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# Transformational Encounters: An Online Dialogical Partnership

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# Transformational Encounters: An Online Dialogical Partnership

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*Our exchange of ideas in this space was more than informational, it was transformational.*

## Introduction

"Zoom has its benefits!" This presentation explores the shared transformational encounters of two doctoral peers as they engaged in an intentional online partnership to support their learning journeys. Originally conceived as a strategy for holding each other accountable to writing goals, weekly online meetings quickly evolved into a rich dialogic space for cultivating meaning between and through perspectives. Our exchange of ideas in this space was more than informational, it was transformational. We convey our story so that session participants might consider the transformative possibilities of online peer-to-peer dialogues for generating shared space, stimulating connections, fueling inquiry, nurturing belonging, and fostering wellbeing. We propose that leveraging online experiences can enable possibilities for duoethnographic collaboration, that can deepen our imagining of future intellectual and scholarly endeavors.

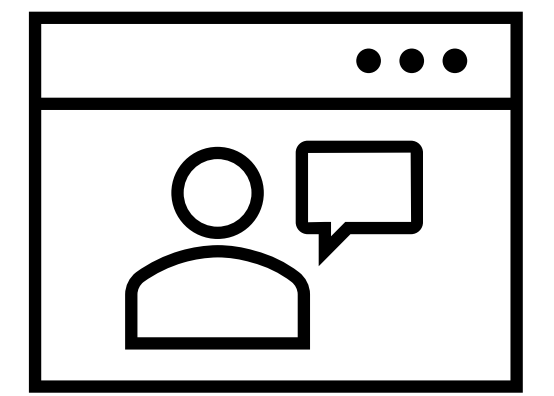
## Our approach: Dialogue as a path for understanding

- Regular meetings took place over the 2022-2023 academic year following the completion of doctoral coursework to stay connected to our work. Zoom was the primary online platform used for connecting.
- We had no previous in-person relationship but as time progressed, the online interactions allowed us to become connected as "suspended talking/thinking heads" and we realized that we had created a dialogic space for cultivating meaning between our perspectives.
- Dialogic encounters serve as sites of inquiry. We began recording conversations and generating transcripts for review. This gave us data that we could only describe as duoethnographic.
- We propose that if participants actively practice with and alongside each other in suspended online spaces, subsequent reflections on their encounters will reveal challenged assumptions and emerging understandings.

## Analysis & findings

As we immersed ourselves in our weekly online encounters, we discovered that our collaborative work was providing an opening for possibilities. We both found ourselves thinking in ways we had not before. We recognized that our encounters had become an avenue for negotiating assumptions connected to

- personal values
- lived experiences
- formative learning experiences
- research interests and directions
- social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion



The space between our perspectives, where we actively sought and constructed knowledge together, continuously revealed horizons that we had not previously imagined. In other words, there was never a clear end to this dialogical process that was both generative and iterative. Our understandings were accepted as dynamic, always open to further interrogation and interpretation. Our potential for transformation was defined by our capacity and willingness to continue to engage in sustained dialogue.

The transformational potential of our dialogue was being realized because of our sustained willingness to listen to, and learn from, each other. For us, this process was facilitated by the online platform. As we negotiated our assumptions during our encounters, we discovered that we were stimulating connections, fueling inquiry, nurturing belonging, and fostering wellbeing. Within this iterative context, the transcripts of our conversations can be conceptualized as duoethnographic content worthy of deeper exploration by us and/or others. We believe that there is always more to be found in the space between our evolving perspectives.

## Key questions for future work:

To what extent can similar online dialogic partnerships be leveraged by graduate students? Can moments of transformation be identified and explored in online dialogic spaces? Can this dialogic partnership model be utilized effectively in other spaces? What value do online dialogues have as a component of duoethnographic inquiry?

## Literature review & potential framework

- "We do not work together we work between the two... We don't work, we negotiate, we were never in the same rhythm we were always out of step" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977, p. 17).
- Consistent with understandings put forward by Sinha (2010), we came to recognize the transformative possibility of speaking with and listening to each other.
- The interaction between our stories, questions, and reflections served as a "catalyst for some change in understanding" (Breault, 2016, p. 14).
- Through our suspended, online dialogue, we found that we had generated a shared space that stimulated connections, fueled inquiry, nurtured belonging, and fostered wellbeing. Given these realizations, and drawing on previous methodological coursework, we came to understand our encounters as sites for a duoethnography, in "which the reconceptualization of the meaning that one gives is reexamined in dialogue with another" (Norris & Sawyer, 2020, p. 397).
- With an approach that "brings together two complex beings situated within their own complex social networks" (Breault, 2016, p. 4), we were able to interrogate and reconceptualize meaning.

## References

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