

## E-GUIDEBOOK

# EVERY VOICE MATTERS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO  
DIALOGIC GATHERINGS  
IN ADULT LEARNING

A-Clase project

2025



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# PREFACE

In recent years, across communities, classrooms, and informal learning settings, the need for authentic, inclusive and thoughtful dialogue has only grown. This guidebook was born out of that need.

What you hold in your hands is more than a manual. It is the result of conversations, reflections, and field experiences carried out across several European projects - Dive-In Dialogue, Science Literacy for All!, A-CLASE, and more. It builds on decades of research in dialogic learning and community-based education and was shaped by the real-life voices of volunteers, educators and participants who have lived these gatherings first-hand.

We hope this guide will not only help you organize dialogic gatherings, but also inspire you to believe - as we do - that learning happens not through instruction, but through connection.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our heartfelt thanks to:

- All the **participants, volunteers** and community members who shared their voices, questions, and silences with us;
- The **moderators and educators** who dared to sit in the circle, not above it;
- The project teams behind **DIVE-IN DIALOGUE, STEP4SEAS, A-CLASE, Science Literacy for All!** and others, who provided the foundation for this work;
- Our institutional partners who support **lifelong learning as a right, not a luxury**;
- And the researchers, from Freire to Flecha, who dared to rethink what it means to learn together.

This guidebook is dedicated to all those who choose **dialogue over division, reflection over reaction, and community over control.**

## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR



Dialogic gatherings are more than a method - they are a way of being in the world. They invite us to listen with purpose, to speak with care, and to build meaning together across generations, languages, and life experiences.

This e-guidebook was born from our collective work in the A-CLASE project, where we witnessed the transformative power of dialogue in adult education. Whether in community centres, digital classrooms, or local libraries, we saw how literature and art could open doors for people who had long been excluded - not just from education, but from cultural participation.

We wrote this guide for you - the future facilitators, volunteers, educators, and curious learners - who believe that every voice matters. It is grounded in scientific research, enriched by experience, and shaped by the values of inclusion, dignity, and lifelong learning.

*You are not expected to be perfect. You are expected to be present.*

Let this guide support you as you create spaces for dialogue, reflection, and shared discovery.

*Belinda Lovrenčič  
A-Clase project  
RIC Novo mesto*

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# INTRODUCTION

This guidebook was created to support facilitators - new and experienced alike - in organizing, leading, and reflecting on dialogic gatherings with adults. These gatherings are more than just book clubs or discussion groups: they are carefully structured, inclusive, and intellectually rich spaces where everyone contributes as equals.

Our aim is to offer a practical, grounded, and inspiring resource that helps facilitators understand not only how to run a gathering, but why dialogic practices are transformative. This guide is rooted in scientifically validated methodologies and shaped by the lived experiences of volunteers, educators, and participants involved in community education across Europe.

The chapters in this guidebook cover everything from the theoretical foundations of dialogic learning to practical advice on choosing materials, setting up the space, managing group dynamics, and evaluating the impact of each session. A collection of tools, templates, and real-life examples is included to help facilitators prepare and lead with confidence.



# WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guidebook is intended for:

- Volunteers and educators facilitating adult learning groups;
- Staff and practitioners working in community centers or lifelong learning institutions;
- **Anyone interested in creating inclusive and respectful spaces for dialogue.**

Whether you're starting from scratch or looking to deepen your practice, this guidebook is designed to walk with you-step by step-toward more **meaningful, ethical, and inclusive dialogic experiences.**

**“ALL CITIZENS HAVE THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC  
ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS.”**

**- UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ARTICLE 27**

*Related content in the A-CLASE e-Textbook*

*For a complementary introduction to dialogic learning with adult learners, including practical examples and foundational concepts, see:*

*– Chapter 1: Introduction – background and purpose of the A-CLASE project*

*– Chapter 3: Preparing Dialogic Sessions – selecting texts, inviting participants, and structuring sessions (A-CLASE e-Textbook, RIC Novo mesto & SAYEG-Der, 2025)*

*The e-textbook presents the methodological basis and implementation experiences of dialogic gatherings in both Slovenia and Turkey. It offers valuable context for new facilitators and institutions starting similar activities.*

# WHAT IS A DIALOGIC GATHERING?

A dialogic gathering is a structured yet flexible space where people come together to reflect, listen, and speak as equals. Rooted in dialogic learning and grounded in research (Flecha, 2000; INCLUD-ED, 2015), these gatherings are not about teaching or debating - they are about understanding and growing through shared meaning-making.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Dialogic gatherings evolved from literary circles and philosophical cafés, gaining particular traction through **Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLGs)** in Europe. These involve participants reading universal texts and coming together in an **egalitarian dialogue**.

*"It is through dialogue, with others and with ourselves, that we become fully human."*

*(Paulo Freire)*



# WHAT MAKES IT DIALOGIC?

Unlike casual discussions or expert-led seminars, dialogic gatherings are:

- **Text-centered:** Participants prepare by reading a shared literary or philosophical excerpt;
- **Non-hierarchical:** The moderator participates equally-without correcting, interpreting, or teaching;
- **Grounded in the text:** Reflections begin with quotes, usually: "On page... I was struck by...";
- **Respectful and inclusive:** All contributions are heard; differences are welcomed as enrichment;
- **Transformative:** Gatherings stimulate empathy, reflection, and deep learning.

As Ramon Flecha writes,

*"Dialogue is not a method - it is the human condition for learning."*

(Flecha, 2000)

## WHY IT MATTERS

In a world full of noise, division, and superficial communication, dialogic gatherings offer a rare and needed space for:

- Deep listening and mutual understanding;
- Empowerment through voice;
- Building bridges across cultures, generations, and beliefs.

*Related content in the A-CLASE e-Textbook*

*To explore further how dialogic gatherings are structured and why they differ from traditional group discussions or teaching methods, see:*

*– Chapter 2: What is a Dialogic Gathering? – defining features and guiding principles*

*– Chapter 5: Types of Gatherings – examples including intergenerational and intercultural formats*

*– Chapter 6: Participant Stories – first-person reflections from Slovenia and Turkey*

*(A-CLASE e-Textbook, RIC Novo mesto & SAYEG-Der, 2025)*

*The e-textbook illustrates how dialogic gatherings support adult learners' sense of agency, especially through culturally diverse experiences in multilingual communities.*

# CORE PRINCIPLES & ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

Dialogic gatherings are not just well-intentioned conversations. They are guided by core principles that structure participation, support inclusion, and promote intellectual depth.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

The effectiveness of dialogic gatherings depends on fidelity to these foundational ideas:

**Egalitarian dialogue:** All voices carry equal weight. Knowledge is built collectively - not transmitted from “expert” to “learner.”

**Cultural intelligence:** Diversity is not tolerated - it is celebrated and essential to richer dialogue.

**Universal themes:** Texts are chosen for their human relevance - love, death, justice, freedom - across time and culture.

**Solidarity over competition:** The goal is not to be right, but to understand and be understood.



### Why universal texts?

Universal texts challenge and elevate. Participants often rise far above assumed “levels of literacy” when presented with rich material. Selecting “easy” content can actually limit growth and silence deeper voices.

*“Dialogic gatherings provide space where reason, heart and experience meet—where we learn to listen not to reply, but to understand.”*

*(Adapted from The Dive-In Dialogue guidebook, 2023)*

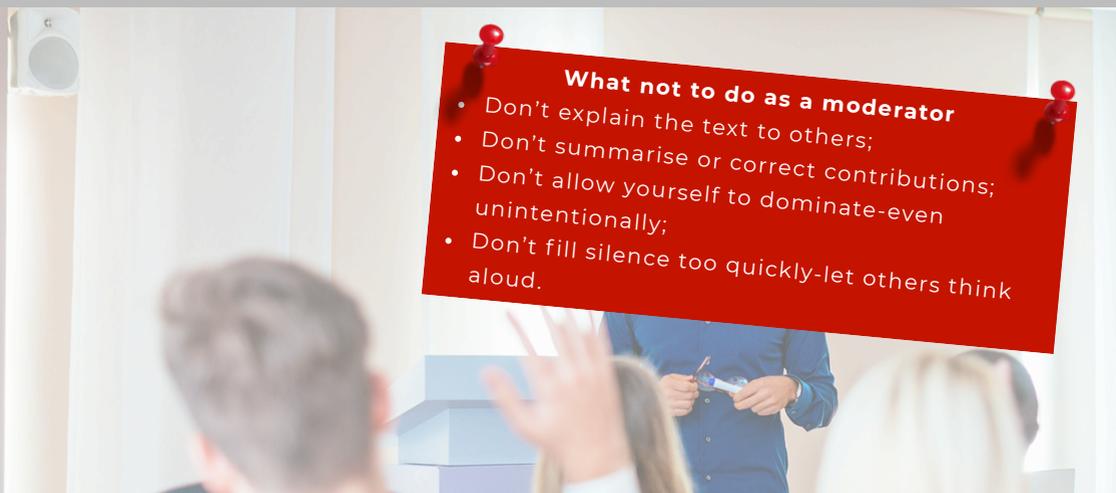
# THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

The moderator is not a teacher, leader or facilitator in the traditional sense. Their role is subtle but vital - they:

- Prepare and organize the space and materials;
- Model active listening and respectful engagement;
- Keep time and flow, ensuring everyone can contribute;
- Do not interpret or teach, but participate equally in the dialogue.

*"The moderator sits at the same level as the participants-not only physically, but epistemologically."*

*(Adapted from internal training materials used in Slovenia)*



*"We sit together not to teach, but to think together."*

*(Adapted from internal training materials used in Slovenia)*

Related content in the A-CLASE e-Textbook

For field-based applications of the seven principles and real-life insights into the role of the moderator, see:

- Chapter 3: Preparing Dialogic Sessions – practical strategies for implementing dialogic principles
- Chapter 6: Participant and Moderator Reflections – experiences from gatherings in Slovenia and Turkey
- Chapter 7: Challenges in Practice – common issues and solutions moderators encountered (A-CLASE e-Textbook, RIC Novo mesto & SAYEG-Der, 2025)

In the e-textbook, facilitators describe how they translated the dialogic principles into practice, especially when navigating language barriers, hierarchical expectations, or mixed literacy levels.

# PREPARING A GATHERING

Thorough preparation creates the conditions for meaningful, inclusive dialogue. This includes selecting the right text, inviting participants, setting up the space, and establishing a respectful tone from the very beginning.

## SELECTING THE TEXT

The chosen material should:

- Explore **universal human themes** (e.g. love, mortality, freedom, injustice);
- Be **challenging enough** to spark reflection, but not so obscure as to exclude;
- Encourage interpretation, disagreement, and emotional response.

Examples include excerpts from novels, plays, essays, letters, or even historical speeches. Religious or political texts are avoided unless they address shared human concerns in a neutral way.

### Avoiding Conflict

Choose texts that do not rely heavily on cultural or ideological background knowledge. Avoid materials focused on religion, politics, or values that may divide rather than unite.



# INVITING PARTICIPANTS

Participants can be of any age or background-but must be **willing to read and engage respectfully**. Diversity strengthens the group.

*"The more diverse the group, the more transformative the dialogue."*

*(Adapted from internal training materials used in Slovenia)*

You may wish to send a **brief invitation** explaining:

- The purpose and nature of the gathering;
- The expectations (reading the text, being on time, listening actively);
- What the gathering is not (a debate, lecture or therapy session).



# ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES

At the start, it is helpful to agree on **shared ground rules**, which could include:

- Speak from the text;
- Listen without interrupting;
- Keep an open mind;
- Avoid correcting others;
- Respect silence.



*"Rules are not imposed - they are co-created and upheld by the group."*

*(Adapted from facilitator guidelines used in dialogic projects at RIC Novo mesto)*

# ARRANGING THE SPACE

The physical setting should promote equality and attention:

- Chairs in a circle, without a front or “head”;
- No tables between participants (if possible);
- Equal distance and visibility for all;
- Printed or digital texts in hand.

If the gathering is online, apply the same principles:

- Equal speaking time;
- Encourage cameras and mics on;
- Shared screen for text reference if needed.

# BEFORE THE GATHERING

- Send the text at least a week in advance.
- Encourage underlining or noting a short passage (1 – 3 sentences) that spoke to them.
- Reassure participants: there are no right or wrong answers-only honest reflections.



*Related content in the A-CLASE e-Textbook*

*For practical insights on preparing successful gatherings-including material selection, participant engagement, and inclusive setup-see:*

*– Chapter 3: Preparing Dialogic Sessions – text selection criteria and preparatory steps*

*– Chapter 5: Types of Gatherings – adapting preparation to different group profiles*

*– Chapter 7: Challenges in Practice – case examples of preparation missteps and solutions*

*(A-CLASE e-Textbook, RIC Novo mesto & SAYEG-Der, 2025)*

*In the e-textbook, both Slovenian and Turkish teams highlight how advanced sharing of texts and careful selection of universal themes led to more meaningful and respectful exchanges during gatherings.*

# FACILITATING THE GATHERING

Facilitating a dialogic gathering means creating a safe and dynamic environment where participants can engage freely and deeply. It is not about steering the discussion or interpreting the text - it is about holding the space for dialogue to emerge.

## SELECTING THE TEXT

Start on time and welcome everyone warmly. The moderator may:

- Briefly restate the core principles;
- Remind participants of the ground rules;
- Encourage those who are new or hesitant.

Then, invite the **first volunteer** to share their chosen passage and explain why it stood out to them. From there, the discussion flows naturally.

*"The first voice opens the door; the others step through."*

*(Adapted from moderator practice in A-CLAS&E gatherings)*

### Avoiding Conflict

Moderators can go first during the first gathering, or nominate someone who feels comfortable. Rotating this role in future sessions promotes shared responsibility.

# SUPPORTING DIALOGUE

During the discussion, the moderator's role is to:

- Participate as an equal (no leading, correcting or explaining);
- Encourage quieter voices to join, without pressure;
- Redirect dominant speakers with gentle reminders;
- Embrace silence as a moment for thought;
- Bring focus back to the text when needed.

**Tools for deepening the conversation**

- “Can you say more about that?”
- “Did anyone else underline the same passage?”
- “What does this remind us of in our lives today?”

*“A good moderator listens more than they speak.”*  
(Adapted from facilitator training materials, RIC Novo mesto)

# NAVIGATING CHALLENGES

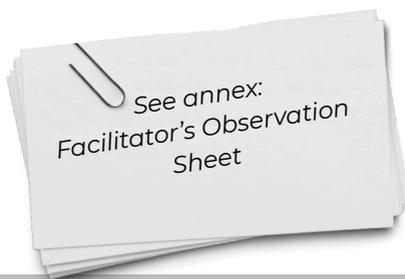
Common challenges and how to respond:

Challenge	Strategy
One person dominates	Gently intervene: “Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t spoken yet.”
Silence after a point	Wait. Let the silence breathe. Ask, “Would anyone like to add to that?”
A comment feels off-topic	Redirect: “Interesting-can we connect that back to the text?”
Emotional reactions	Validate and hold space: “Thank you for sharing that with us.”

**Conflict? Return to the text.**  
If disagreement arises, remind the group: we interpret together, not to win but to understand. “Let’s go back to what the author said...”

# CLOSING THE GATHERING

- End on time and with gratitude;
- Invite a last round of reflections (“One word or sentence you’re leaving with…”);
- Remind the group when and how the next gathering will happen.



*"We do not reach answers - we reach each other."*

*(Adapted from facilitator training materials, RIC Novo mesto)*



*Related content in the A-CLASE e-Textbook*

*To learn more about facilitation strategies—including how to manage group dynamics and foster deeper dialogue—see:*

- Chapter 4: *During the Gathering* – dialogic flow, moderation techniques, and pacing
  - Chapter 6: *Reflections from the Field* – what worked and what didn't for real moderators
  - Chapter 7: *Challenges in Practice* – practical guidance for common facilitation obstacles
- (A-CLASE e-Textbook, RIC Novo mesto & SAYEG-Der, 2025)*

*The e-textbook includes several facilitation stories from gatherings in Turkey and Slovenia, where moderators reflect on redirecting dominant voices, supporting emotional disclosures, and encouraging equal participation without pressure.*

# EVALUATING AND REFLECTING

Evaluation is not about measuring success in traditional terms. In dialogic gatherings, it's about deepening insight, noticing growth, and improving the process for everyone involved—participants and moderators alike.

## REFLECTION BY THE MODERATOR

After each gathering, moderators are encouraged to reflect on:

- What went well? (e.g. balanced participation, meaningful connections, flow of dialogue)
- What was challenging? (e.g. disengagement, time pressure, moments of tension)
- What did I learn - from others, from the text, from myself?

*"I am not the one who teaches. The others teach me in the act of speaking."*

*(Adapted from Paulo Freire's)*

### Keep a log

A simple journal of reflections after each gathering helps track group dynamics over time and highlights recurring insights or challenges.

See annex:  
Moderator Self-Reflection  
Sheet

# FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

Participant feedback should be simple, open-ended, and focused on:

- How they experienced the dialogue;
- Whether they felt heard and included;
- What they would like more or less of;
- Their emotional or intellectual response to the text.



*"Feedback is not correction—it is contribution."*

*(Adapted from facilitator training materials, RIC Novo mesto)*

# DOCUMENTING THE GATHERING

Keeping basic records helps maintain structure and trace the development of the group. This may include:

- Attendance list;
- Date, time, location;
- Text used;
- Number of participants;
- General tone or observations.



## **When documentation is important**

While some gatherings are informal, others may be part of a funded project, training program, or institutional process where documentation is essential.

*Related content in the A-CLASE e-Textbook*

*For real-life reflections on evaluation and continuous improvement in dialogic gatherings, see:*

- Chapter 6: *Reflections from the Field – insights from moderators in Turkey and Slovenia*
- Chapter 4: *During the Gathering – informal methods for gauging group dynamics*
- Chapter 8: *Conclusions and Recommendations – lessons learned for sustaining quality dialogue (A-CLASE e-Textbook, RIC Novo mesto & SAYEG-Der, 2025)*

*The e-textbook emphasizes the importance of reflective practice, showing how facilitators documented group progress, noted subtle transformations, and used feedback to adapt future sessions.*

# CASE STUDIES

Dialogic gatherings may seem simple in theory - but it's in practice that their true power shines. This chapter brings together real-life examples from different countries, settings, and participant groups.

Each case study shows how the same principles can adapt to diverse contexts: from schools and community centres to prisons and training institutions. You'll discover the challenges faced, the creative solutions found, and the human stories behind every gathering.

These stories are more than reports. They are proof that dialogue can transform individuals and communities - one shared text, and one conversation at a time.

*"Every gathering begins as a conversation, but it can become a turning point in someone's story."*  
(Adapted from facilitator training materials, RIC Novo mesto)



# DIALOGIC SCIENTIFIC GATHERINGS



**Project:** Science Literacy for All!

**Organized by:** RIC Novo mesto

**Target Group:** Adults and community members interested in science

**Text Used:** Scientific articles on topics like climate change, recycling, and permaculture

**Setup:**

- Seven gatherings held in Novo mesto
- Over 100 participants
- Discussions based on scientific texts prepared by different lecturers
- Additional Scientific Cafés organized in Dolenjske Toplice with lectures and open discussions

*"Great lecture! I have learned a lot!"  
"A very good meeting, a lot of new information."*

**Key Observations:**

- High participant engagement and positive feedback
- Enhanced understanding of scientific topics
- Encouragement of critical thinking and community involvement

**Moderator Reflection:**

- Noted increased interest in scientific topics among participants
- Observed improved dialogue and exchange of ideas

**Outcomes:**

- Promotion of scientific literacy in the community
- Strengthened community bonds through shared learning experiences

**Engaging community members in scientific discussions fosters a culture of inquiry and lifelong learning.**

# INCLUSION THROUGH DIALOGIC GATHERINGS



**Project:** Dive-In Dialogue

**Organized by:** Consortium including Universitat De Barcelona, RIC Novo mesto, and others

**Target Group:** Disadvantaged students across Europe

**Text Used:** Universal texts covering themes like justice, freedom, and identity.

## Setup:

- Implementation of Dialogic Gatherings in schools across five countries
- Training of teachers to facilitate gatherings
- Creation of a transnational network for resource sharing

*"I feel more confident to express my thoughts."  
"It's easier to understand others' perspectives now."*

## Key Observations:

- Improved key competences among students
- Enhanced inclusion in school and society
- Positive changes in classroom dynamics

## Moderator Reflection:

- Teachers reported increased student engagement
- Noted development of critical thinking skills

## Outcomes:

- Fostered inclusion and diversity in educational settings
- Empowered students to participate actively in their learning.

Dialogic Gatherings serve as a powerful tool for promoting inclusion and developing key competences among students.

# DIALOGIC GATHERINGS WITH MOROCCAN MOTHERS IN SPAIN



**Project:** INCLUD-ED –  
Strategies for Inclusion and  
Social Cohesion in Education

**Organized by:** Learning  
Communities in Spain

**Target Group:** Moroccan  
immigrant mothers with  
limited formal education

**Text Used:** Classical Spanish  
and universal literature.

## Setup:

- Weekly dialogic literary gatherings at primary schools
- Mothers invited through word of mouth, community networks, and schools
- Sessions facilitated by trained teachers, with interpretation when needed

*"At first I came just to listen. Now I speak. I read. I have something to say."*

## Key Observations:

- Mothers initially hesitant, but gradually became active participants
- Shift in self-perception: from "illiterate outsiders" to valued contributors
- Children began showing improved academic interest after seeing their mothers engage

## Moderator Reflection:

- Initial challenges with trust and language were overcome by consistency and respect
- Dialogues became emotional and reflective

## Outcomes:

- Increased school engagement among immigrant families
- Improved self-esteem, language skills, and community belonging
- Empowerment of women in navigating broader social structures.

A red pushpin is pinned to the top right corner of a dark grey rectangular box containing white text.

Dialogic gatherings empower  
marginalized groups not by  
teaching them, but by believing  
in their capacity to learn and  
share meaningfully.

# DIALOGIC GATHERINGS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS (UK & SPAIN)



**Project:** INCLUD-ED & Learning communities

**Organized by:** CREA & local schools

**Target Group:** Primary school students, many from migrant and socially disadvantaged backgrounds

**Text Used:** Classic children's literature (The Little Prince, A Thousand and One Nights)

## Setup:

- Weekly in-class gatherings facilitated by teachers
- Texts shared with families; discussions built from home reading
- Students discussed selected passages in a circle during school hours

*"They wanted to know what was going on in the gatherings, so they practiced and finally learned to read."*

## Key Observations:

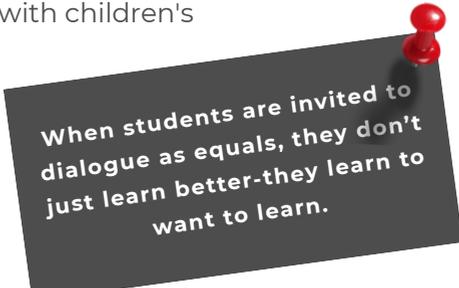
- Increased student motivation to read independently
- Noticeable gains in oral expression, vocabulary, and empathy
- Changed family-school dynamics - parents engaged with children's learning

## Outcomes:

- Improved academic performance and classroom participation
- Boosted intercultural understanding

## Reference:

- CREA, 2018; Flecha, 2015



When students are invited to dialogue as equals, they don't just learn better-they learn to want to learn.

# DIALOGIC GATHERINGS IN

## INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS IN SLOVENIA



**Project:** A-CLASE

**Organized by:** RIC Novo mesto

**Target Group:** Adult learners and local volunteers / Incarcerated adults and adult learners in institutional training environments.

**Text Used:** The Odyssey, Martin Krpan, The Metamorphosis of Narcissus (visual interpretation).

### Setup:

- Sessions held in correctional facilities and adult education institutions
- Participants with diverse educational backgrounds
- Methodology: egalitarian seating, pre-distributed texts, free selection of key passages

*"I never thought I'd read Homer. But when I did, I realized - we're all fighting our way home."*

### Key Observations:

- In prisons: enhanced understanding of fellow inmates' motives, backgrounds, and stories
- In training centers: improved group dynamics and increased confidence
- Conflict resolution and emotional maturity developed naturally through literature
- Strong connections made between texts and personal life experiences

### Outcomes:

- Strengthened reading comprehension, questioning, and self-reflection
- Greater inclusion, empathy, and social cohesion in institutional contexts

**Institutional settings may seem unlikely places for literary dialogue-but these are often the spaces where it's needed most. Dialogic gatherings created a safe space for expression, recognition, and growth**

# DIALOGIC GATHERINGS WITH ADULTS IN TURKEY



**Project:** A-CLASE

**Organized by:** SAYEG-Der

**Target Group:** Adult learners  
and local volunteers

**Text Used:** Turkish translations  
of universal texts.

**Setup:**

- Weekly sessions in community centers
- Facilitators trained jointly by RIC Novo mesto and SAYEG-Der
- Group sizes of 6 to 12 adults
- Texts shared in advance

"We never knew we could talk like this about a book. It felt like we were all discovering something together."

**Key Observations:**

- Initial hesitation due to unfamiliarity with the format
- Increased participation and connection over time
- Volunteers emerged as co-moderators
- Cultural resonance sparked emotional and honest exchanges

**Outcomes:**

- Improved literacy, self-expression, and intergenerational dialogue
- Stronger community connections and sustainable local models



Dialogic gatherings in Turkey confirmed that egalitarian dialogue transcends educational background.

*Further Reading in the A-CLASE e-Textbook*

*The case studies in this chapter illustrate how dialogic gatherings take root in diverse settings—from schools and prisons to training centers and community halls.*

*For deeper insights into the development, methodology, and reflections from both Slovenian and Turkish implementations of dialogic gatherings, see:*

– Chapter 3: Preparing Dialogic Sessions

– Chapter 4: During the Gathering

– Chapter 6: Participant and Moderator Reflections

(A-CLASE e-Textbook, RIC Novo mesto & SAYEG-Der, 2025)

*The e-textbook complements these real-life stories with field-based observations, methodological clarity, and lessons learned from gatherings implemented across two countries.*

# ETHICAL AND INCLUSION GUIDELINES

Dialogic gatherings are inclusive by nature-but inclusion does not happen automatically. It must be **intentionally cultivated** through ethical awareness, careful preparation, and ongoing reflection.

## THE ETHIC OF EQUALITY

At the heart of dialogic methodology lies a commitment to **equality of differences**.

This means:

- No hierarchy of voices- everyone speaks and listens as equals;
- No assumptions about participants' capacities or literacy levels;
- Respect for diverse experiences and backgrounds as sources of knowledge.



### **Equal doesn't mean the same**

In dialogic settings, equality means equal opportunity to contribute-not uniformity of expression or style.

# CHOOSING INCLUSIVE MATERIALS

Text selection is one of the most critical ethical decisions a moderator makes. The goal is to invite everyone into the conversation, not to alienate or polarize.

## Recommended guidelines:

**Choose universal themes** that touch shared aspects of human life—love, loss, friendship, identity, change, freedom, injustice;

Be mindful of texts that assume **high levels of literacy or academic background knowledge.**

**Avoid texts** that rely heavily on a specific **cultural, political, or religious worldview**, especially when such content may reinforce division or discomfort;



### Politics, Religion and Values

Dialogic gatherings are not the place to resolve deep ideological differences.

Avoid texts that center on:

- Religious doctrine or sacred texts;
- Nationalistic, partisan, or political rhetoric;
- Content that explicitly promotes a particular moral, cultural or value system.

These topics can easily trigger identity-based conflict, especially in diverse or vulnerable groups. Instead, choose texts that raise deep questions without prescribing answers.

*"We do not gather to convert, convince or correct—we gather to connect."*

*(Adapted from closing reflections in A-CLASE dialogic gatherings)*

# PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ACCESSIBILITY

To ensure full participation:

- The **space must be accessible** (mobility, visibility, acoustics);
- Communication must be clear, with **support for language barriers** (e.g. bilingual texts, summaries);
- Psychological safety must be nurtured through consistent respect, openness, and **freedom from judgment.**



# THE MODERATOR AS AN EQUAL

The moderator does not lead—they **model equality:**

- They sit at the same level (literally and figuratively);
- They share their reflections, **not interpretations;**
- They uphold the values of **solidarity, inclusion and shared growth.**

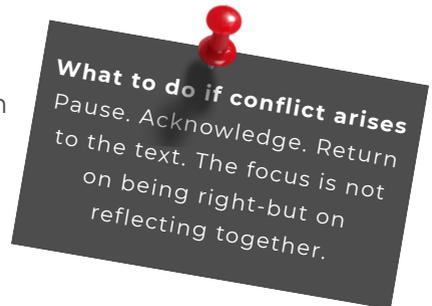
*"The moderator is not a guide on a stage, but a voice in the circle."*

*(Adapted from Training materials for dialogic facilitators in the A-CLASE project)*

# AVOIDING HARM

Though rare, dialogue can sometimes bring up discomfort, tension, or misunderstanding. The best protection is **prevention:**

- Choose texts and topics with care;
- Establish rules from the beginning;
- Reinforce that **disagreement is natural - but must remain respectful;**
- Intervene gently if disrespect arises, and redirect to the text.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & GLOSSARY

## SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

The following publications and research informed this guidebook and offer deeper insights into dialogic learning and inclusive education:

- Flecha, R. (2000). *Sharing Words: Theory and Practice of Dialogic Learning*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Herder and Herder.
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All cited works are either open-access or available through partner institutions.

*Related content in the A-CLASE e-Textbook*

*For additional reflections on inclusion, participant safety, and culturally respectful practices in dialogic gatherings, see:*

- Chapter 3: *Preparing Dialogic Sessions – text selection strategies and sensitivity to diverse audiences*
- Chapter 5: *Types of Gatherings – adapting to institutional and intercultural contexts*
- Chapter 7: *Challenges in Practice – managing values-based tension and fostering group cohesion* (A-CLASE e-Textbook, RIC Novo mesto & SAYEG-Der, 2025)

*Field notes from both Slovenian and Turkish moderators highlight the importance of carefully chosen texts, nonjudgmental listening, and protecting the dialogic space from dominance, exclusion, or ideological pressure.*

# GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Term	Definition
<b>Dialogic Gathering</b>	A structured, inclusive conversation based on a shared text, where all participants contribute as equals.
<b>Moderator</b>	The person who prepares and holds the space for dialogue, without leading or interpreting.
<b>Universal Text</b>	A text that raises existential, emotional or ethical questions relevant to all humans, regardless of background.
<b>Egalitarian Dialogue</b>	A conversation where all contributions are equally valued, and knowledge is co-constructed.
<b>Inclusive Practice</b>	Educational approaches that ensure participation of all, especially marginalized or vulnerable groups.
<b>Ground Rules</b>	Agreed-upon norms that support respectful, meaningful and safe participation.
<b>Self-reflection</b>	A structured personal review of one's own experiences and learning.
<b>Facilitation vs. Participation</b>	In dialogic gatherings, the moderator does not "facilitate" in the traditional sense, but participates equally.

## Language Note

This guide uses terms like "moderator" and "facilitator" interchangeably in some places, but always in the context of egalitarian, non-directive roles.

# TEMPLATES AND TOOLS

This chapter contains downloadable tools designed to support the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of dialogic gatherings. All tools have been tested during the A-CLASE project in Slovenia and Turkey. They are free to adapt and use in other contexts.

## PREPARATION

### **Planning Template**

A structured sheet for designing each gathering, including text selection, objectives, and potential challenges.

Downloadable file: [Planning template](#)

### **Participant Invitation Template**

An example invitation to be adapted for different participant profiles and settings.

Downloadable file: [Participant Invitation](#)

### **Moderator Planning Grid**

Helps the facilitator prepare the session step-by-step, from warm-up to closing reflection.

Downloadable file: [Moderator Planning Grid](#)



# ADDITIONAL PREPARATION

## **Additional: Attendance list**

Standardized attendance form, including consent to data manipulation.

Downloadable file: [Attendance list](#)

## **Additional: Ground Rules Poster**

Printable poster of dialogic rules: listening, speaking respectfully, embracing diversity.

Downloadable file: [Rules for Dialogic Gatherings](#)

## **Additional: Ice-breaker Activity**

Fun and reflective questions to build group cohesion.

Downloadable file: [Ice-breaker activity](#)



# DURING THE GATHERING

## **Facilitator's Observation Sheet**

Template for noting dynamics, challenges, and participant contributions during the session.

Downloadable file: [Facilitator's observation sheet](#)

## **Additional: Session Report Form (Minutes)**

Used by moderators or assistants to document attendance, speech patterns, and group behaviour.

Downloadable file: [Minutes](#)



# EVALUATION

## Reflection Sheet for Participants

Simple form for participants to reflect on each session.

Downloadable file: [Participant Reflection Sheet](#)

## Reflection Sheet for Moderators

A simple tool for moderators to reflect on their own facilitation after each gathering.

Downloadable file: [Moderator Reflection Sheet](#)

### Customisation Tip

All templates are editable and can be translated or adjusted to fit your audience and setting. Feel free to add your logo, colours, or visual identity.

## Additional: Participant Feedback Form

Used after every 5th gathering for deeper participant input.

Downloadable file: [Feedback Form](#)

## Additional: Participant Self-Assessment

A confidential tool to assess personal growth in soft skills.

Downloadable file: [Perception Scale for DG Participants \(KPI\)](#)

## Additional: Volunteer Self-Assessment

Tailored for volunteers, focused on communication, empathy, and facilitation skills.

Downloadable file: [Perception Scale for DG Moderators \(KPI\)](#)

"Structure frees the mind to focus on what matters:  
*dialogue.*"

*(Adapted from training materials for dialogic facilitators in the A-CLASE project)*

All templates are editable and ready to print. They reflect the diverse experiences gathered in Slovenia and Turkey and are meant to support inclusion, dialogue, and continuous improvement.

You are encouraged to adapt them-just don't forget to stay true to the spirit of dialogic learning.

# FINAL NOTE: THE POWER OF DIALOGUE BEGINS WITH YOU

This guidebook was never meant to be just a manual. It is an invitation.

An invitation to slow down, to listen, to speak with intention-and to rediscover the simple power of being heard.

Dialogic gatherings offer a space where everyone belongs, where no voice is too small, and where stories meet in unexpected ways. They are not about fixing others or teaching truths, but about walking together toward deeper understanding.

You do not need to be a scholar, a facilitator, or an expert to begin. You only need the courage to ask:

**What touched you in the text?  
And why?**

The rest will follow-through silence, laughter, and the patient weaving of shared meaning.

And when it does, know that you are now part of a growing community that believes learning happens best when we learn from each other.

Let the dialogue begin-with care, with curiosity, and with you.

*The A-CLASE e-textbook offers context, methodology, and reflection-but this guidebook provides the practical tools. These templates were created to help you take the first step-from intention to implementation.*

Together, the A-CLASE e-textbook and this guidebook form a complementary pair: one grounded in reflection, the other in action.

# INVITATION TO CONNECT

We'd love to hear how your gatherings unfold. Share your stories, questions, or feedback with us at [belinda.lovrencic@ric-nm.si](mailto:belinda.lovrencic@ric-nm.si).

***Let's keep the dialogue going.***

*We do not gather to teach, but to think together -  
and sometimes, to change the world."*

*(Adapted from Training material for dialogic facilitators in The A-CLASE project)*



# REFERENCES

This guidebook was developed as part of the **A-CLASE Erasmus+ project (2023–2025)**. It integrates practical insights, materials and reflections from gatherings held in Slovenia and Turkey.

Some theoretical references are based on the work of CREA (University of Barcelona) and related EU-funded initiatives (INCLUD-ED, La Verneda).

All sources have been cited with permission or are in the public domain.

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