



## Key Advice

### Differences between a discussion or debate versus a dialogue

Explain the fundamental differences between a discussion (debate or argument) and a dialogue (open, empathetic conversation). Emphasise the value of suspending personal opinions to explore diverse perspectives.

	<b>Discussion / Debate</b>	<b>Dialogue</b>
Starting point	Looking for 'the' best answer or that which is morally 'right'.	Reality and that which is morally "good" is not fixed and multi-interpretable.
Basic attitude	Wanting to convince the other person from one's judgement or knowledge.	Investigating. We have something to say to each other.
Speaking time of others	Participants demand speaking time and see the other person's speaking time, insights and/or knowledge as incorrect.	Suspension of judgements. Exploring your own and others' judgements through sincere questions is paramount.
The language that is used is characterised by	'Yes, but .....',	'Yes, and ....', asking (probing) questions, accurately formulating, and monitoring the process (e.g., summarising each other).
Process is characterised by	Momentum, acceleration, and conclusions and/or solutions.	Active listening, desires and answers that are evaluated are evaluated.
Focus is on	Objective and/or effective knowing, decisions, conclusions and judgements.	Examining and testing the different points of view.
Levels of inference	Attention is focused on 'absolute knowing'.	Attention is focused on 'relative knowing'. There is room for not knowing and new questions.

*This table was created by the VU Centre for Teaching & Learning, based on: Molewijk, B. (2013).*