

Discern + Digest

A TOOLKIT BY THE
BEECK CENTER FOR SOCIAL
IMPACT + INNOVATION

PUBLISHED MAY 2021

By Grace Mariana Rector

beeckcenter
social impact + innovation

About the Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation

The Beeck Center is an experiential hub at Georgetown University that trains students and incubates scalable, leading edge ideas for social change. We believe impact at scale requires the courage to think and behave differently. Our work centers on investing in outcomes for individuals and society. We equip future global leaders with the mindset to promote outcome-driven solutions, using the tools of design, data, technology, and innovation. We convene actors across the public, private, and civic sectors to advance new tools, frameworks, and approaches necessary to achieve these outcomes.

About this Toolkit

This report was released May 2021 under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 license](#), and should be cited as: Grace Mariana Rector. Discern + Digest Toolkit, Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation, Georgetown University, 2021.

Table of Contents

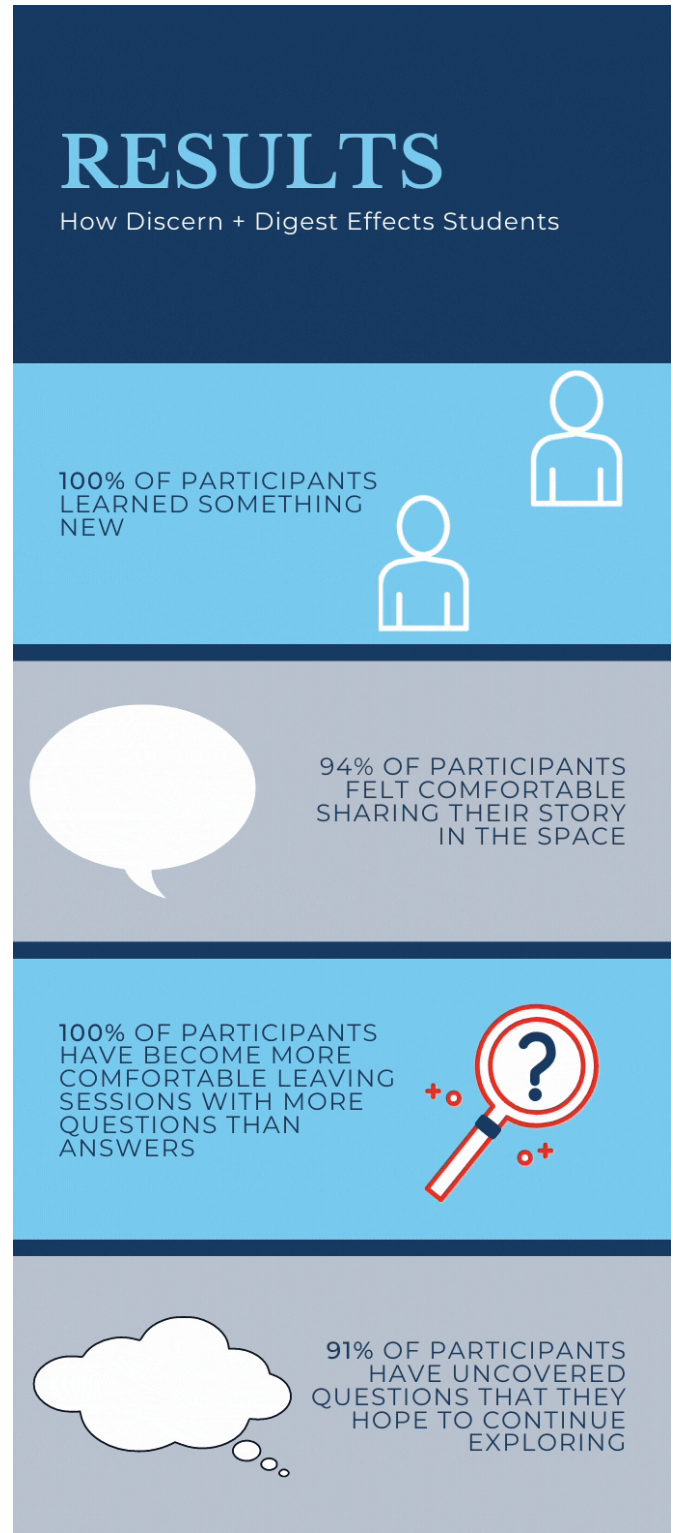
Introduction to Discern + Digest	3
Program Overview	4
Mission	4
Audience + Outreach	4
Program Roles	5
Structure of the Conversation	7
Selecting your Group	10
Setting Expectations	11
Facilitation	13
Train-the-Trainer Model	13
Facilitation Techniques	13
D + D Speakers and Topics	15
Topic Selection	15
Identifying Speakers	16
Outreach to Speakers	17
Orienting Speakers	17
Post Meeting	17
Event Logistics	18
Sample Timeline	18
Considerations	20
FAQS	20
Conclusion	22
Testimonies	23
Appendix	25
Acknowledgments	25

Introduction to Discern + Digest

Congratulations on taking the first step toward enhancing your organization! Discern + Digest provides participants with the space and tools to reflect inwardly and with peers, enabling them to step back amid a fast-paced world and set intentional time and space for discernment. This dialogue series is for on-campus centers, student groups, professors, and even organizations off campus that are looking to bring more complex dialogues into their workplace. The tools described below can be integrated into your office, classroom, or community group, typically with a group of 10-15 participants (feel free to interpret this broadly—at the Beeck Center, we’re all learning constantly!). The dialogue series often complements a shared experience, such as being part of the same work or educational space.

This dialogue series enables participants to engage with their work more deeply by unraveling complex questions. The series can serve to improve the well-being of those who participate, providing a space for sometimes difficult and important dialogue or introspection and creating healthier individuals and more collaborative, caring environments.

Join us in making healthier workspaces by opening the door to this important discourse. We welcome you to our community as we spread this initiative.

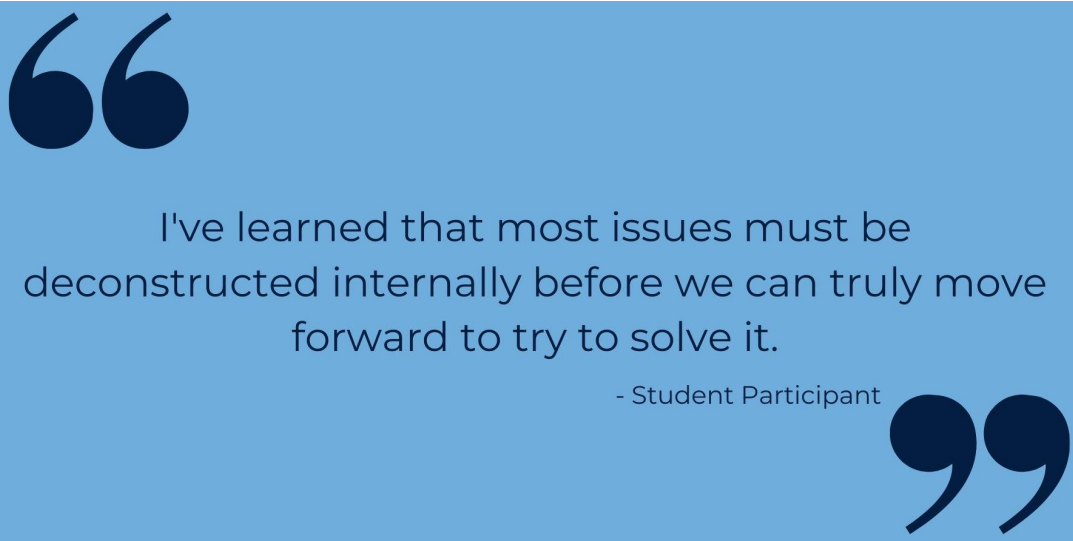


Quantitative data from participant surveys

Program Overview

Mission

Discern and Digest (D + D) is a dialogue series created to help participants explore the intersection of social impact and their role in their workspace through learning how to ask good questions, reflect, and discern. The discussions equip participants with the mindsets and skills necessary to become a successful 21st century social impact leader. Moreover, the discussion series will help build a community of deep, critical thinkers who are committed to social impact.



Quoted testimonial from Discern + Digest participant

Audience + Outreach

The primary audience for this series includes student organizations, centers that work with students, or any organization looking to bring employees together through difficult conversations. At the Beeck Center, we tailor this program to our cohort of student analysts who work at the center. It is recommended to cap the group of participants at 16 so that it is small enough to still be an intimate space.

Program Roles

The program will be led by a program manager, which, in the case of the Beeck Center, is a student analyst. While the program manager will begin and guide the series by facilitating, the goal of the person in this role is to train all participants on how to be effective facilitators so that they leave the program with techniques that they can use in future endeavors. Each subsequent discussion will be facilitated by two participants—to be rotated each week—following a train-the-trainer model, which will be described in detail later in this toolkit. While the facilitators guide the conversation, there are other roles central to the success of the discussion, including:

The Program Manager

The student or staff program manager will:

1. Deliver an introductory presentation on the program
2. Lead the development of discussion topics and questions
3. Train all participants in facilitation methods
4. Provide general support (as-needed) to facilitators in their conversations with potential speakers
5. Serve as a backup facilitator if any conflicts arise
6. Send reminders regarding the logistics of the weekly discussions
7. Manage any discussion follow-up tasks

For discussions held in person, additional responsibilities include:

8. Reserve a physical space to hold the conversation
9. Coordinate catering
10. Clean up post discussion

This role requires at least 10 hours/week to complete the aforementioned tasks. If the program manager is a student, then a staff member should supervise this student; however, if a staff member will start as the program manager, another staff member is not needed.

The Staff Member

The staff member assigned to oversee the implementation of the program will:

1. Supervise the program manager on staging and facilitating the discussion
2. Serve as a staff resource for participants regarding internal issues or concerns regarding the program manager
3. Represent the center by attending every discussion and giving updates to staff on the milestones achieved within Discern + Digest.

The following guidance may be distributed to the staff member that will attend weekly discussions:

- You, as the staff person, are primarily an observer, synthesizer, and supporter of the facilitators to ensure a psychologically safe space.
- The D + D lead, facilitators (rotating through a train-the-trainer model), and participants are all equipped to hold each other accountable to the community guidelines, which are established at the beginning of each semester.
- Should there be any issues, please address them with the facilitators and then the D + D lead. Should there be an issue with the D + D lead, participants should consult you as a staff person.
- In virtual spaces, you may use the chat to share ideas, ask questions, and emphasize ideas shared in the conversation.
- Limit your verbal participation; understand that there is a power dynamic where some comments you make may carry unintentional weight. Use “I statements” and avoid making generalizations or recommendations, like “We should . . .” or “We do ___.”
- As a witness and observer of D + D, you are an ambassador of how D + D fits into the larger student analyst program.

The Guest Speaker

Each week, the guest speaker selected to join the group will:

1. Participate in a pre-discussion orientation with facilitators to discuss their story and potential question for the following discussion
2. Attend one 90-minute D + D session to share their story (10 minutes) and to listen to the participants engaging with the topic

The following guidance may be distributed to the guest speaker:

- You, as the guest speaker, are primarily a peer, learner, and contributor in the D + D space — think about what you can gain from this conversation. Instead of

“

Storytelling is not about conveying information. It’s about the process of entering a world created by the storyteller. The speaker brought me into a moment in his life and I was able to connect to his story and experience!

- Student Participant

”

“

I resonated with the speaker’s story completely. It was the story I needed in my life, a story I had been living out, processing, and reflecting upon in my own way since starting college--especially now with the state of the world and the state of some of my relationships.

- Student Participant

”

Quoted testimonial from Discern + Digest participant

treating it as a traditional speaking engagement, reframe this as an invitation to share and listen.

- Your principal role is to set the tone for the dialogue through a story that reveals a question that you've struggled with throughout your life.
- The most powerful stories that set the tone for the most vulnerable conversations are ones in which the speaker describes a vulnerable moment in detail that reveals the question that we will unpack throughout the conversation.
- Limit your verbal participation to a few comments after you have spoken; understand that there is a power dynamic where some comments you make may carry unintentional weight
- Share any resources that you may find helpful to participants in the chat so that you do not take away time from their discussion.

The Participants

Each participant in the dialogue series will:

1. Attend every session unless an emergency arises (participants cannot miss more than two sessions)
2. Follow the group written expectations
3. Come to the space with an open mind and a willingness to be vulnerable

Structure of the Conversation

Agenda

Each week that participants come together, the 90-minute model* that the Beeck Center utilizes will follow this agenda:

- *5 minutes: Introductions and icebreaker*
- *10 - 15 minutes: Guest speaker shares personal reflection to introduce the topic or question at hand*
- *5 minutes: Participants pause to write their reflections in their D + D journals***
- *60 minutes: Facilitators lead a reflective discussion on the topic/question, using the strategies learned in our [facilitation basics session](#).*
- *5 minutes: Facilitators summarize interesting points of discussion to wrap up reflection.*
- **TOTAL: 90 Minutes**

**Note on format: If the discussion is in person, you may consider providing lunch to participants and allow them time in the beginning to eat. If it is virtual, participants may bring their lunches if it is during lunchtime.*

***Note on materials: The Beeck Center created a [journal template](#) in collaboration with [Zenit Journals](#).*

Discussion Topics

Initial discussion topics will be determined by the facilitators, with input from the participants. For Beeck Center’s discussions, general themes include examining tough questions related to social impact, and reflecting on personal social impact journeys. Before the series begins, the program manager should frame the purpose of the discussion group, introduce participants to the art of reflection and discernment (along with tools for effective discernment), and cultivate trust between discussion group members. To correlate with the academic calendar, the D + D series typically runs from the beginning to end of a semester-long period, then restart with a new cohort.

Selecting the Topics

Once the participants have been identified, the first meeting will include [setting expectations](#) and brainstorming topics. D + D is driven by questions and thus the participants are encouraged to unravel—rather than answer—the question to sustain a more profound discussion. In the first meeting, the leader of D + D will ask participants to write down as many questions as they can on sticky notes within five minutes. At the Beeck Center, we first ask students to write down any questions that they’ve struggled with while working within the social impact space; however, you are welcome to determine what questions you want participants to explore through this series.

Example Questions

- 1 How do our identities impact our personal and professional roles?
- 2 How to find meaning when meaning doesn't always pay the bills?
- 3 How to adapt to life when it changes unexpectedly along your journey?
- 4 What assumptions go unquestioned in social impact spaces?
- 5 How to stay rooted while trying to change the system?

A list of sample questions from previous discussions

When developing the question to discuss in the series, it is important to avoid leading questions. Instead of “How can we seek less external validation?” it could be “Where does our motivation come from and how does that impact our successes?” Rephrasing the question in a more open-ended way sets the group up for a more dynamic conversation, providing space for individuals to disagree and break down

Selecting your Group

The Beeck Center developed this dialogue series as an educational space for students. For spaces that do not include student analysts or student workers, you may consider selecting a small group of students (10-15 people) that are already heavily involved in your organization, or you can invite students that are interested in joining the organization. If your organization does not work with students, you can use this dialogue series with your core team, for example.

All potential participants must commit to a few expectations before participating:

1. Participants are **expected to commit to consistent attendance**, with two excused absences, or the number of absences that your organization deems appropriate. **Consistent attendance builds trust and community among the participants.** If someone comes only every two weeks, they will miss out on previous conversations and the natural building upon topics that the dialogue is set up to enhance.
2. Participants must recognize that **the space is for vulnerability and deep conversations.** The best conversations are ones that focus heavily on participants' personal experiences and stories. Thus, the individuals you invite to the space need to be **open to vulnerability.** Good listening skills, or a commitment to improving one's listening skills, is also a requirement.

If participants are curious about the takeaways they will gain from D + D, you may refer them to the [one-page overview](#).

Depending on the conversations they have, D + D participants may strengthen their network and community, while learning to take a human-centered approach to inquiry and community engagement. Finally, D + D will give participants a space to reflect on their experiences to help guide the next ones.

D + D seeks to help participants become more reflective thinkers by learning to unravel thought-provoking questions instead of striving to solve them. Students are often taught that knowledge is knowing. However, in the space of D + D, students are encouraged to grapple with difficult questions, acknowledging that it is okay if they don't know the answers. Moreover, when selecting individuals to participate in this series, think about people who would be comfortable exploring this new space as well as individuals who this series may challenge. You may send out an [interest form](#) similar to the form we use.

Setting Expectations

Once you have selected your group of participants, it's to plan your first meeting. For more specifics on event setup and logistics, view the event logistics section below (pg. 19). Setting expectations is a critical part of creating the D + D space, and the most effective way to set these expectations is by co-designing them with the participants.

Participants need to know what they can expect from their peers when considering whether to share a vulnerable story. A concept we introduce to our D + D participants is that of a "Brave Space." We define this as a space that is not only safe for participants to share their experiences, but one where participants will feel comfortable enough to be brave and share more vulnerable stories. Encouraging bravery is a great place to start with your participants, letting them know that when they are open to taking risks and sharing stories, others may be able to learn from them. This concept must also be clarified by reminding participants that they should not feel pushed to share things that they do not want others to know.

What is a Brave Space?



Another expectation to set is the concept that “**Silence is Good.**” In our series at the Beeck Center, the student facilitators remind students at the beginning of every D + D meeting that silence is good because that means the students are taking time to reflect and process their thoughts instead of blurting out the first thing that comes to mind. Reiterating this notion helps the silence in the room feel a little less awkward, although it may feel awkward nonetheless.

Below is a sample slide from our “Introduction to Discern + Digest” presentation in which the facilitator asked students what expectations they wanted to agree upon as a group. Some of the expectations that are essential include:

- **Use “I” statements:** It’s often safer for someone to share how “we feel” instead of how “I feel” because then it’s more intimate. It is more powerful to share one’s personal experience instead of generalizing what others feel or have experienced. It is the facilitator’s role to remind the group to use “I” statements if they begin to generalize.
- **Take space, and make space:** This rule reminds participants that there is a time to take space and share with the group, but also that it’s important to make space for others and simply listen.

Community Guidelines

ZOOM:

- Ask clarifying questions using the chat feature
- Use best judgement to mute/unmute
- Use gallery screen format
- Use video when possible



Expectations: It’s your space and your rules

1. Question the idea, not the person.
2. Do not freeze a person in time.
3. Own your words and your impact.
4. Validate others’ feelings.
5. Assume best intentions.
6. Use “I” statements. Speak from your experiences. Avoid generalizations.
7. Focus and attentiveness--be an active listener. Tune in to the session.
8. Let there be silence. Silence is okay.
9. Step up, step back. Take time to reflect and process. Give others space.
10. Actively look at others in the virtual setting.
11. Close your windows.
12. What’s said here, stays here. What’s learned here, leaves here.
13. Stayed unmuted if you can.

Ultimately, the most important part of expectation setting is that they are set by the participants who then agree to follow them. It’s the job of the facilitator (though not the facilitator alone) to hold participants accountable when they break a rule.

Facilitation

The D + D series is not only a great space for individuals to participate in reflective dialogue, but it also allows students to facilitate these complex conversations and equips them with important skills for future careers. The Beeck Center expanded D + D to include a train-the-trainer model so that multiple students could receive facilitation training as well as have a space to practice and develop their skills. The participants selected to facilitate are either directly chosen by the program manager or volunteer. It is often more impactful if the organization selects participants for the role who have expressed interest in developing their facilitation skills.

Train-the-Trainer Model

The train-the-trainer model is designed to support sustainable leadership. The program manager begins the program by delivering [Facilitation Training](#) to all participants. Afterward, the program manager chooses a student to co-facilitate the first meeting. Pairing an experienced facilitator with a less experienced facilitator allows for natural mentorship and the transfer of knowledge. After this pair facilitates a meeting, the prior student chooses or is assigned another student with whom they will co-facilitate. Now, the student with less experience has co-lead a discussion and can pass on tips and tools to the new student co-facilitator. This model continues through the term until several participants have facilitated multiple conversations.

Facilitation Techniques

Your organization may adopt the Beeck Center's [Facilitation Training](#) (designed for students in our student analyst program) or you can create your own. Providing training to all of your participants ensures not only that they have the tools to facilitate if they're chosen, but also that they are equipped to ask thought-provoking questions to build on those asked by your facilitators. After completing this brief training, participants will walk away with a skill set that they can apply in your organization or beyond.

Facilitation Tips

- Practice active listening
- Seek to build relationships
- Take notes
- Ask probing + open-ended questions
- Allow moments of silence
- **Remember our community guidelines!**
- Check-in!
- Go in with a structure/schedule in mind, but be open to change

Below are some key facilitation tips from the Beeck Center's training:

- **Hold the space:** This has a dual meaning: hold the silence and make space for participants to share in a supportive environment. It's the job of the facilitator to embrace silence—however uncomfortable it may feel—and not rush to ask a follow-up when silence follows something that someone said. When there is silence, the facilitator should look up or make eye contact with participants. Looking down suggests disengagement. To support other participants who share, especially when it's something vulnerable, the facilitator should thank that participant for sharing. It's also important to always look at the participant speaking with a soft-focus so they feel supported.
- **Be flexible:** While facilitators should go into a conversation with a list of planned questions and an idea of different ways to direct the conversation, they also need to be flexible enough to let the participants direct the conversation. Any conversation is valid, as long as it builds upon the original question and is not about something entirely unrelated. Allowing participants to guide the conversation makes it more relevant to their experiences.
- **Take notes:** This is not required for facilitators, but can be helpful when trying to track where the conversation goes. A good facilitator will write down topics that participants introduce, as well as questions that may deepen the conversation.

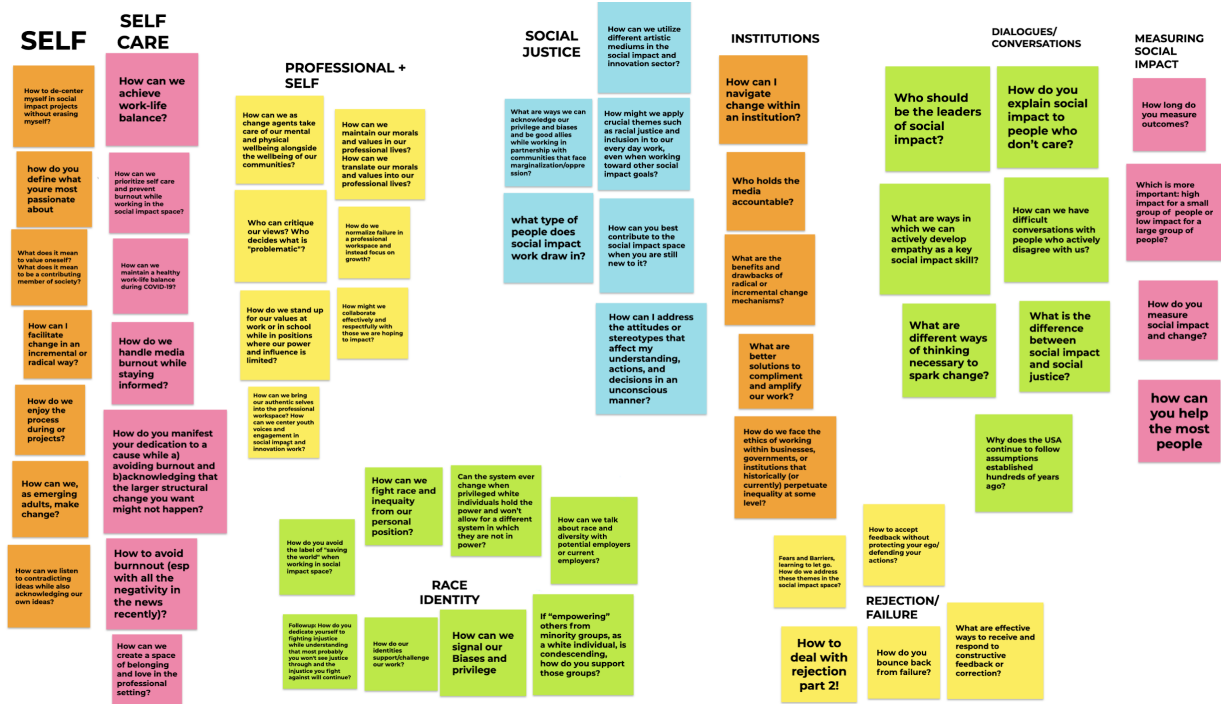
D + D Speakers and Topics

Once you have selected your group of participants, set group expectations, and trained them on how to facilitate their conversations, you are ready to bring in a guest speaker. A unique part of the D + D series is the relationship between the student participants and the guest speaker. Rather than a traditional brown bag lunch where speakers come and talk about their career followed by a Q&A from students, in this series speakers are prepared by student facilitators to come into the space and share a story and a related question that they've grappled with. When a leader or expert shares something with which they struggle, it makes it easier for participants to relate to them as human beings instead of an untouchable role model. Accordingly, it is important to tell all interested speakers that they will serve as more of a peer to students than a mentor. Remind them to refrain from taking over the conversation, and to instead allow participants to engage freely with the question that the speaker presented.

In regards to topics or questions, the program manager should work with the student facilitator to form complex questions that encompass the speaker's story. Facilitators must develop the question from the speaker's story rather than choosing a great question and forcing the speaker to find a story that fits the question.

Topic Selection

To start the series, the program facilitator will lead a brainstorm session to source discussion topics and identify potential speakers. Once the facilitator presents the Introduction to D + D presentation, she/he/they will ask all participants to think about questions that they are grappling with: either general questions related to social impact or questions more specific to their work. The facilitator will give all participants 5-10 minutes to write down each of their questions on a sticky note. The aim of this activity is for participants to articulate as many questions as come to mind instead of trying to come up with a small number of high-quality questions. If you are facilitating the space virtually, you may use [Google Jamboard](#). Familiarize yourself with the tool beforehand so that you can support participants in navigating it. Ask participants to add each of their questions on separate sticky notes on the Jamboard whiteboard. Once the time is up, the facilitator gives time for participants to review all the questions that their peers wrote. The facilitator is then in charge of helping the group organize the questions into themes.



Above is an example of our topic brainstorm session over jamboard in June 2020.

The broad themes of self-care, professional + self, etc. were identified by the program manager to organize all of the students' questions.

While the series may not address the specific questions that the participants introduced, the brainstorm is helpful to the facilitator because she/he/they can share it with potential speakers. It also helps the speaker choose their topic with participants' interests in mind.

Identifying Speakers

A key feature of D + D is the guest speaker that we invite every week. The speaker is important because they set the tone for the rest of the conversation, thus it is essential to identify the right speakers to join your space. At the Beek Center, we have staff members and fellows who we typically recruit to speak. Our staff and fellows at the Beek Center are mid-upper level professionals with diverse experiences ranging from fundraising to design-thinking to everything in between! Sometimes staff connects external contacts who fit the dialogue culture with the student program manager so the two of them can schedule an introductory meeting.

Once you've identified individuals that you think would be a good fit for the program, you should reach out to them via email.

Outreach to Speakers

We have developed [email templates](#) to use for navigating outreach to speakers. Make sure you give a clear overview of the program, describe the role that the guest speaker will play, and specify how much time they will need to dedicate to the program. For a program overview, you can refer to the earlier section (pg. 4). The role of the speaker in D + D is to share a story related to a question that they've struggled with throughout their experience in the social impact sector. They will need to commit to a 45-minute meeting with the two student facilitators to develop the question and frame their story in addition to the 90 minutes allocated for the discussion.

Orienting Speakers

Once a speaker has agreed to participate in the dialogue series, the program manager and student facilitators will need to send a [pre-meeting email](#). Once student facilitators and the guest speaker are in the meeting, the [in-meeting guide](#) developed by the program manager will be helpful.

Post Meeting

After the meeting with the speaker, be sure to thank them for their participation and reinforce how excited you are to have them speak at the dialogue series. In some cases, speakers may not be ready to share at D + D, either because they haven't done enough self-reflection, they aren't sufficiently open to being vulnerable, or they're not a good fit for this program specifically. In these instances, you can set up a second, 30-minute meeting with the guest speaker and give them some guidance about what they need to do before that meeting, whether it be to reflect on a story or to pick which theme is most interesting.

Once the speaker knows what story they will share and the student facilitators have constructed a good question, the program manager will draft an [email to participants](#). The email should briefly summarize the speaker's story and define the question of the week. Allow the speaker to review and approve the way that you describe their story in the email before sending it to all student participants. Once the speaker approves, the program manager will email the participants the day before the discussion. For a speaker to be successful in the D + D session itself, they should review [the speaker tips and tricks](#) before attending.

Event Logistics

A benefit of the D + D program is that it can be implemented in-person or over a video call. While in-person discussions are better, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the program was successfully implemented over Zoom. Accordingly, logistics may be different depending on whether the discussion is in person or online. The most important logistics for the day of the discussion, in person, is to:

1. Ensure that catering* is ready to go!
2. Send out a reminder to participants about the topic of discussion, time, and place.
3. Establish five minutes at the beginning of every discussion to check in with a quick icebreaker question to re-establish a sense of community.
4. Provide additional resources for a conversation (optional) to give participants material to draw from in the conversation.
5. Make sure that student facilitators are properly prepared to lead the conversation.

*In-person sessions can include, snacks, refreshments, etc. that would require additional planning

Sample Timeline

For centers or clubs interested in implementing this program, displayed on the next page is a sample timeline that the Beeck Center uses to coordinate planning for the D + D dialogue series over a semester **(10-week program)**.

	PROGRAM MANAGER	STUDENT FACILITATOR(S)
PRE-PROGRAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Create + adjust Intro to D+D Presentation and Facilitation Training Presentation 2) Send out applications for participating in D+D for external students. 	
WEEK 1 + 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Select student participants 2) Deliver introduction to Discern + Digest presentation 3) Deliver Facilitation Basic Presentation 4) Meet with first Student Facilitator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meet with Program Manager to identify and prepare a speaker for the following week 2) Go through a 1+1 overview of facilitating with Program Manager
WEEK 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Lead a prep call to discuss questions and facilitation techniques. 2) Co-lead the D+D session with a student facilitator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Co-lead a D+D session with the program manager 2) Prepare with a different student facilitator for the following week 3) Co-lead a facilitation call with the speaker
WEEK 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide general support to student facilitators 2) Facilitate the changing of student facilitators so that each student leader facilitates twice (over the next weeks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) New student co-leads a D+D session with the previous student facilitator 2) The new student facilitator prepares with a different student facilitator for the following week 3) Co-lead a facilitation call with the speaker
WEEK 4 PROCESSES REPEAT UNTIL WEEK 10		
WEEK 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Facilitate a feedback session for participants 2) Prepare closing remarks and ways for students that will not return to continue their journey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Participate as regular students in the feedback session

Sample timeline for Discern + Digest over 10 weeks

Considerations

Student participants completed several surveys about their experience throughout the series so that Beeck Center staff could measure its impact and improve the program for future cohorts. The main points of feedback included:

- Offering more nonverbal ways for more reserved participants to engage in the conversations
- Keeping topics more concrete so that participants can offer personal experiences to connect with the dialogue
- Inviting student speakers as the guest speaker
- Distributing resources before the conversations so that participants can be more prepared
- Utilizing breakout rooms on Zoom to allow for a “pair-share”
- Inviting more guest speakers from outside the Beeck Center
- Ensuring that the question for the conversation is clear and that the facilitators prepare a few more guiding questions to keep the conversation moving along

FAQS

Q: Adding D + D to my center seems like a lot of work on top of the programs that I’m already managing. Is it still possible to implement D + D?

R: This toolkit can be used however your organization sees fit. You can alter the program by having dialogues once a month, adjust the time to only be an hour, or even have a [one-off D + D event](#) using strategies detailed in this toolkit.

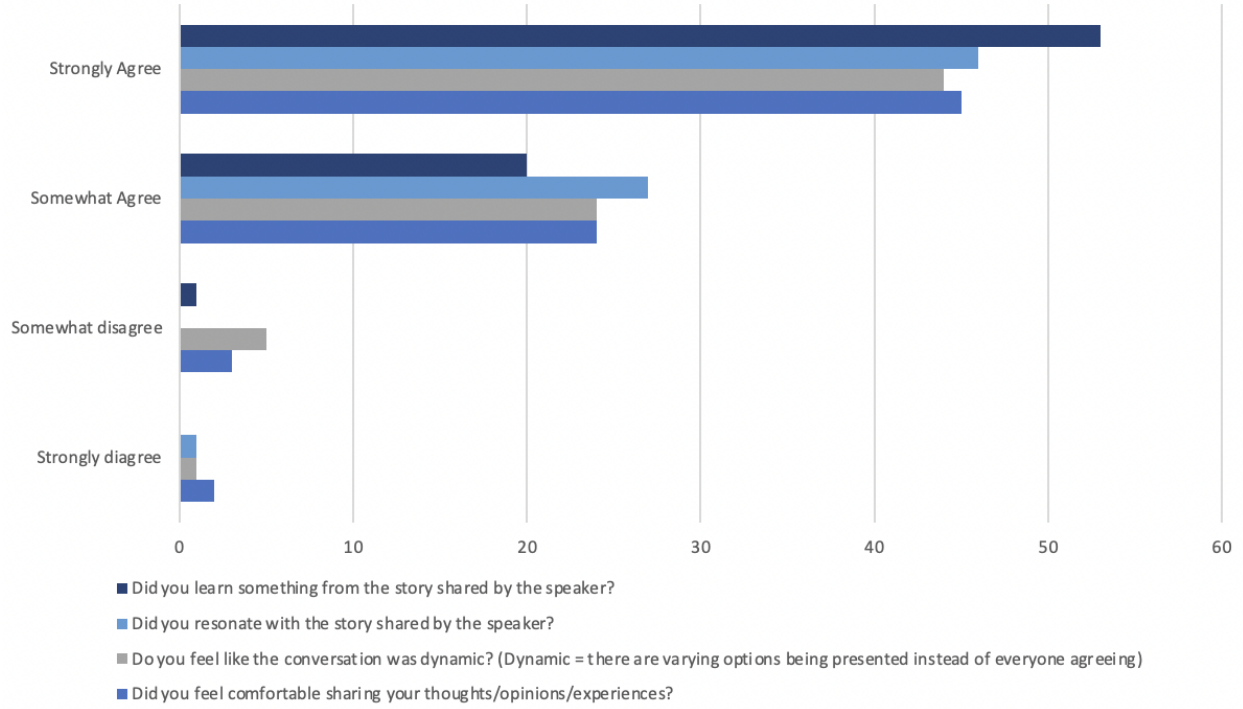
Q: What is the time commitment for managing this program?

R: At the Beeck Center, the program manager dedicates five hours per week to organizing the series, but your center can choose which aspects of the program you want to use based on the availability of your team.

Q: What is the most important part of having success with this program?

R: It is key to establish the expectations clearly at the beginning so that you have a strong basis from which you can build trust and a bond between participants. It is also very important that participants attend every session because absences can break the developing community of trust.

Feedback (Summer 2020)

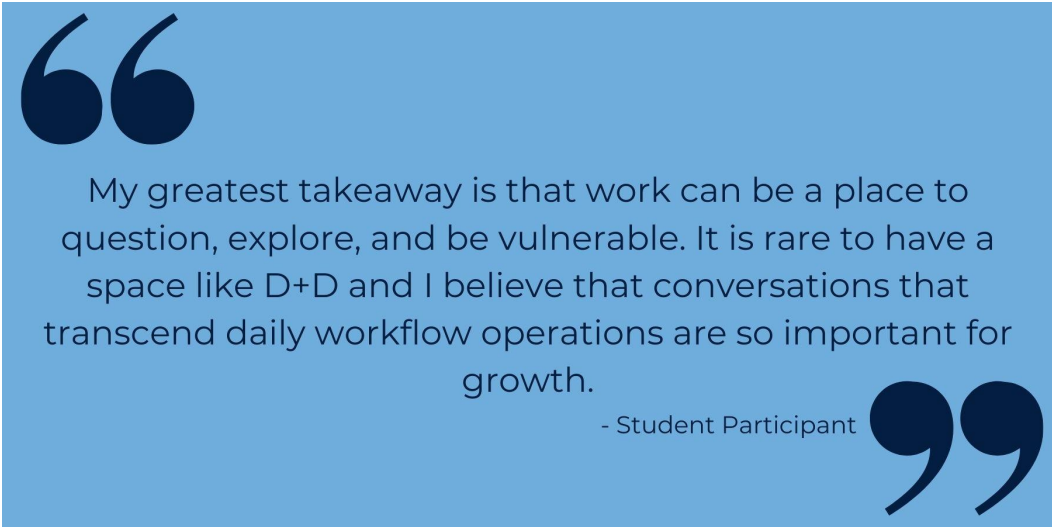


Over the summer of 2020, student participants were asked to complete a weekly survey assessing their experience in the dialogue series. The bar chart above demonstrates the degree to which student participants agree or disagree with the statements listed below the graphic.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the D + D Dialogue Series is a program that can add value to your workspace and that will provide participants with the opportunity to reflect profoundly on the work that they do. Implementing this program according to this toolkit will give participants facilitation skills that they can use beyond their involvement in the program, and the student participants will also gain discernment and reflection skills that are instrumental to meaningful work. Your job as the program manager will be to properly prepare the program to be a success by mastering logistics, being skilled in leading deep discussions, and coordinating all communication between student participants and staff.

We provide this tool on behalf of the Beeck Center with the hope that the D + D program can positively impact individuals beyond our center. Thank you for taking the time to equip yourself with the necessary tools to carry out this program successfully. If you'd like to learn more about the impact that this student has on participants and guest speakers, please email the [Beeck Center](#). For more about the program's impact, please read some of the testimonials below.



“
My greatest takeaway is that work can be a place to question, explore, and be vulnerable. It is rare to have a space like D+D and I believe that conversations that transcend daily workflow operations are so important for growth.
”
- Student Participant

Quoted testimonial from Discern + Digest participant

Testimonials

Feedback from Guest Speakers

“

“Students came across as authentic, and the discussion wasn’t about finding the ‘right’ answer but rather identifying more questions and exploring various perspectives and approaches to the topic. This experience left me with more to think about myself. It left me feeling hopeful and grateful . . . I appreciated how students were comfortable taking their time to think and reflect.

- Alina Liao (Founder of Zenit Journals)

”

Quoted testimonial from Discern + Digest participant

“

“I gained so much from the conversation that day and was grateful to connect with students in a meaningful way, beyond standard work conversation. It gave me a new sense of community in a time when it was needed the most. I’m thankful to the students for being so engaging and thoughtful in our conversation.”

- Molly Porter (Beeck Center Admin Manager)

”

Quoted testimonial from Discern + Digest participant

“

“I was really impressed with the honest - and vulnerable - reflections from all of the students and their ability to be so open with each other. Also, it was a new experience (in our busy, virtual world) to hold the silence for so long in between comments, so that really stuck with me, too.”

- Andrea McGrath (Beeck Fair Finance Lead)

”

Quoted testimonial from Discern + Digest participant

Feedback from Student Participants

“

“I had always doubted my public speaking skills, and D+D presented itself as a powerful space to practice, expand, and learn from others on the role of being a facilitator. Volunteering to be a facilitator for any kind of meeting/activity would have never been on my radar before I joined the Beeck Center, and I’m grateful that I got fruitful guidance before I facilitated for the first time. Since then, I’ve noticed myself speaking up more in virtual meetings and guiding conversations in a meaningful manner--facilitating for D+D definitely helped me set the stage for my growth in public speaking.”

- Angela Guo (Student Analyst, UNC '21)

”

Quoted feedback from Discern + Digest participant

“

“After each D+D, I felt enlightened and empowered to conquer professional and personal life using the new knowledge. Going through the process with the speaker and running through questions helps strengthen your own experiences and values as well as strengthening the conversation.”

- Hayley Pontia (Student Analyst, Georgetown '21)

”

Quoted feedback from Discern + Digest participant

Appendix

1. Email Templates
 - a. [Orienting speakers email templates](#)
2. Sample facilitation meeting with speaker*
 - a. [Conversation with Heather](#)
3. Sample 90 minute discussion*
 - a. [Conversation with Katya](#)
4. Google Slide Presentations
 - a. [Introduction to D + D Presentation](#)
 - b. [Facilitation Training Presentation](#)
5. Online resources
 - a. [Virtual Facilitation Guide](#)
6. [Resource folder](#)

*These conversations are shared with the consent of the individuals featured in the videos

Acknowledgments

Countless individuals supported the development of this toolkit: from ideation to incubation, and finally to scale.

Specifically, I'd like to thank Nate Wong and Matthew Fortier for co-developing this program in the Spring of 2019. Without their vision, this program would not have had the impact it has two years later. I also want to thank Franchesca Rybar for providing guidance and feedback on the Toolkit throughout its development.

I am grateful to the student analysts from 2019 - 2021 who pioneered the space and provided feedback for the Beeck Center to use in improving the program. I also want to thank all the individuals and organizations that provided suggestions in making this toolkit easy-to-use including the Center for Social Justice, Campus Ministry, the Center for Student Engagement, and CNDLS.

Lastly, a special thanks to the CALL and Nomadic Theater for implementing the Discern + Digest program into their organizations. And thank you to future organizations that will carry on the impact of Discern + Digest!