the only way” for students to reach the fullest expression of their being (Freire, 1973, p. 45). When students reach the fullest expression of their being, as Freire explains, they will obtain conscientização (Portuguese, translating to *critical consciousness* in English). This concept represents self- and social-awareness, empowerment, and accountability. Students who reach conscientização realize they are *capable*

of becoming literate, even if they aren't yet. They discover they are *capable* of developing skills, asking questions, and finding answers. As Shih describes, "conscientization may be defined as the critical awareness of reality and the capacity to transform it" (2018, p. 66). Whether students are impoverished, illiterate, misunderstood, ill, or apathetic, their education and life will be forever altered when they reach conscientização. Now they see themselves as Subjects or actors within the world; that their words and actions have an effect on the world around them.

Within the dialogic classroom, students are "producing and acting upon their own ideas—not consuming those of others" (Freire, 1973, p 108). They are pondering, listening, speaking, writing, and reflecting on the objects of study and the culture surrounding them. At the same time they sit in class and participate in dialogue, their hearts and minds are transforming. Freire explained the timeline of student consciousness. As he wrote, the "discussion of [the] codifications will lead the group toward a more critical consciousness at the same time that they begin to learn to read and write" (Freire, 1973, p. 51). His students were asked to read the word and read the world. Teachers of the dialogic method today can integrate the theory of conscientização into their classrooms by training students in thoughtful dialogue and engaging them in anthropogenic concept-building as they also build literacy skills. Within the dialogic method, students are asked to recognize their capacity for self-development and for more conscious actions

within their culture. Freire's educational model inextricably links consciousness with literacy and has inspired a global movement for critical pedagogy.

### Critical Pedagogy

The elements discussed thus far represent more than one teacher's radical ideas. These methods involved in the dialogic method are indicative of a critical pedagogy, which has been embraced by a number of educators. This pedagogy "is rooted in the notion that education should play a role in creating a just and democratic society" (Shih, 2018, p. 65). It requires teachers to take an active role not only in their students' learning but in their students' conscientização and cultural awareness. Ultimately, critical pedagogues believe that education should facilitate "the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world" (Freire, 1973, p. 34). The elements of the dialogic method epitomize the "practice of freedom" leading to conscientização but also steer students to powerful language and literacy learning.

With or without the lens of critical pedagogy, linguistic and sociocultural scholars reach similar conclusions about the dialogic method. Critical pedagogues run classrooms that engage the "complex social identit[ies]" of the learner and situate their knowledge making within the "larger, and frequently inequitable social structures which are reproduced in day-to-day social

interaction” (Peirce, 1995, p. 12). The reality for language teachers is that refusing to utilize dialogic methods in their classroom will automatically decrease their student’s potential for linguistic development. In the following section, a series of linguistic and sociocultural theories support the methodology of Freire’s dialogic pedagogy.

PART TWO  
LINGUISTIC AND SOCIOCULTURAL THEORIES SUPPORTING THE  
DIALOGIC METHOD

Language Development

Several theories in the area of second language acquisition support concepts in Freire's dialogic method, including sociocultural theory with its ideas of inner/private speech and collaborative dialogue. Sociocultural theorists such as Swain (2015), Brown (2012), Fecho (2010), and Beckett (2013) provide scholarship that supports the dialogic method as an empirically proven method for dynamic linguistic development. Additionally, their research shows that higher level thinking skills only emerge when learners develop their linguistic skills and knowledge. Swain (2015) describes the skills that humans acquire only through linguistic development: "the means to be free of the immediate present, to solve difficult problems, to impede impulsive behavior, to plan, to focus attention, in sum, to master one's own behavior" (p. 41). Language acquisition, as she and her peers demonstrate, occurs through exposure, practice, correction, attention, time spent noticing, inner speech, and collaborative dialogue. All of these tasks are central to the dialogic method and result in advanced learning for students.

"Language", says Brown et al (2012), "emerges over time through the interactions of many people and of interactions between cognitive and neural systems" (p. 150). When language teachers understand the cognitive, neural, and social aspects of learning, they can propel their students to advanced levels



of learning. It is the teacher's role to maximize her student's internalization and externalization of language. Both of these factors (internalization and externalization of language) are "socially constructed and changed by use" (Brown et al, 2012, p. 150). Structured facilitation of the dialogic method provides students with ample time for independent thought, self-talk, and group talk. Developing the external aspects of language means working on accurate listening, competent speaking, and the ability to offer critical and creative feedback to peers. "Learning is a lifelong process" that best serves students and culture when it stimulates "emotional and intellectual development" along with the academic goals (Carl, 2011, p. 134). This learning process works hand in hand with the anthropogenic goals of dialogic teaching developed by Freire and other critical pedagogues.

### Internalizing Language and Private Speech

Sociocultural scholars in second language acquisition have noted that internal thinking and talking to oneself constantly occur during language development. Time spent processing ideas, recalling words, and creating ideas in your head is necessary to learn a language and to learn in general. These activities are also all essential parts of the dialogic method. It is not possible to have dialogue unless the participants are internally thinking and speaking privately to themselves. Sociocultural theories on internal language and private

speech support the idea that the dialogic methodology of pondering and reflecting support students' linguistic development.

Swain (2015) explains that “private speech is speech addressed to the self” (p. 33). This speech “is intrapersonal communication that mediates thinking processes; that is, it is a cognitive tool that helps to structure and organize our own thinking” (2015, p. 33). This form of speech, directed only to the speaker, is essential for linguistic and cognitive functions. Language teachers should note sociocultural theories on the relationship between language and action. Self-commentary before sharing ideas with others is a sign that the speaker’s cognitive linguistic skills are advancing. Swain (2015) explains the importance of this learning: “spontaneous behavior... [transforms] into planned and organized behavior with the aid of speech” (p. 36). Over time, self-talk allows language users to mediate their thoughts and plan for their speech and actions before they occur (pre-meditation). Caught between our external perceptions and our internal processes, we use private speech to facilitate “higher mental processes” (Swain, 2015, 34). It is a language teacher's responsibility to make space for this critical activity in language development.

Utilizing Swain’s framework for private speech, dialogic teachers wishing to facilitate private speech should set expectations for their behavior at that time. The teacher will demand there be “no eye contact”, that voices are “lowered often to a whisper and sometimes... not audible at all”, and that students keep “utterances...short (often limited to a few words or less)” (Swain et al 2015, 35).

Shockingly, some teachers attempt to punish students for making quiet comments to themselves during learning activities! But thinking through complex problems is not always possible in silence. Private speech is an aspect of language development that aids students in “strengthening associations between various kinds of linguistic and nonlinguistic knowledge” (Brown et al, 2012, p. 150).

Private speech is the key element of language internalization made possible in dialogic classrooms. As the linguistic theorist Vygotsky explained, self-dialogue represents an “externalization of higher mental processes,” or thinking out loud (Swain et al, 2015, p. 34). The well-informed language teacher, then, is prepared to incorporate private speech in class so her students can explore their linguistic ideas and succeed in their higher mental processes. In the dialogic classroom, the teacher provides ample thinking time and asks for private speech, personal writing, reflection, and a general attitude of thinking slowly and deeply in order to reach the fullest potential of one’s cognition. One goal for dialogic language teachers is to normalize and encourage the linguistically essential act of private speech.

### Collaborative Dialogue

The externalization of private speech into multi-person conversation, or collaborative dialogue, represents the next step in linguistic and cognitive learning. Language is social and relies on interactions between users for both

cognitive and linguistic progression (Brown, 2012). Collaborative dialogue, defined by Swain (2015), is a linguistic encounter between students where they “engage jointly in problem-solving and knowledge building” (p. 39). The thoughts created through private speech become actions as they are shared with peers and offered as objects of inquiry. The dialogic classroom relies on collaborative dialogue because it creates a “form of shared cognition” that leads to higher level mental activities (Swain et al, 2015, p. 41). Cognitive tasks like synthesis, evaluation, and analysis are made possible when language learners collaborate, listen, provide feedback, and reflect on their ideas in dialogue.

Swain (2015) connects inner speech with collaborative dialogue. Speaking aloud is an act that “completes our thoughts (cognition, ideas)” and, through collaboration, “transforms [those ideas] into artifacts that allow for further contemplation, which, in turn, transforms thought” (Swain et al, 2015, p. 41). Collaborative dialogue is thus a recursive act that increases cognition. Teachers who facilitate collaborative speech are creating “a collective experience in class” in which discussion and “reflection” are encouraged (Fecho et al, 2010, p. 444).

When the hopeful, loving aspects of the Freirean dialogic method are utilized in class, along with the dialogic method, teachers and students will recognize dialogue not as “leading to language learning” but as “language learning in process” (Swain et al, 2015, p. 39). Private speech, discussed above, helps learners to outline their preliminary ideas. Collaborative speech, discussed here, helps learners to complicate, negotiate, alter, or strengthen those

ideas. Perhaps most importantly, collaborative dialogue pushes students into the zone of proximal development where the majority of long-term learning takes place.

### The Zone of Proximal Development

Sociocultural theories of language learning also embrace the notion of the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) which, as with private speech and collaborative dialogue, has relevance to dialogic approaches to teaching. Fecho describes the ZPD as the space in which students are able to learn via the assistance of a more knowledgeable other (2010, p. 427). This “other” is often a classmate who shares their lived experiences and personal thoughts through collaborative dialogue. The “unfamiliar” space of the ZPD is where powerful learning happens (Fecho, 2010, p. 427). Vygotsky originated this theory when he identified learning as a neurological process of connecting and strengthening new neural synapses in the brain (qtd. in Fecho, 2010, p. 427). As students ponder, question, consider, listen, use inner speech, and use collaborative speech, their brains are forging new connections that strengthen their language and thinking capacities.

Learning implies cognitive growth. Thoughtful engagement and concentration unlocks our brain's flexibility and helps us move into the ZPD where we can form new thoughts. As Swain (2015) demonstrates, language use in the proximal zone helps students to “be free of the immediate present, to solve

difficult problems, to impede impulsive behavior, to plan, to focus attention, in sum, to master one's own behavior" (p. 41). Engaging in these demanding mental tasks, as Fecho (2010) articulates, feels less secure than surface-level thinking in the banking model (p. 427). Yet, discomfort is to be expected when students are in the midst of massive growth.

When students are participating in advanced cognitive tasks, "the best (or perhaps, only) way for the learner to engage in the activity is by 'talking it through' in the first (strongest) language" (Swain et al, 2015, p. 43). The sociocultural theories of the ZPD thus connect to the dialogic method. "Talking through" ideas (through private speech or collaborative dialogue) allows students to practice inquiry, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and more. The dialogic method gives students the chance to embody new language learning and build neurological connections in their zone of proximal development.

### The Paradox Between Safety and Tension in the Classroom

The Freirean dialogic method, devoted to uncovering the anthropogenic concept of culture, asks students to "engage in personally challenging explorations and lines of inquiry that [call] thinking into question" (Fecho et al, 2010, p. 445). Working in the ZPD, students deal with difficult cognitive, social, and personal tasks. Dialogic teachers must confront the emotional aspects of these advanced learning methods and create a balance between safety and tension. As Fecho (2010) explains, "creating a space where it is safe to engage,

inquire, and dialogue may feel very unsafe” (p. 445). Students are physically safe in class, but the influx of challenging tasks and ideas may be taxing and stressful within the body. This tension stems from the “contradictions, realizations, anger, and the loss of old ways of thinking” after participating in linguistic and cultural activities (Fecho et al, 2010, p. 445). The balance between safety and tension lies within reflection.

Ample time for reflection and private speech allows students to organize and regulate their responses to the new learning materials. These tasks require diligent work for teachers, especially those who are new to the dialogic method. Emotional experiences may be scary for those used to the artificial neutrality of banking model classrooms, but emotions are the precursor to connecting, respecting, and trusting cultural experiences in the classroom. Teachers should, as Freire encouraged, “learn with [their students] how to go beyond, not just their limits, but his or her limits” as well (qtd. in Beckett, 2013, p. 57). In order to accomplish these goals, the culture within the classroom must incorporate strict boundaries for respect, safety, and engagement with hard topics. Then students can bear witness to emotional learning experiences and emerge with a new understanding of themselves and their position in the world. Embodying big emotions and embracing tension in the classroom will lead students to a courageous understanding that they have a right to think their thoughts, express their thoughts respectfully, and be heard.

PART THREE

PUTTING THE DIALOGIC METHOD INTO PRACTICE: A CURRICULUM  
FOR EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS

The dialogic method could be beneficial for K-12 education in the United States because it enriches student language learning, encourages conscientização, helps students build connections, and lets students become leaders in their own learning activities. My own investment in the dialogic method is connected to my work as a middle school English teacher. To demonstrate the applications of the dialogic method, I have created a series of classroom materials that could be utilized in an eighth-grade English language classroom. The 20-session course teaches science fiction creative writing using the dialogic method. My appendices include a lesson plan for the first day of class; a lesson plan for a dialogic class after completing a course reading; a list of keywords and writing prompts for both in-class and take-home writing, and a final reflection prompt to be utilized after the class's short-story assignment. I have also inserted annotations within the works to demonstrate their connections to the dialogic method. In this section, I will explain this curriculum and make connections to the socio-cultural, linguistic, and critical pedagogical theories for the dialogic method.



## Lesson Plan for the First Day of Class

In this lesson plan (See Appendix A), I have curated learning objectives; a dialogic objective; the strategy for class activation; a learning objective in student-friendly language; a teacher script to explain the day's learning activities; the teacher strategies for modeling activities to students; steps for student independent work; steps for student collaborative work; time for student reflection; and a writing prompt for homework. This level of detail is not always required in a dialogic classroom. But as middle school teachers understand, the first day of school is the most important day of the year. Every minute of this class period serves a purpose. On this day it is essential that the teacher establish a "current" amongst students on the nature and energy of their (dialogic) classroom expectations (Freire, 1973, p. 47). This current prepares students for the "inclusive, caring, and critically tended alliances" they will forge with one another and with their teacher (Nagda, 2006, p. 573). Preparing students for meaningful collaborative dialogue starts with meaningful pondering, writing, and inner speech, all of which are encouraged in this lesson plan.

The official student-friendly learning objective is that by the end of class, students will "think, write, and share [their] ideas about the story [they] see in a picture" (Appendix A). Although students don't have the pedagogical knowledge to anticipate this learning objective, dialogic teachers know that students will be pondering, writing, using inner speech, and using collaborative dialogue to discover the implicit concepts within a codification. The teacher will facilitate an

exploration of codifications in science fiction topics and students will have the opportunity to think and write about alien invasions, a dystopian city, a campfire burning on a mountainside by two abandoned people, and a spaceship exiting the Earth's orbit. These codifications, different than those used by Freire, still provide a means by which students can reckon with the anthropological concept of culture. Pondering, writing, and inner speech are the primary tasks utilized in the first class period because they prepare students for meaningful collaborative dialogue and reflection later on.

#### Lesson Plan for a Dialogic Class After Completing a Course Reading

The course design for this eighth-grade science fiction creative writing course (See Appendix B) includes a single reading assignment, the short story *The Book of Martha* by Octavia Butler (2003). The day after students finish the reading, they will be asked to participate in collaborative dialogue for the majority of the class. A few minutes of reflection and writing at the beginning and end of the class session supplement the time spent in dialogue. Four separate CCSS ELA-Literacy standards support the dialogic lesson plans, including standard 8.1.A: "Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion" (2022). The dialogic framework prepares students to meet this learning objective. "Coming to

discussions prepared” takes some work. The night before the collaborative dialogue, students have a take-home writing task to reflect on their ideas about the story. On the morning of the dialogue, they will review and ponder their ideas about the story before collaborating with others. Using a graphic organizer, they will also use writing as a tool to organize their ideas during the dialogue. By listening to each other and sharing their own thoughts, students will deepen their understanding of the text and also gain awareness about human culture. This supports their developing conscientização.

This lesson plan also anticipates difficulties students may have in their first collaborative dialogue sessions. The teacher models a variety of sentence starters that students may use if they feel awkward or don't know what to say in the conversation. Sentences like “I was wondering if you could explain that comment more” and “I'd like to say something” may sound simple to adults who have engaged in collaborative dialogue for years. But for students in eighth grade, these phrases are unfamiliar. Becoming a dialogic teacher requires the teacher to “search” with their students “for a new set of limits” to what they are capable of thinking, writing, hearing, and saying in the classroom (Beckett, 2013, p. 57). New tasks in the classroom can feel tense and uncomfortable amongst students who may have limiting beliefs about their own leadership in the classroom. Anticipating this tension is the work of the teacher, who prepares herself for any possible problems her students may have with the materials and

gives clear directions and guidance on how students can maintain control and use their time to learn.

Both lesson plans in the appendix (first day of class and the class period after reading *The Book of Martha*) are designed to set students up for success in their learning. As the teacher listens to her students, she shows them that she regards them as “worthy to listen” and that she’ll listen too because her students are “worthy to speak” (Peirce, 1995, p. 29). Patience, a loving attitude, and space for reflection will allow the teacher and her students to maximize their learning. The only way for students to be successful in a dialogic class is to participate together “as equals” and explore the learning topics without harshness or judgment (Freire, 1973, p. 48). The teacher is responsible for creating a supportive atmosphere in class. Student expression and connection pushes students into the proximal zone of learning and enables long-term learning (Swain, 2015, p. 43).

#### Keywords and Writing Prompts for Both In-Class and Take-Home Writing

Writing “routinely over extended time frames... for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences” is a learning objective in the national Common Core English standards that directly links to the dialogic method and my appendix (2022). As seen in Appendix C, students following my curriculum will be asked to “think new thoughts while pondering, listening and speaking” and

“write my new thoughts down, helping me to learn even more.” The full dialogic objective for writing in the course also sets the expectation that students will “use creativity and imagination to reflect on what I want to learn while writing” and that “writing is a tool that I use to organize and understand my thinking and to make new thoughts.” Their ponderings, inner speech, and collaborative dialogue will be systematically organized throughout the twenty class periods, each of which includes at least one writing prompt. Their notebook is not used like a bank to passively copy notes for memorization. Their notebook is instead an “instrument” that they use in the journey of learning “to read and write” (Freire, 1973, p. 48). The writing prompts given to students throughout the course will prepare them to embody their learning and reflect on their thoughts and experiences.

For example, several writing prompts ask for a metacognitive reflection on the act of learning. In class two, students will “first think, then talk, then listen, then write” during class. Their discussion and writing prompt is “what are the reasons talking with others helps us with our learning?” Sociocultural and linguistic theories succinctly state that dialogue is “language learning in process” (Swain, 2015, p. 39). Eighth grade students haven’t read these theories and must discover the value of collaborative dialogue through their own conscious reflection. As the class moves forward, students are asked to reflect upon the nature of stories. As they learn about the genre of science fiction and creative writing, they will write about “one of [their] favorite stories” and collaborate with peers on “what makes humans love stories and want to listen” (Class 3). Their

dialogic engagement solidifies when they take the time to complete their thoughts by writing. Although this curriculum is designed around the genre of science fiction, the dialogic method and its emphasis on reflective and creative writing are useful in all subjects. The cycle of pondering, using inner speech, engaging in collaborative dialogue, writing, and reflecting is flexible enough to meet the needs of diverse curricula. Students who express themselves through writing and then share their written ideas with others can “see one another as part of a social network” where their ideas are “produced, validated, and exchanged” in an equitable learning cycle (Peirce, 1995, p. 29). For these reasons, writing is an essential piece to the dialogic method and necessary for eighth grade students in this context.

#### Final Reflection Prompt After the Short-Story Assignment

As is the case in most creative writing classes, the final assessment for the course is a large short-story writing project. Instead of using the writing prompt for this thesis appendix, however, I have included a reflection prompt to be given to students after they finish their short story (See Appendix D). Students will first ponder what [they’ve] written about and reflect on those writings. They will then “use inner speech” to think about and write what they have learned about creative writing, science fiction, their skills and preferences as a writer, and their short story. Finally, a collaborative discussion will help them hear their classmates’ reflections, share their own, and add their final ideas to their written

reflections. In each of these learning activities, students will write their thoughts in their reflection prompt. The reflective activities in Appendix D allow students to verbalize (with inner speech and collaborative dialogue) and embody (through writing) the conscientização that they have developed in their 20-course science fiction experience with me.

This reflection prompt promotes “an open climate for discussion in which pupils feel free to participate“ (Carl, 2011, p. 140). There are no wrong answers in the reflection, just space to learn and grow. My personal reflection in the appendix is that teachers should also consider writing their answers to these reflection prompts. As critical pedagogues of the dialogic method, we know that “restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry” is what leads us to conscientização and our fullest potential (Freire, 1973, p. 72). We ask our students to engage in reflection so they can recognize themselves and “become themselves” (Freire, 1973, p. 45). As teachers, we hope that our students will carry their reflection skills with them into the new spaces where they engage in creative writing work. But most importantly, the act of reflection “help[s] students interrogate their relationship to ... larger social processes” like how writing works, their identity as a writer, and their engagement in advanced tasks like writing complete short stories (Peirce, 1995, p. 29). Completing this reflection allows students to cognitively end their activity in this course, acknowledge their growth, and recognize all the room they have to continue developing.

## Learning Objectives

The Common Core state standards for ELA-Literacy, as referenced in my works, emphasize dialogue as a necessary element for linguistic growth (CCSS ELA-Literacy Standards, 2022). All eighth-grade students in the United States, for example, are expected to “engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions... building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly” (CCSS ELA-Literacy Standards SL 8.1, 2022). This standard, referenced in Appendices A and B, asks teachers to facilitate collaborative dialogue to strengthen student learning. With creativity and vision, public-school teachers across the United States can merge the common core learning standards with the methodology of dialogic education (Pondering, listening, speaking, writing, and reflecting). The relationship between dialogue and writing is also referenced in standard W 8.5, which says “with some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach” (CCSS ELA-Literacy Standards, 2022). For some activities in the dialogic method, such as the growth of conscientização, time spent using inner speech, and the study of codifications, teachers may need to make creative connections between the standards and their classroom activities. The scholars we’ve heard throughout this thesis, however, demonstrate that all of the activities within the dialogic method lead to cognitive and linguistic growth. Therefore, the language and literacy standards are parallel to the purposes of the dialogic



method and can be practiced simultaneously in English classes throughout the US today.

## PART FOUR

### FREIRE'S STUDENTS, OUR STUDENTS

#### Conclusion

The existence of language necessitates the existence of human culture. Sharing language, ideas, stories, traditions, rituals, and care practices are all cultural experiences (that humans, and other animals, know). Education is a profound influence of human behavior and thought; “there is no culture without education” (Setiadi, 2017, p. 7). However, human culture is not without shortcomings. As Freire saw in his daily life, thousands of people were living in slum conditions, unlettered, and without adequate food, medicine, housing, or protection. In the 1970’s, Freire argued for a “cultural revolution” in which “the total society [is] to be reconstructed” (McKenna 2013, 455). This framework may startle the average US teacher, who maintains footing on a trepidatious balance beam within our conflicting culture. We want changes, yes, but not revolution. How could Freire hold a stance so radical? The critical pedagogy that Freire inspired shows teachers that education can transform student consciousness and turn them from “being for others” into “being[s] for themselves” (qtd. In Shih, 2018, p. 65). Using the dialogic method, students will think critically and creatively about the problems in their world. They will learn to develop their own thoughts through inner speech and strengthen or alter their thoughts through collaborative dialogue. Freire told us that educational leaders have no right to

“treat the oppressed as their possession” (Freire, 1970, 120). Instead, it is a leader’s responsibility to empower their students to “effect a change in [their] former attitudes” and then “[discover themselves] to be a maker of the world of culture” (Freire 1973, 47). Meanwhile, scholars in linguistic and socio-cultural fields demonstrate the feasibility and promise of his methods.

Anthropological theories are as integral in the dialogic method as linguistic and socio-cultural theories. Dialogic educators must look at the past and gather “a means of understanding more clearly what and who [we] are so that [we] can more wisely build the future” (Freire 1997, 84). Using the dialogic method in our classrooms must include an awareness of Freire’s cultural philosophy. He is an advocate of total social change for the uplifting of oppressed people and would advocate for 21st century teachers to maintain similar goals. After all, when our students reach conscientização of this method, they will surely transform the world.

APPENDIX A  
LESSON PLAN FOR THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

## Lesson plan for the first day of class

### **Learning Objectives:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.D
- Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

**Dialogic Objective:** I engage in the dialogic method by pondering, writing, listening, and speaking about a fictional scene on a codification.

The following codifications will be presented to students:

1. A dark forest with two figures standing in front of a burning fire
2. The ruins of a modern city with a lone figure in a wheelchair
3. A war-like cityscape with alien figures walking through

4. A spaceship propelling away from Earth

**Class Activation:** *Students find their seats and begin a short questionnaire with relevant information for the teacher. When enough time has passed, they will enact the paper collection method at the teacher's discretion. The teacher (or an assigned student worker) will read the learning objective written in student friendly language. The teacher will ensure that students have necessary materials (pencil, eraser, and spiral notebook) and provide extra materials.*

**Learning objective in student friendly language:** I think, write, and share my ideas about the story I see in a picture.

**Teacher script explaining today's learning activities:** "Today we are going to meet each other and share some creative ideas. Our creative ideas will emerge after we look at a few pictures. For each picture we see, we will sit and stare and think about the kind of story that picture is telling. When we've thought enough, we will write a shorty-short story to describe what we created in our mind. Shorty-short means less than one hundred words. We aren't going to share our entire stories, but we are going to share a simple summary of what we wrote. A simple summary means a sentence about what we saw within the picture and what we wrote about. We are going to take turns when sharing and also tell our classmates our names so we can be respectful.

In this section of class, students will interact with codifications for the first time. Pondering on these pictures will help them with creative expression through writing.

**Modeling activities to students:** The teacher will model the cycle of pondering and writing to students by taking out her notebook and pencil and opening up to yesterday– the day before class. When she was preparing for class, she ended up writing a shorty-short story because she was so curious about the picture she saw. The first codification she will show students is “a dark forest with two figures standing in front of a burning fire.” She will sit alongside her students and say “let’s ponder what we see here.” She models pondering by nodding her head, speaking quietly to herself, and focusing deeply on the picture.

After a couple of minutes, she will capture their attention again to say “normally after we ponder something like this, we start to write about it. I looked at this picture yesterday before class and wrote this page (shows page to the class). Is it alright if I read a bit of my story aloud to you?” The students will nod! She does not read the entire statement aloud. She looks at her story from the top to the bottom, slowly, and says “I am going to summarize my story. A summary means re-telling the most important idea I had that inspired me. The most important idea that inspired me in this picture is ...”

It is possible that students would like to share feedback or discuss her ideas. Instead, the teacher should redirect students to their own notebooks and ask them to try writing a story for a different codification in their first “student independent work” of the class.

In this section of class, students will see the teacher model “inner speech” by thinking and whispering to herself while pondering the picture. She will explicitly state what pondering means.

**Student independent work:** For this independent work, the teacher will ask her students to engage in the same process she just demonstrated. She will switch the codification to #2: The ruins of a modern city with a lone figure in a wheelchair. “We are going to ponder this picture and figure out what story we see in this picture. Let’s take one minute of silence to ponder.” After one minute, she will pick up her pencil and begin to write. “Let’s start writing down our thoughts about the picture. It’s okay to write anything we want. And we should stay silent. We are going to write for five minutes.” She will write for thirty seconds and then stroll around the room. She should not distract students, but ensure that all are able to participate in this activity. After five minutes, she will capture her student’s attention. “Now is the point in class when we would normally share. For this picture, we are going to practice sharing by doing something unexpected. We are going to all share at the exact same time. Our class might get a little noisy, but follow along with me and



practice what it will be like when you are in a group.” She will ask students to listen to these dialogic phrases:

- *My name is ....*
- *When I saw this picture, I mainly thought about...*
- *My summary for my writing is ...*
- *Thank you for listening. Who’s next? OR FOR TODAY ONLY: Thank you to myself for sharing. I think I’m done.*

She will model these sentences first, then ask students to repeat. Students can speak as loudly or as quietly as they want because it’s practice. “Eventually we will be sharing with each other and listening to each other. Then we’ll have to speak loud enough that our classmates can hear us, but quiet enough that their ears don’t hurt!”

During this activity, the teacher begins to connect codifications with idea generation, one of the foundations of conscientização. Students will also practice collaborative dialogue in a low-stakes activity.

**Student collaborative work:** Depending on the success and/or hesitancy of students to engage with the speaking activity, the teacher may ask for another round of practicing or encourage students to work with peers for the next two prompts. Either way, the goal of the teacher is to have every student share their

name, thoughts, summary, and show thanks to at least one other classmate before they leave class today.

The teacher may follow a variety of partnering strategies. She may group students based on proximity of seats, ask students to walk randomly through the classroom to happen upon a new partner, call student names with popsicle sticks, etc. One grouping should be adequate for students to share both stories.

It is also possible that five minutes is not enough time for writing their stories. The teacher can ascertain students' writing timeline by saying "during our last writing time, we had five minutes. If you think that was enough time, please show me by raising a hand with a fist. If you think that was not enough time, please show me by raising a hand with five fingers open." She can adjust the timeline based on their answer.

The two remaining codifications for class are:

1. A war-like cityscape with alien figures walking through
2. A spaceship propelling away from Earth

In this section of class, students will continue to act in low-stakes collaborative dialogue activities, mediated by the flexible teacher. Students will also be building language and developing stories based on the codifications.

**Reflection:** With between ten and seven minutes left in class, the teacher will ask students to prepare to exit but retain their notebook and pencil on their desk. “Please write (today’s date) reflection on the next page. On this reflection, write down what you did in class today. Then write a sentence on something you liked thinking about or doing during class today. Thank you for completing your reflection silently and please stay seated and quiet, or even put your head down, until the bell dismisses you for your next class.”

This reflection allows students to build self-awareness by naming their learning tasks and taking ownership of the activities or thoughts they enjoyed during class.

**Homework:** Spend at least 12 minutes writing more in one of your short stories from class today. The teacher may say “Tonight’s homework is to set a 12 minute timer on your microwave or phone. Open your notebook to your short stories from class. And choose one that was the most interesting. For 12 minutes *without taking a break* write more to that story. You might add what people say, think, or do, or even what is happening in the world around them.”

APPENDIX B

LESSON PLAN FOR A DIALOGIC CLASS AFTER COMPLETING A COURSE

READING

Lesson plan for a dialogic class after completing the course reading, *The Book of*

*Martha* by Octavia Butler.

**Learning objective:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.A
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C
- Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4
- Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Dialogic objective:** I engage in the dialogic method by pondering, writing, listening, and speaking with classmates about our class reading, *The Book of Martha*.

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**Class Activation:** *Students find their seats after taking a graphic organizer designed for them to track their speech and learning during the dialogue today. This organizer asks them to review their take-home writing assignment from the night before. They wrote about The Book of Martha and their opinions on 1) the most captivating part of this story, 2) the ideas from the book they'd like to discuss, and 3) their questions. The graphic organizer provides space for their names and the names of their group mates. It also provides space for a summary of each group mate's takeaways about the story.*

*The teacher (or an assigned student worker) will read the learning objective written in student friendly language. The teacher will ensure that students have necessary materials (their dialogic graphic organizer, a pencil, eraser, and spiral notebook) and provide extra materials when necessary.*

In this section of class, students will use both reflection and pondering which result in “inner speech”, a great developer of language. Their reflection will lead to collaborative dialogue because they are preparing their comments and questions.

**Learning objective in student friendly language:** I share my ideas and reflect on the ideas of others to learn more about *The Book of Martha* with dialogue.

**Explanation of learning activities:** “We have been talking and listening to each other since our class began. Today there is only one difference. We will be talking and listening in our groups to learn about *The Book of Martha* and I won’t interrupt the discussion to ask questions or share my own ideas. You are in charge today. What questions do you have so far?”

“You have a graphic organizer. Please write down your group members’ names.”  
(Teacher can read the group names or students will use groups they are already familiar with).

“During the dialogue *or* after the dialogue, you will write a summary of everyone’s comments. The graphic organizer shows me that you know how to dialogue, that you pondered what to say, that you listened to one another, and that your dialogue helped you all learn more about the story. Who has a question that could help us understand what’s going to happen?”

This explanation sets the standard for student accountability during the dialogue. The teacher says that her participation will be limited and that it is the student's responsibility to maintain their dialogues. She offers space for questions to ensure that all students understand the expectation.

**Modeling activities to students:** Modeling the dialogic expectations for this class involves giving sentence starters to students so they are prepared to carry on the conversation in case of awkwardness or silence. The teacher can prepare a large-font list of sentence starters to be placed on the wall for student access. The teacher might introduce this by saying “sometimes we feel a little awkward or aren't sure what to say next. It can help to have some easy sentences to use when we get stuck. Some of these sentences can be:

- I'm sorry, could you remind me of your name?
- Thank you for sharing \_(name)\_. I was wondering if you could explain that comment more?
- I'm not sure who's turn it is. \_(Name)\_ could you share one of your ideas that we haven't discussed yet?
- I'd like to say something.
- Can you repeat that please?
- Can we move on to \_(this thing)\_ ?
- Thank you for sharing!
- Who else has an idea to share about \_(this thing)\_ ?”



In this section of class, the teacher literally provides the language of dialogue through these sentences. She introduces the sentence starters in a way that empowers and encourages students to utilize language for their own benefit so they can have a good dialogue.

**Student independent work:** For student independent work, the teacher will ask for pondering and reflection about the dialogue. She will ask all students to copy down the sentence “dialogue helps me learn. I am capable of having a good dialogue with my group. My ideas matter” onto their graphic organizer. She may give students an extra minute of silence to reflect on this statement. Then she will ask students to move to their groups and arrange their desks in a circle so all group members are facing one another.

In this section of class, the teacher encourages conscientização by giving students an affirmation about their dialogue.

**Student collaborative work:** After students are in their groups, the teacher will give them ~three minutes to settle in. Then she will capture their attention for the last time and give the timeline. “Our dialogue is beginning now. I will not speak again to the class until (this time). If you need me, please wave to me. Have fun!”

If and when students wave for the teacher's attention, she will join them and answer clarifying questions or provide guidance on the dialogic process.

During this activity, students are embodying the dialogic method. This activity will be successful when the teacher has provided ample time and space (such as with the activities leading up to this collaborative work) for reflection, pondering, writing, and using inner speech.

**Reflection:** When the time is over for the dialogue, the teacher will congratulate her students and ask them to thank one another. She will read their take home homework prompt and after they copy it down they can stand up near their seat and wait for the dismissal bell.

**Homework:** My classmates helped me learn/realize that:

1)

2)

3)

Dialogue is a helpful way to learn new things because:

1)

2)

3)

In this homework reflection, students connect their experience in collaborative dialogue back to their writings and ideas generated from inner speech. They share not only the material learnings about *The Book of Martha* but also their reflections on the nature of dialogic learning.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF KEYWORDS AND WRITING PROMPTS FOR BOTH IN-CLASS AND  
TAKE-HOME WRITING

List of keywords and writing prompts for both in-class and take-home writing

Learning objectives:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Dialogic objective:** I think new thoughts while pondering, listening, and speaking.

I write my new thoughts down, helping me to learn even more. I use creativity and

imagination to reflect on what I want to learn while writing. Writing is a tool that I use to organize and understand my thinking and to make new thoughts.

**Keywords & concepts taught to students to aid in writing prompts:**

Dialogue	Initial Reaction	Chaos/Chaotic
Element	Reflection	Protagonist
Science Fiction	Capture/Captured	
Story Arch	Fascinate/Fascinating	

<b><i>Day</i></b>	<b><i>In-Class</i></b>	<b><i>Guiding Questions</i></b>	<b><i>Take home (th) or in-class (ic) writing prompts</i></b>
1- M 2/28	Questionnaire and shorty-	Where do we start when we want to get	th- Spend at least 12 minutes writing more in one of your short stories from class today.

	short writing prompts	creative and write stories?	
2- T 3/1	Reading the syllabus and figuring out the dialogic method	What are the reasons <b><i>talking with classmates</i></b> about our ideas and what we wrote is helpful for us to learn more?	Ic- first think, then talk, then listen, then write—what are the reasons <i>talking with others</i> helps us with our learning?
3- W 3/2	Introduction to the story arch (characters, setting, conflict, and choices/ resolution)	What <b>*elements*</b> show up in every story?	Ic- first think, then write, then talk, then listen, then reflect, then write again: What makes humans love stories and want to listen?  Th- (12 minutes) one of my favorite stories is.... In this story, ...

<p>4- TH 3/3</p>	<p>The book of Martha Day 1</p>	<p>Octavia wrote this story. It is about Martha who is transported from her home into the presence of “God” (not religious, just an idea to explore). Using a story arch and a graphic organizer, what have we learned in this story so far?</p>	<p>Ic: People might be curious about this story because.... Th- (12 minutes) Science fiction stories normally include... <i>The Book of Martha</i> counts as science fiction because.... (Look at your notes about science fiction!)</p>
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<p>5- F 3/4</p>	<p>The book of Martha Day 2</p>	<p>How does Octavia characterize Martha—who is Martha? What does she do, think, say, look like?</p>	<p>Ic—characterization in stories means.... Th—(12 minutes) What conflict (or conflicts) is Martha going through in this story?</p>
<p>6- M 3/7</p>	<p>The book of Martha Day 3</p>	<p>How does Octavia create conflict in <i>The Book of Martha</i>? What choice does she have to make?</p>	<p>Ic—God chose Martha to do what? What is Martha’s *initial reaction*? Th- (12 minutes) If I was in Martha’s situation, my *initial reaction* would be ... After thinking more, I would probably choose *this* though</p>

<p>7- T 3/8</p>	<p>The book of Martha Day 4</p>	<p>What elements of the story arch can we identify in <i>The Book of Martha</i>? Where and how do we see the four elements of science fiction in this story?</p>	<p>Ic—Re-write this story as a shorty-short story. Include the setting, characters, conflict, and choices.</p> <p>Th- (12 minutes): The most captivating part of this story is _____...</p> <p>I want to discuss *these ideas* in our dialogue because I want to share that _____...</p> <p>My only questions are _____...</p>
<p>8- W 3/9</p>	<p>Dialogue day 1: The book of Martha</p>	<p>There is no guiding question today. Students will share their ideas, notes, and questions</p>	<p>Ic: Reflect on your homework writings from last night. In your graphic organizer, copy down and/or re-write the most important ideas you want to bring to your dialogue today.</p> <p>Th- (12 min): My classmates helped me learn/realize:</p>

		about <i>The Book of Martha</i> .	1, 2, 3 things I can reflect on the dialogue and say that it helps me learn for these reasons: 1, 2, 3 reasons.
9- TH 3/10	Imaginative thinking day 1: the types of characters that *fascinate* me	What is a fascinating character? What are the elements of characterization in stories (and in life)?	Ic: Think of your favorite character from movies, music, cartoons, or books. Follow the elements of characterization to describe them. Th: (20 min) Think about yourself. What makes you unique? What are your likes, interests, questions, and desires? Describe your character using the characterization elements.

<p>10- F 3/11</p>	<p>Imaginative thinking day 2: the types of conflicts that <i>really</i> challenge a character.</p>	<p>What is a conflict? What makes a conflict <i>really</i> challenging for a character?</p>	<p>Ic: After brainstorming movies with big conflicts, write a shorty-short story about the conflict the character went through. Th: (20 minutes) What is a conflict you've experienced in the last year? Who was involved? What happened? What did you do? What would you change if you went through that conflict again?</p>
<p>11- M 3/14</p>	<p>Imaginative thinking day 3: when conflicts turn into <i>*chaos*</i>... shorty-short story writing.</p>	<p>What is the difference between conflict and chaos? What chaotic things can happen in science fiction?</p>	<p>Ic: (Open writing prompt: Write with classmates) Chaos is when everything goes wrong and you feel like you're out of control. Write down some chaotic conflicts that you can imagine.</p>

	<p>The elements of conflict and chaos.</p>		<p>Th: (12 minutes) What reasons should we have to stay hopeful even when there is chaos around us? Use an example of a chaotic situation from class and explain why there is still room to be hopeful and make choices.</p>
<p>12- T 3/15</p>	<p>Imaginative writing day 4: setting *influences* characters and conflicts. The elements of the setting.</p>	<p>How do writers add details to their settings? What makes a setting fascinating?</p>	<p>Ic: The teacher will display images of different settings. We'll work as a class to describe the setting with detail. Th: Return to your writing prompt from Day 1: Monday, 2/28. Write for 12 minutes to create a detailed explanation of the setting in the story.</p>

<p>13- W 3/16</p>	<p>Imaginative writing day 5: the choices of the the *protagonist* push us forward along the story arch. There is <i>always</i> a choice to be made.</p>	<p>How do choices change based on the characterization of the protagonist? Loving vs. selfish, generous vs. greedy, hopeful vs. pessimistic?</p>	<p>Ic: Select one of the personality profiles that the teacher provides (from the projector—students choose a color and then the colors are revealed to be personality traits). Describe the elements of the character in detail.</p> <p>Th: Think of the character you created today. This character is going through a horrible conflict and loses someone they love. How will they respond? (8 minutes)</p>
<p>14- TH 3/17</p>	<p>My short story: Making a conflict, making chaos, the</p>	<p>There is no guiding question today. Students will share their</p>	<p>No in-class writing today.</p> <p>Th: Spend 20 minutes brainstorming bullet points (or</p>

	choices my character makes	questions, ideas, and notes about science fiction creative writing and brainstorm ideas for their own short stories.	sentences) about the story you want to write.
15- F 3/18	My short story writing day 1	<i>There are no guiding questions for the rest of the class.</i> Post-Its and story outline.  Creating a skeleton of my character, setting, conflict,	Th: (12 minutes Saturday, 12 minutes Sunday) Review <i>all</i> your creative writings since class began. On your Th page for today, make bullet points of all the ideas you want to include in your story.

		<p>and choice.</p> <p>This weekend and next week we will write!</p>	
16- M 3/21	My short story writing day 2	<p>The beginning: Introduction to the character, the conflict they're facing, the setting they're stuck in, and the choice they'll eventually have to make.</p>	Th: (12 minutes) continue writing your story



<p>17- T 3/22</p>	<p>My short story writing day 3</p>	<p>The middle: Adding details. Tell us more about the *fascinating* bits of the conflict. Give us more information about the character's traits. Perhaps, bring in chaos to the story.</p>	<p>Th: (16 minutes) continue writing your story</p>
<p>18- W 3/23</p>	<p>My short story writing day 4</p>	<p>The end: The choices the character makes. Tell us how the story ends. What did</p>	<p>Th: (20 minutes) continue writing your story</p>

		<p>the character decide to do?</p> <p>What happened to the chaos, conflict, character, or setting, based on the choice they made?</p>	
<p>19-TH 3/24</p>	<p>My short story dialogue and final revision day.</p>	<p>Sharing our story ideas with classmates can influence us to have new ideas or want to change what we wrote.</p>	<p>Ic: After sharing, listening, giving, and taking feedback, what did you learn about your story and what would you change if you had more time?</p> <p>Th: no writing homework today</p>

20- F 3/25	Final class dialogue and reflection	What have I learned about creative writing and science fiction? What have I learned about myself as a writer and the stories I like to tell?	Ic: What have I learned about creative writing and science fiction? What have I learned about myself as a writer and the stories I like to tell? Th: No writing homework. Congratulations!
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The in-class and take-home writing assignments accomplish several goals. Firstly, they are the primary source of student conscientizacáo throughout the class. Many of the writings (days 2, 8, 9, and 20) are directly asking for self-reflection towards conscientizacáo. Secondly, they embody inner speech. For take-home writing assignments, students are not interacting with others when they think and write. They are asked to ponder and create their ideas for their own purposes. This is a manifestation of inner speech. Third, they aid in the dialogic method

because the ideas students prepare in their writings translate to meaningful dialogue with their classmates during collaborative speech.

APPENDIX D

FINAL REFLECTION PROMPT AFTER SHORT-STORY ASSIGNMENT

## Final reflection prompt after short-story assignment

### **Learning objective:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.B
- Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well the purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 8 [here](#).)

**Dialogic objective:** I engage in inner speech and collaborative dialogue to share my reflections about my final writing assignment in class.

**Teacher script explaining today's learning activities:** The teacher says "it's our last class period and so we need to ponder and reflect what has happened over

the last twenty classes. To get started let's open up our notebooks back to the very first page when we wrote shorty-short stories about the codifications. I want us to take a couple of minutes to slowly go through every page, one at a time. As you look through your notebook, remember all the activities we did and all the things we talked about. After we are done rifling through these pages, we're going to do inner speech and collaborative dialogue to figure out what to write in our reflection."

In this section of class, students are simultaneously pondering and reflecting on their previous writings. This helps them to track their thinking from the beginning of the class until now and will allow them to engage in creative and thoughtful dialogue before producing the reflection.

**Modeling activities to students:** At this point, the teacher will ensure that all students have a copy of the reflection prompt. The teacher will use discretion on whether this prompt should be answered in notebooks, on separate pieces of paper, or on the computer.

***Reflection Prompt:***

In this final written reflection, I will ponder what I've written about since I first entered this class. I will reflect on these writings by asking myself "what did I learn?" I will use inner speech as I think to myself and write down what I have learned about creative writing and science fiction; about my skills and

preferences as a writer; and about my short story. I will use collaborative dialogue to hear my classmates' reflections, share my own, and add my final ideas in my answer before submitting this reflection.

**First**, review your writings from the first class period until now. (pondering)

**Second**, answer three questions: (reflecting and using inner speech)

1. What did I learn about science fiction and creative writing in this class?
2. What did I realize about my own skills and preferences as a writer by making my own short story?
3. If I had more time, what would I change in my short story? Why? Were there any reasons I didn't make those choices from the beginning?

**Third**, use a group dialogue to review your answers and hear the answers of your classmates. (speaking and listening)

While sharing in dialogue, write down keywords that you forgot to mention in your answers.

Help your classmates expand their ideas by asking them questions or reminding them of activities and discussions we've had throughout the class.

**Fourth**, use more reflection and inner speech to add some more ideas to your answers. (writing)



**Fifth**, congratulate yourself on a job well done. You have completed this sci fi creative writing class!

**Modeling activities to students:** The teacher will model the cycle of reflection by reading instructions one section at a time and providing students with ample time to complete each component of the reflection. (The teacher may choose to begin this reflective process earlier than the last day of class to ensure that all students are able to complete the steps).

As demonstrated in the reflection prompt, all aspects of the reflection connect to aspects of the dialogic method. Pondering, reflecting, inner speech, collaborative dialogue, and writing are necessary for the reflection. Teachers should also write their answers to this reflection prompt and consider what they've accomplished and learned throughout the course.

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