

# Bridging & Breaking

Dialogues of Belonging





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## **Bridging & Breaking:**

Dialogues of Belonging



Length — ☒ 30 minutes  
☐ 60 minutes  
☐ 90 minutes

### **Description**

A Dialogue lesson is a cultural lynchpin for each learning module. Activities in the Dialogue portion encompass collaborative rituals and key concepts of modules, while placing human connection, understanding and stories at the center of the learning experience. A culture of care and love are prioritized to help prime participants' minds and hearts.

A 30 minute entry-level discussion/workshop tool about the video explainers' core concept that strengthens understanding, language, and connection to self and community context.

### **Audience**

People with some-to-no familiarity on the topics, high school and college students, people watching the videos alone but wanting more background materials, equity and inclusion professionals in the private sector, government staff.

### **Guiding Inquiries**

- What is breaking and what is bridging?
- What role do personal stories and cultural and social narratives play in shaping our understanding of how to bridge in our own lives?

### **Lesson at-a-Glance**

- Welcome (5 minutes)
- Breaking & Bridging: Story Palettes (10 minutes)
- Video & Discussion (10 minutes)
- Journal Reflections (5 minutes)

### **Materials**

Writing utensils, lesson, [link to video](#) and [transcript](#) of "Bridging: Towards A Society Built on Belonging" (Animated Video)

### **Room Setup/Needs**

Play music as participants enter.

Write and post Collective Agreements so they are visible inside the learning space.

Learning setting: One chair or desk for each participant. Place chairs / desks in a circle for learning. Set up a centerpiece of plants, fabric, candles, or another artifact that is responsive to the participants attending.

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## **Outline**

- Learners will gain an introductory understanding of the concepts of bridging and breaking.
- Learners will explore strategic narratives that are designed to bridge people and society towards one another, and into belonging.
- Learners will watch Bridging: Towards a Society Built on Belonging video and have the opportunity to apply these concepts to their own lives.

## **Equipment**

- Projector
- Computer
- Wifi
- Audio system to share videos

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Lesson Plan



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## The Context/ Framing the Issue

“Of all the forces shaping politics and power around the world, perhaps none are more important than our sense of who we are, and who we are becoming.” Having collective anxiety due to rapid change is a normal biological reaction, but how we respond to this anxiety is social. And our social responses are greatly shaped by the stories presented from those we look to as leaders and through the power of culture. We can respond to these changes either as a threat—breaking—or as an opportunity, bridging. Bridging calls on us to reject a politics of ‘us vs. them’ and instead move towards a future where there is a new ‘us.’”

-Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society

## Strategies (Start of Lesson)

**“There is no death, only a change of worlds.”**

**-Chief Seattle**

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**Play music as participants arrive.**

### 1. Welcome 5 minutes

#### **Welcome, [Land Acknowledgement](#) and Community Agreements**

(See ‘Activity Guide’ to consider which activities are best suited for your context. These are essential for setting the tone of the learning space)

### 2. Breaking & Bridging: Story Palettes 10 minutes

1. Create two columns with “breaking” and “bridging” written at the top of each.
2. Using the questions in the columns below, jumpstart a whole group conversation. The conversation is intended to establish a common language for the concepts of *breaking* and *bridging*.
3. Record the group’s responses on the board under the appropriate column.
4. Start with the “breaking” palette.



You might say something like....” *The purpose of a Story Palette is to our identify experiences with a concept or topic in order to build out a deeply personal, human-centered frame of reference.*”

#### **Breaking Story Palette**

- What happens to an object when it breaks? What happens to the parts and pieces of the broken thing?
- When was the last time something valuable of yours was broken?
- When was the last time you were involuntarily broken-off from a group (of friends, work, spiritual group or social community)?
- When was the last time you voluntarily broke from your group?

#### **Bridging Story Palette**

- When was the first time you remember crossing a bridge? Where were you going? Where were you leaving?
- What was on the other side?
- When was the last time you had to bridge with someone “outside” of your group (of friends, work, spiritual group or social community)?
- When was the last time you chose to bridge with someone who you didn’t consider in your “in-group”?

### 3. Video & Group Discussion

10 minutes



Click icon to watch video.

1. Watch [Bridging: Towards a Society Built on Belonging](#)



2. Reflect briefly on the film.
  - a. What did you see, hear, think?
  - b. What do you feel?
  - c. What do you wonder?
3. Building off of the responses from the story palettes, ask participants their thoughts about why individuals, groups, and communities in society might take on practices of breaking towards an untruthful and sentimental historical past.
4. Share the definitions of breaking and bridging with the group.

#### Breaking:

- Pulling away from other groups in ways that make it easier to tell and believe false stories of “us versus them”
- To initiate or foster practices that reinforce othering and dehumanizes a manufactured “them”
- A manufactured or manipulated inter-personal and/or structural response to a perceived “Other”

#### Bridging:

- Relating to other groups based on deep listening, empathetic space, and recognition of suffering
- Rejects that there is a ‘Them’ while recognizing our unique differences
- A strategic or intentional response to reject Othering

#### Role of stories and cultural narratives in bridging and breaking:

- Narratives of shared humanity, optimism, opportunity, and inclusion can help counteract the fear and angry populism we see today—which have grown out of widespread “breaking” stories that warn of a dark and scary future or an untruthful and sentimental historical past.

#### **4. Journal Reflection**

5 minutes

Write the following question on board. Invite your group to reflect on them in their journals or notebooks. Invite participants to read all or parts of their reflection. Alternatively, you might invite the group to stand in a circle and take turns responding the questions aloud.

***Who would you want to connect with / bridge towards?***

Thank the group for being together and for building communities of belonging.

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## Activity Guide

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## Welcome and Opening Activities

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### Alter/Altar Space

As time and space allows, prepare the space for learning by making room for viewing films, holding circle, and engaging with exercises particular to your module. Optionally set a place for inclusion of any relevant objects of beauty or importance (books, flowers, art, etc.) and inviting participants to do the same.

### Music

Play music as participants arrive and get settled. Some suggestions for songs: We Are-Sweet Honey and the Rock, Pata Pata-Miriam Makeba, People Everyday, Two Hearts-Valerie June, Waiting in Vain- Bob Marley, Can I Kick It-A Tribe Called Quest, I Am That I Am-Peter Tosh.

### Circle Process

Most lessons open and close with circles, where participants and facilitator(s) stand or sit in a circle (or semi-circle or oval as needed!) in order to transform traditional, hierarchical learning spaces into collaborative community spaces.

### Breathing Exercise

Invite participants to engage in an embodied practice of mindfulness and internal and external presence.



This icon indicates a talking point.

You might say something like: *“Exhale first. Breathe in deeply. Hold it for a moment. Exhale slowly.” (pause) Now take 3 deep breaths on your own. When you breathe in allow yourself to receive the air. As you exhale, relax completely.*

### Land Acknowledgement

Open with an acknowledgement of the land we stand on. Explain that land acknowledgement is an important element of reckoning with our collective past. It is a way to shift power by remembering and honoring the historical truth, the trauma, and the knowledge that our indigenous family is still here and has for centuries maintained stewardship over the land we are on.

A formal, opening acknowledgment of the indigenous land we stand on includes acknowledgement of the indigenous community whose land was colonized (in North American contexts). If more research is needed by facilitator, <https://native-land.ca> is an excellent resource.

### Conocimiento

A Spanish word meaning “knowledge or conscience.” The Conocimiento Principle, a principle of the Latinx/Chicanx movement for transformation and equity, recognizes that common unity begins with the process of shared awareness and understanding, or Conocimiento.

—Roberto Vargas, Ph.D



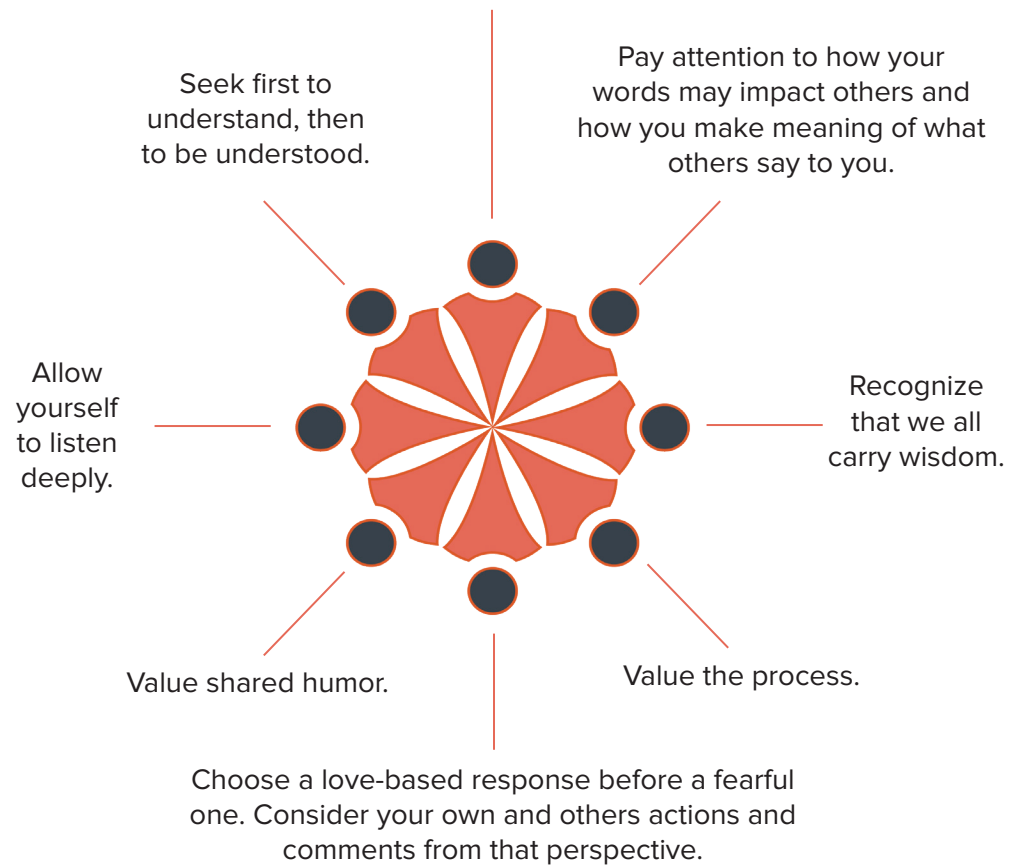


You might say something like... *“Conocimiento was used and highlighted during the Farm Workers’ Movement in California to bring people together in community to understand and leverage each others’ strengths.”*

The process of Belonging begins by identifying what’s already beautiful and present. Conocimiento is a practice that centers the human experience as meaningful and worthy. It is a practice that shares and uplifts the strengths of each person in relation to the collective, in order to achieve a common purpose. It will be important to practice *conocimiento* in your workshops to support people’s ability to feel immediately connected for a common cause.

## Community Agreements

Use and adapt these agreements to help set the tone, intentions, values and ethics of the learning environment.



## Various Thinking and Speaking Protocols

**Save the Last Word** - Save the Last Word is a thinking and discussion routine used to clarify and deepen thinking about a text.

**See, Think, Wonder** - See, Think, Wonder is a thinking routine developed by Project Zero (Harvard Graduate School of Education) to help learners make careful observations and develop their own ideas and interpretations of what they see.

- What do you see?
- What do you think about what you see?
- What does it make you wonder about?

**Parts, Purposes, Complexities** - Parts, Purposes and Complexities is a thinking routine that helps learners slow down and make careful, detailed observations of an object or system they are examining. This routine encourages them to look beyond the obvious features of an object or system and to consider its functions and complexities. Parts, Purposes and Complexities is a thinking routine created by Agency by Design with Harvard Project Zero.

- What are the parts? What are its various pieces or components?
- What are its purposes? What are the purposes for each of these parts?
- What are the complexities? How is it complicated in its parts and purposes, what are some complexities of the relationships between the two, what questions arise?

## Speaking Order

Speaking Order is used in social practice circles around the world. It is one way to address and practice the reversal of systemic inequities introduced and held by white supremacy and patriarchy. Speaking order supports a shift in power from the people who have been granted the most power in our society based on colonialism, imperialism, and paternalism. These systems function to bias societies towards a worldview of hierarchical domination over others rather than a holding a viewpoint of community wisdom and collective good.

Speaking Order is often difficult to explain in settings where the system of inequity is not understood by all in the room, particularly with people in positions of privilege (such as white men) who may be used to holding more space in conversation and/or decision making, or are new to understanding white privilege and the role it plays in perpetuating the historical oppression of people of color around the world.



To introduce Speaking Order, you might say something like: *“We are going to practice shifting the power dynamics today. We will use Speaking Order as a way to reckon with our shared history of imperialism and a white ruling class. Speaking Order will ask that anyone who self identifies as having been granted the most unearned power in our society... based on factors of race, gender, age, religion, ability, etc...will let others speak before weighing in. Again, we ask the group to internally self-identify and simply stay mindful throughout our time together of who takes up the most/least airtime in group discussions and decisions. Speaking Order asks that the floor be turned over to lead from the wisdom of those who have been most “Othered” and carried most of the burden of societal oppressions. We acknowledge that there can be discomfort around this ask regardless of your positionality or “situatedness”, but invite this practice as a model for authentic reconciliation and as a path to increase mutual Belonging.”*

## More Useful Resources

- [Culturally Responsive Resources](#)
- [Restorative Circle Processes](#)
- [Pillars of Andragogy](#)