

Dialogue, Power and Leadership
Abstract

The term dialogue has widely been used in discussions on management and leadership for several decades. However, the use of the term has often been ambiguous, resulting in multiple and even conflicting notions. This also has important implications for the use of dialogue in organisations. One main area of confusion is power relations and especially the role of the manager or the leader in dialogical discussions. This presentation outlines a philosophical elucidation of power relations and leadership in dialogue. It builds on John Dewey's philosophy of experience and Michel Foucault's power analytics. On the one hand, Dewey's philosophy helps to conceptualise dialogue as a learning process based on shared human experiences in the spirit of a democratic way of life. On the other hand, Foucault's notion of power relations helps to clarify the type of power required in dialogue and gives ideas for what good leadership in dialogue means.