

Cultivating Creativity and Self-reflective Thinking Through Dialogic Teacher Education

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A new program of teacher training in a dialogical spirit in order to prepare them towards working in the field of philosophy with children combines cultivating creativity and self-reflective thinking had been operated as a part of cooperation between the academia and the education system in Israel. This article describes the program that is a part of their practice towards co-operation between academia and schools as a part of PDS (professional development schools) partnership. The program fosters creativity and self-reflective thinking in schools and teacher training, and offers dialogical methods through the philosophy of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and Paulo Freire. The program encourages adopting principles proposed by Buber (1947; 1957; 1959), who perceived education as a dialogue among people whose humanity is fully manifested in its reciprocity. This is an unequivocal stance, maintaining that neither skillful technique nor exciting contents can replace the experience of the spontaneous, authentic concrete presence of the educator's personality. The dialogic dimension of the program draws its significance from the principle of responsibility, as expressed by Emmanuel Levinas (2003). It is based on the idea that the human being, as a speaking subject, does not place himself/herself in the center, but turns to the other. This committed attitude of the other must be expressed in education action, in clothing the naked and feeding the hungry as expressed by Freire (1970; 1973). These principles implemented in teacher education and teacher training requires active listening, a capacity to be response-able to environment in which teachers are situated and it seeks to uncover assumptions, reflect on concepts in use and assist the new teacher to be involve in a philosophical inquiry, as well as situating self-understanding in the context of philosophy of education.

Keywords: dialogue, dialogic philosophy, teacher education, philosophy of education, philosophy with children, self-reflective thinking

Introduction

A teacher education program in the spirit of dialogic education began to operate in Israeli high school (grades seven to 12) during the 2008 to 2009 school year. Entitled, dialogue with the secondary school: A unique practical experience for exceptional teacher education students, this program is being advanced as a cooperative academia—school venture within the PDS (professional development schools) framework in order to cultivate cultivating creativity and self-reflective thinking through philosophy with children and philosophy of education.

This program seeks to advance establishment of a broad dialogic culture in the teacher education program as a way to encourage creativity and self-reflective thinking. It does so by emphasizing two dialogic

dimensions—dialogic organization and the dialogic classroom, via five principles denoted by Isaacs (1999): respect, listen, suspend judgment, free yourself and communicate one's reasoning process.

This program also integrates principles elucidated by Buber (1957) in *I and Thou* in two primary domains: dialogic organization involves enabling teacher education students to extend their knowledge and understanding of educational philosophies of different, often oppositional educational systems; and dialogic classroom prepares the student for later field-based experience and discipline-oriented teaching in a way that combines dialogical principles in teaching, and also in relations with pupils. These two dimensions draw upon as well as develop the student's self-reflective and creativity capacities.

Integration of such a dialogic culture also seeks to support pre-induction teachers in their experiencing of the educational system and equip them with the professional tools that will assist them to develop their own dialogical skills as teachers and staff members and work with those tools in philosophy with children. In addition, it will enhance a dialogic culture in their classroom and school.

This paper seeks to contribute to the discussion combining philosophy in the field of teacher education and especially to the possible contribution of dialogue to the professional development of new teachers. The argument is advanced, initially, by presenting the philosophical and other assumptions underlying the program. This is followed by a more focused analysis of how this conceptualization is applied in this experimental teacher education program.

Foundations and Relevance of Dialogic Philosophy for Teacher Education

Dialogue is an integral consideration in central approaches of humanistic education. The essence of the dialogic is understood to lie in a person's relationship to himself/herself, as well as to others, as free, autonomous subjects involved, consciously, in shaping one's own character and world. Developing the dialogic in an educational setting, formal or informal, requires learning to draw upon one's reflective, logical, autonomous, critical, ethical and creative aspects of consciousness. Underlying such efforts in this dialogic teacher education program is the process of addressing a central question: How and in what manner should one be a person? Accordingly, the main derivative question addressed by students in such a program asks: How and in what manner should one be a dialogic educator functioning as a part of the educational system?

The most familiar connection to the concept of dialogue lies in the philosophy of Socrates and Plato, from the days of classical Athens. Socrates (1947; 1957; 1959; as cited in Burbules, 2005, p. 193) self-proclaimed role as a gadfly, the non-conforming anti-authoritarian who speaks truth to power, meshes perfectly with the self-image of the critic.

The dialogic philosophy included in the teacher education program examined here also builds upon the thinking of Martin Buber, in regard to conventional education; Emmanuel Levinas (2003), in regard to special education; Hans Gadamer, in regard to dialogue in the classroom; and Freire (1970), in regard to the emancipatory dialogue of the teacher with him/herself, pupils and the community.

The Socratic dialogic method was applied practically in the previous century by Nelson (1949), who developed a philosophy of education that focuses on the self-directed learner. Nelson's (1949) system was based on a learning-teaching process in which learners accumulate knowledge through developing their capacities to gain insight and understanding from daily life experiences, and it demanded creativity in analysis and self-reflective skills.

Referred to by Nelson (1949) as cooperative group dialogue, this process takes place as learners deal with

a philosophic question related to the realities of life in their classroom or school/system. An external moderator facilitates this conversation, and his/her role is to insure that dialogue takes place, without interfering with exchanges between participants or impose limitations on the substance of their self-directed inquiry¹ (Saran & Neisser, 2004, pp. 1-2).

In 1922, Nelson integrated theory and practice when he established a boarding school, the Walkenuhle, together with an academy for adult education, known as the PPA (Philosophical-Political Academy). His goal in doing so was to examine his dialogic ideas in situations taken from learners' everyday lives. Teachers in both institutions employed the Socratic dialogic methods when analyzing situations in their everyday professional lives.

Different from the Platonic approach to Socratic dialogue that relates to an interpersonal discussion, Nelson (1949) emphasized the importance and power of dialogue in group learning. In his view, each group member has the opportunity to serve as a "midwife" during the process of developing ideas. The aim in this dialogic process is to advance an idea from "birth" to educational practice. Here, Nelson accepted the stance that, in principle, through consensus the group is able to identify the truth.

Heckmann (1981), Nelson's student, extended some of his teacher's dialogic ideas into the domain of teacher education in Germany following World War II. His ideas developed a tradition of Socratic dialogue in Germany and Holland. *Das sokratische Gespräch*, published by Heckmann in 1981 presented six pedagogical tools essential in this process, as has proved to be the case in the extensive application of this method in Germany, Holland and England.

The following four components of the method are involved in dialogue in group learning, including in teacher education:

(1) Importance of producing results. Ultimately, this process involves answering the philosophic question posed by eliciting the truth about the nature of worldviews regarding tolerance, freedom, justice and responsibility;

(2) Importance of participation in process. To be active in the cooperative process involves seeking answers to questions and developing mutual understanding of others. This process involves the following: members share their concrete experiences; the group selects some from among these experiences for detailed investigation; and active participation in the examination process;

(3) Importance of enriching an individual's deep understanding. The approach aims to enrich an individual's understandings and insights as the dialectical process advances in a manner that allows participants to grasp the moral complexities of everyday life;

(4) Importance of dialogue as a practice in shaping educational life. To achieve, via dialogue, greater clarity regarding what is and is not an act guided by educational thought, as well as one that advances participants' confidence in the dialogic process as a means to arriving at conclusions the desired approach to an educational/educative life.

Nelson and Heckmann understood that it might not be possible for participants to achieve unequivocal even authoritative results via the dialogic group process. However, this should not be disappointing. This is especially the case in teacher education programs, because the group learning process can lead to learning about educational experiences in everyday school life and enrich the novice teacher intellectually.

¹ The two institutions were closed in 1933 by the order of the government. A majority of the students came to oppose the Nazis. One of the PPA teachers, Suzanne Miller, a historian of Germany, wrote about the importance of Socratic dialogic practice. The PPA renewed its activities in 1949, however this was not the case for The Walkenuhle.

Here, the distinction offered by Alro and Skovsmose (2004, p. 15) in regard to the nature of dialogue and learning in mathematics education is important, as the authors distinguished between a process in which there is a discussion, or the “act-of-talking” and the “act-of-dialogue”. The latter involves investigation, risk-taking and preservation of equality. Furthermore, they remind us that the dialogic process is collective, facilitates critique, and so serves to achieve meaningful learning.

During the 20th century, the dialogic philosophy was associated more than all others with its most prominent advocates, such as Buber (1947; 1957; 1959), Emmanuel Levinas (2003), along with Paulo Freire’s (1970) critical pedagogy, the humanistic psychology propounded by Carl Rogers (1969), Nel Noddings’s (1984) pedagogy of care and concern, and even the integrative perspective of Georg Gadamer’s (1975) hermeneutics (Aloni, 2008, p. 7).

Expansion and Constriction of Dialogical Approaches in Education

The concept of the dialogic has become quite challenging as there has been both a growing desire for, as well as, erosion of the dialogic in the last several years. The use of the dialogic has become important in teacher education, in general, and higher education institutions, particularly in their connecting to and collaborating with the field. Indeed, the relationship between academia and the surrounding environment has changed markedly over the last two decades. Massification and diversification of the higher education system, economic globalization, and novel modes of knowledge production, new professional requirements and the establishment of new vocational higher education systems in many countries have challenged higher education institutions to develop new forms of collaboration with working life (Tynjälä, Välimaa, & Sarja, 2003).

In writing about Freirian dialogue, Gover (2008, pp. 195-196) stated that,

Following Wittgenstein, we can say that the dialogic is one of those concepts with magical powers; that is, it is a concept that requires one to be as clear as possible about its meaning lest one impair oneself and hinder your dialogic partner. This is all so much more the case when you or your dialogic partner was educators. After all, without conceptual analysis, would it not be more exciting to adopt such a fuzzy path as dialogue, which likes such other magical concepts as autonomy, reflection and self-discipline can invite acting in ways that seem to be so clear and desirable for everyone, especially for educators... The discussion of dialogue in education is more complicated. Indeed, we might ask, what is the relationship between dialogue and education? After all, the teacher is the one who knows the material that has to be studied and the pupil is assumed to be lacking knowledge. What is there to dialogue about? The teacher teaches the pupil. And, as he/she matures and knows more, then we will see if he/she is interested in dialogue and in what manner. Now, if you insist and still want to undertake an educational dialogue, then what do you mean by this? Does this mean to enable the pupil to ask questions and answer patiently, while taking into consideration his/her abilities and his/her views? Or, perhaps to guide the pupil to discover the knowledge desired by himself/herself? Or, more far reaching, to determine through discussion with the pupil the desired knowledge that he/she will study? Or, even further, to teach the pupil via discussion only what he/she wants to study?

Further, in advancing an initial mapping of monologic and dialogic paradigms, Wegerif (2008, p. 274) stated the criticism of the monologic paradigm as follows:

The monologist overlooks the fact that knowledge is never independent of social, historical and biological contexts that give it meaning. One aspect of the contextual background required to interpret knowledge claims is their position within conversations including what could be described as the long-term conversations of a culture.

“Dialogue in Education”: Expansive and Reductive Trends

In spite of the difficulties involved in defining the “dialogic in education”, we can point to a number of

trends related to this concept. An expansionary trend seeks to rely primarily on post-modernist, anti-authoritarian trends in its opposition to hierarchies and dichotomies in education. This trend is very inclusive and relates dialogue to such domains as inter-personal communication, non-violent communication, inter-personal respect, encouragement of creativity and strengthening school-community collaboration.

The second trend is reductive in nature, as it is concerned solely with defining, quite narrowly, the difference between dialogue and authoritarian approaches. This approach does not question school hierarchies and seeks to establish criteria that will shift philosophic dialogue from the theoretical to the methodological domain that can be applied in educational practice. Such approaches attempt to define the desired form of dialogue among teacher and pupil, lesson planning and ways of conducting dialogic teaching-learning processes. Furthermore, this trend seeks to encourage and advance dialogue as a means to advance work in organizational terms in the classroom and educational system by applying clear criteria defined in advance. Proponents of this trend have also defined criteria that could be applied in teacher education. For example, development of the new teacher's empathy and flexibility during teacher training that enable him/her to focus on developing dialogically-oriented lessons.

Nicholas C. Burbules is a leading proponent of the reductivist approach. In his book, *Dialogue in Teaching, Theory and Practice*, Burbules (1993) proposed a limited view of the use of dialogue as a type of pedagogical communicative relations. In doing so, Burbules claimed that there are certain types of interactions that can be referred to as "dialogical", and to which there are different approaches that are appropriate to different styles of teaching, pupil learning, and fields of knowledge and that when applied can be improved in practice.

At the beginning of the book, Burbules (1993) presented his disagreement with many who discussed dialogue in terms of what is referred to as "Socratic dialogue". He claimed that this concept can include a long list of elements and is not, in practice, a "method" but rather a dialogic approach that talented teachers might decide to adopt in certain pedagogical situations. Indeed, Socrates often referred to dialogue, as if it was based on a process of an individual's personal dialectics.

Stating the view that Socrates himself was not consistently a Socratic teacher, the approach adopted by Burbules (1993) assumed that dialogue is more a form of praxis than of techne. Yet, being a successful participant in a dialogue does require learning through practice. And, in his writing on dialogue in education as well as in his article *Dialogues beyond responsibility* (with Susanne Rise), Burbules and Rise's (1991) has discussed the possibilities of dialogue among different, foreign and even hostile cultural communities that seek productive dynamics.

Such dynamics are characterized, in Burbules and Rise's (1991) views, by attaining consensus or agreement about consequences from the facts, beliefs and interpretations. In turn, this can lead to meaningful cooperation, attaining partial understanding or accepting the legitimacy of certain views that facilitate continuation of productive dialogue, even in the face of real differences or remaining differences in opinion. Often the identify boundaries of the sides open and participants become more flexible, as they attain broader knowledge about the other, greater insight into themselves through gaining the other's perspective and development of their capacities for social, inter-personal, inter-cultural and political communication (Burbules & Rise, 1991).

Five Elements of Classroom and Organizational Dialogue

Continuing directly on from Burbules, Isaacs (1999) defined the following five elements necessary for

dialogue:

(1) Respect—assume that you are among equals and that they are legitimate and important to the learning process, regardless of whether or not you agree with them;

(2) Listen—listen in order to understand and learn, not for correctness. Be aware of your own listening to others. Do this by being aware of “mental models” and obstacles that get in the way of what is being said and hear. Do not listen in order to respond or advocate, listen to understand;

(3) Suspend judgment—be aware of assumptions and certainties and learn to hold them apart or place them to the side without feeling compulsion to act upon them;

(4) Free yourself—balance inquiry and advocacy. Free yourself up from a rigid mindset. In inquiry, seek clarification and a deeper level of understanding, not the exposure of weakness;

(5) Communicate your reasoning process—talk about your assumptions and how you arrived at what you believe. Seek out the data on which assumptions are based (your own and others).

In regard to organizational dialogue, Slotte (2004) proposed adopting dialogue as a way of strengthening organizational intelligence. In doing so, he based himself on Buber (1957) and Bohm (1992; 1996), a physicist who employed the dialogic approach in his scientific work, as well as Isaacs (1999) and Freire (1970; 1973). Slotte (2004) argued that dialogue is a form of philosophic work that can be internalized in an organizational culture and employed in such organizational activities as: daily meetings, developmental discussions, work-related meetings, problem-solving, developing organizational strategies, leadership and developing an organization’s value directions. His research provides examples from the daily life of leaders, organizations and employees, and he found that staffs enjoyed the advantages achieved through such philosophical dialogic endeavors. Also, dialogue embedded in the organizational culture improved the sense of the communicative and work relations, as well as served as a resource for problem-solving and organizational trust.

In responding to the critique of the dangers of banal use of dialogue as a concept, Slotte (2004, p. 43) claimed that,

A simple but important lesson to be learned from such criticism is that dialogue, or any other change program, does not work if it is subordinated to the modes of thinking, communication and culture that dialogue is aimed at in the first place. In such situations, dialogue becomes a mere “buzz word” in the service of the forces that real dialogue challenges. This can happen when, for example, the goal of a dialogue is determined in advance. Then, strong pressure is exerted to reach the goal, and, as a result, authentic dialogue, creativity, surprise and joint investigation disappear. If dialogue and dialogical methods merely are incorporated in organizations, in conflict situations and classroom without questioning the dominating views on communication, then learning, thinking together and interaction in dialogue will only become a means to enhance the current practices that we wish to change. This is a core reason why a philosophy of dialogue is needed.

Slotte (2004), as noted, drew heavily from Bohm’s (1996) work, as well as from Senge (1994, p. 43):

Dialogue is not merely a set of techniques for improving organizations, enhancing communications, building consensus or solving problems. It is based on the principle that conception and implementation are intimately linked, with a core of common meaning. During the dialogue process, people learn how to think together—not just in the sense of analyzing a shared problem or creating new pieces of shared knowledge, but in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility, in which the thoughts, emotions, and resulting actions belong not to one individual, but all of them together.

Slotte (2004) attempted to create a “mix”, in his words, combing the “power” of each of the approaches he presented, as follows,

The power of the Bohmian inspired dialogue methods lies in the enhancement of thinking and communication skills that allows individuals to see systemic complexity as well as how attitudes and positions taken in a dialogue affect the whole group. The power of Nelsonian dialogue is the concentrated focus on a given topic and the analytical approach. The power of Buberian dialogue lies in the creation of a meaningful relation between individuals, a meaningful human system. (p. 43)

Slotte's (2004) approach to dialogue as an organizational tool is expansive. On the one hand, he assumed that it is not certain that leadership, an agenda or decision-making will emerge in the process. On the other hand, criteria similar to the process supported by Isaacs (1999) can be employed: listening, organizational investigation, airing of opposing perspectives advances thinking, rejection of prejudgment, refraining from generalizing, respect for others and preservation of organizational balances.

The Program: Dialogic Teacher Education

Improving the dialogic culture between the new teacher and the school setting/educational system, and vice-versa, is the goal of this program. In doing so, the program also seeks to contribute to the development of the new teacher as a dialogic person and as one with skills to work in a small group setting in philosophy with children. Such a person is a listener who relates in a warm manner, is inclusive, attentive and respectful of his/her pupils, colleagues and the community of inquiry.

The fundamental assumption of the program is that changes are needed in two main dimensions of teacher education programs: First, expansion of the student-teachers' organizational orientation, to be achieved by employing "organizational dialogue", and second, inclusion of "classroom dialogue" in teaching practice.

Organizational Dialogue

The dialogic program integrates the training of the school-based teacher education staff, including the school leadership, key staff members, discipline coordinators and classroom teachers, along with the student-teachers in the need for adopting a dialogic culture as a model of community of learners and a community of acceptance. Such a culture is characterized by openness, cooperative discourse and acceptance of critique. Such a process can also lead to reducing alienation often directed to and felt by the student-teachers, on the one hand, and instilling openness to the needs of the system in the student-teachers, on the other hand.

This initial stage of induction to the dialogic culture seeks to establish commitment to dialogue by the school-based staff and the student-teachers, as a shared act of inquiry and meaning-making. By employing creativity and dialogue, participants explore the nature of reciprocity and empowerment gained through socially transformative praxis and the constructivist view of knowledge. This stage also emphasizes the pedagogical view that seeks to integrate theory and practice in work-based learning. Here, the relationship between higher education and working life can be examined from at least four different perspectives: (1) student learning and the development of expertise; (2) educational institutions and staff; (3) working life of organizations and employers; and (4) society and the system of education. These perspectives can lead to self-reflection by all those involved in educational actions.

Dialogic teacher education also involves revealing, in an ongoing and reflexive manner, yet-to-be-investigated forms of discourse familiar to and held strongly by teacher education students, in regard to themselves, the school system and their future role in the educational system. This process also enables school-based teacher-educators to examine their own views of student-teachers and the teaching profession, as well as views of the school administration towards teachers-to-be and the system of teacher education.

This process takes place in a workshop setting, guided by the thoughts of Buber (1984, as cited in Aloni, 2005, p. 483) who claimed that,

Cultivation practice develops knowledge that frees the young from the anxiety and disappointment that can flourish in an unreliable world. In doing so, they come to believe that there is human truth, truth about human existence. Instead of opposition to educational acts, a wonderful event occurs in such an atmosphere: The learner comes to accept the educator as a person, someone to be trusted. He/she feels that the educator is not there to do something to him/her, but rather to take part in his/her life.

The foundations of work in the workshop, as well as throughout the program, can be found in essential dialogic constructs elaborated upon in the philosophies of Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. For Buber, encounter (*Begegnung*) has significance beyond co-presence and individual growth. He looked for ways in which people could engage with one another fully to meet themselves. The basic fact of human existence was not the individual or the collective as such, but rather for Buber—"Man with man".

Principles of the Buberian dialogic method and his conception of dialogic encounters are especially relevant today, in regard to the possibilities of counter-education, and can become, if developed, an avenue for enriching a new language of critical pedagogy. For example: (1) the relation to the "Thou" is immediate; (2) there is no terminology between "I" and "Thou", no politically-correct language or pseudo-police, no preconception and no imagination, and memory itself changes, since it plunges from singularity into the whole; (3) there is no purpose between "I" and "Thou", no greed and no expectations; (4) longing itself changes since it changes from dream into appearance; and (5) only where all means and objectifications do not exist can encounter happen.

According to Buber (1962), the authentic solution to existential loneliness is misframed as being dependent on the choice between collectivism and individualism. In Buber's (1962) view, we should be liberated from this Kierkegaardian belief in favor of a third option—the interpersonal path residing in the bond between one person and another. This alternative lies "beyond the subjective, out of the domicile of the objective, on a path along a narrow ridge along which you and I meet, in the in-between" (Buber, 1962, p. 112).

Buber (1962) argued that the real in these thoughts is an extension of the notion of relation beyond inter-human relations to the whole of existence. The whole of existence is determined by the kind of relations, in his opinion; the "I" develops with both human and material entities. "I" can live through "I"—It relations if "I" imagine life to be a destiny imposed upon me or an aimless accident. But, "I" can also live through dialogical relations and conceive of life as a search for answers. To do so means that "I" have to respond, genuinely, to the actualities in the situation, not through plans to realize other aims. Doing so assumes self-responsibility, instead of self-realization, or in short, response.

The dialogic dimension relates, as well, to the principle of responsibility, as enunciated by Emmanuel Levinas (2003). In his view, as a speaking subject, a person does not place himself/herself in the center, but turns to the other. This attitude of commitment to the other must also be expressed in action. This approach can be implemented in the dialogic program in general as well as in the context of teacher education for special education and in working with pupils with special needs.

Buber (1947; 1957; 1959) and Levinas's (2003) ideas, as well as, the philosophy of personal dialogue may be an instructive method, too, for such ethical inquiry as well as for defining the nature of personal responsibility. It is not a naive approach, but rather an existential and counter-educative engagement in an era

of disaffection, terror and unfamiliarity.

The cooperative learning process involving the student-teachers and teachers that takes place during the school year enables participants to engage in such dialogic exchanges in regard to the organizational nature of educating. Such a dialogic process builds a philosophic community that, as stated by Freire (1973), may stand in opposition to a static, lifeless, fossilized and synthetic reality that is classifiable and predictable. This new educator community can develop an activist dimension given that the dialogic can intensify the need for and value of activism. The hermeneutics of care, even love, can be expressed in the group's meetings; as modesty, not a sense of superiority, is required in this ongoing creative process. Hope, too, is integrated as participants come to understand one another's foibles, whether it be the student-teachers or the educator.

This process also involves participants in discussion of the educational philosophy of each particular school as well as that of the larger urban educational system, in contrast to other educational organizations. This enables the student-teachers to become familiar with them, raise questions, share doubts and engage in a dialogue guided by ethical concerns that, too, are taught in the program. The dialogic elements should be characterized by mutual openness, without taking an educational philosophy for granted or concern for the continuity of an organizational reality.

An additional substantive domain is the student-teachers' growing familiarity with the ways in which educational organizations function, from their structure and finances, internal and external actions with the community, as well as the intricacies of functioning amidst multiple constraints. This process requires as an open and expansive a dialogue as is possible between all participants, including members of the school's administrative staff. This includes examination of the school's written curricula, timetable, and budget and assessment methods. While sharing these materials is informative, such dialogue also demonstrates the staff's openness to engage in critique and their self-reflective capacities.

Student-teachers in the dialogic teacher education program also visit and observe other educational organizations that represent other, even oppositional, educational/organizational philosophies; for example, private schools, democratic or anthroposophic schools, home-schooling, religious schools and so forth. Such visits advance comparisons, critique and examination of various systems of principles and values all of which enable student-teachers to understand the philosophic and organizational debates between these different educational systems. Sanctioning critical viewing establishes the legitimacy needed for conducting open discussion of philosophic issues, fosters doubt in regard to the realm of the taken-for-granted in educational practice, as well as in the organizational and the pedagogical realms. The fundamental philosophical assumptions of these organizations' educational activities are examined thoroughly and demonstrate the organization's openness to discussion with students.

Organizational dialogue is undertaken through mutual obligation acted upon by the educational organization and the higher education institution. For its part, the latter assigns a teacher educator who participates with the students and the school-based teacher educators by conducting discussions, workshops, visitations, observations and facilitates weekly discussions among all of the persons involved. Furthermore, the new program also challenges higher education departments to develop pedagogical and educational thinking and practices. The program examines the pedagogical aspects of increased interaction with and collaboration taking place between higher education and working life, and identifies as well as advances ways to confront challenges posed for research on higher education.

Classroom Dialogue

Learning in the school-based student group employs Isaacs' (1999) five principles. Here, the teacher education students and the facilitator from academia function as a community of inquiry, in a manner similar to the goals Lipman (1991) presented in his "philosophy for children"; that is, the group is involved in intellectual inquiry that also strengthens individuals' abilities to distinguish and create relations among phenomena.

Dialogue within the community of inquiry enables participants to transgress discourse boundaries. In doing so, a fundamental operating principle is to refrain from the subject becoming a discussion topic. This requires that participants' apply self-awareness during the fast paced exchanges of conversation and action.

Overall, the emphasis is not on the accumulation of knowledge studied, but rather on enriching each individual's connection to understanding. Rather than stress ownership of knowledge, such connections are inclusive of the entirety of human experience and moral responsibility throughout history. Such learning seeks to build deep respect for the individual.

Dialogic freedom is the centerpiece of the community of inquiry. Doing so enables participants to expand their degrees of freedom, avoid intellectual traps and enjoy renewal. Juxtaposed to institutionally-driven goals, this process requires self-motivation and drive.

The dialogic approach exercised in the community of inquiry makes possible transmigration beyond hermetic, deterministic and linear time to a temporal concept in which the past is neither cyclical nor overcome, but rather continues to thrive and be reinterpreted. Such a process of re-biographization emerges from maximizing opportunities that arise through group learning for renewal via a new question or new response. Such a process is made possible when there is intense and ongoing concern to maintain the kind of quality communication that is possible in the group context. Here, the dialogic group applies the insights of the physicist Bohm (1996) who claimed that dialogue has the capacities to develop forceful and powerful capabilities in a group. Indeed, Bohm (1996) foresaw in the functioning of dialogic group hope for the solution of many human problems and a great opportunity for individual and social development.

Bohm (1992) dealt extensively with how meanings evolve in society. He compared the entirety of society to a sea of meanings. Thus, amidst this sea of opportunities for multiple meanings, we are involved in creating and casting out meanings that ultimately entrap us in nets of meanings that unify us and make oral discourse possible, but also in much more broad ways enable us to relate our meanings about the world within which we live. The room where we are sitting, the language we speak, the nation's borders, our values systems and the truths we discover about the world—all are products of what Bohm (1996) referred to as "thinking processes". Amidst this "sea of meanings", there are focal points that, on the one hand, enable us to exchange meanings and converse, yet on the other hand, they permit only certain types of thinking when focus points are frozen. Alternatively, openness to investigate the processes that shape the reality in which we live requires probing their nature and the manner in which they restrain us. Without such capacities our solutions will be, solely, partial and local, and we will be destined to repeat and live through the same crises that characterize human realities. It is such a context that Bohm (1996) referred to the "human viruses" or the patterns of meaning and thinking that reproduce themselves throughout the net and allow only certain types of action.

The moderator in dialogic teacher education groups is a fully engaged, committed participant, like other group members. However, when the ultimate goal emerges in the process, this teacher education program has a

goal and subject-matter. This requires much greater alignment by the moderator with the goal of preparation for teaching.

The goal of field-based experience for teacher education students is to map as broadly as possible the formal and informal elements of the educational system. Such familiarity develops during their once a week participation in a school setting. During this day, participants are involved in a variety of activities, including lectures, shadowing educators, conducting investigative observations, and planning and implementing an educational initiative in this setting or an immediate social setting, in order to solidify various elements of the students' views of the community and educational leadership.

The field experience includes integration of theoretical knowledge along with assuming leadership in the education, with the overarching goal of facilitating group as well as individual expression in a manner that advances the capacities and desires of each student. Accordingly, in the short run, planning is stressed over implementation.

The program underlines creativity and self-reflective as two main foundations of dialogue and mutual partnership as a part of PDS framework. The program combines the demand that students and teachers to change. Its basic philosophy is raising questions, legitimizing doubt and maintaining openness for discussions.

This work is conducted through self-reflection, as a tool of work (or method of discussion), and creativity—for example, in solving differences or gaps that are the result of differences in ideology or beliefs. Slotte (2004) argued that the need for new methods of democratic deliberation in public decision has triggered interest in philosophy as the practice of thinking about the most important matters in our lives, such as problems in the school system (Slotte, 2004, p. 43).

Slotte (2004) exemplified the importance of philosophy in discussing the concept of knowledge which he claimed is central to grand change programs. Dialogue can be characterized as a way to engage in such deep, structured and pragmatic philosophy without any prior knowledge of academic philosophy. Dialogue should promote creativity and can do so, if establishing dialogue as a goal is determined in advance. According to Slotte (2004, p. 43),

If dialogue and dialogical methods merely are incorporated in organizations, conflict situations, and the classroom without questioning the dominating views on communication learning, thinking together and interaction dialogue will only become a means to enhance the current practices that we wish to change.

Group learning outside the walls of the academic institution fosters building a community that is capable of integrating Lipman's (1991, pp. 241-243) principal stages of inquiry: proposing a text, setting an agenda, consolidating a community, implementation of exercises and discussion programs and encouraging continuous response. Lipman's (1991) proposals are supported by the principal intellectual traits and cognitive virtues identified by Sharp (1998, p. 209) as those needed in constructing dialogue in a community of inquiry. In her view, such a community of inquiry should be based, to a great degree, on care expressed by each participant for the growth of other participants and the logic of the discussion. Doing so facilitates openness and readiness to change positions and be changed, trust in others, willingness to accept others' thinking, autonomy and the self-esteem that evolve from the trust that each participant has in others and in the world.

Indeed, it may well be that a variety of characteristics can be developed through participation in a dialogic community of inquiry, including tolerance, consistency, overarching view, openness, self-correction, directed use of criteria and sensitivity in connecting with and respecting other participants as possible sources of new understandings. Learning and reinforcing these principles can be integrated into the students-teachers'

education experiences as school interns, principally in their discipline as secondary school educators.

Summary

This paper describes a new program in the spirit of dialogic teacher education that combines co-operation between academia and schools as part of PDS partnership. The program fosters creativity and self-reflective thinking in schools and teacher training and offers dialogical methods through the philosophy of Buber (1947; 1957; 1959), Emmanuel Levinas (2003) and Freire (1970; 1973).

The program encourages adopting principles proposed by Buber, who perceived education as a dialogue between people whose humanity is fully manifest in its reciprocity. This is an unequivocal stance, maintaining that neither skillful technique nor exciting content can replace the experience of the spontaneous, authentic and concrete presence of the educator's personality. Buber placed belief and experience at the center of the dialogic encounter. He perceived the human encounter to be all-important and was interested in the dialogic dimension in concrete situations. He called for the presence of the whole being and opposed any of the splintering that is all too often manifest in restricted approaches (psychoanalytical, sociological or historicist).

The dialogic dimension of the program, concerning special education, draws strongly upon the principle of responsibility, as expressed by Emmanuel Levinas (2003). It is based on the idea that the human being, as a speaking subject, does not place himself/herself in the center, but turns to the other. This attitude of commitment to the other must be expressed in educational action, in clothing the naked and feeding the hungry as expressed by Freire (1970; 1973).

This dialogical teacher education model, which incorporates a community of philosophical inquiry among the students, assumes that there is something to be gained by joint inquiry among the participants not just in terms of training but in terms of rigorous inquiry. Such inquiry is characterized by the community of inquiry undertaking critical, creative and caring thinking.

Acting upon these principles in a teacher education program requires active listening, the capacity to be responsible to the school environment in which teachers are working. In doing so, the program engages student-teachers in inquiry that seeks to uncover assumptions reflect upon concepts-in-use and assist the new teacher to be involved in a philosophical inquiry that situates self-understanding in the context of the philosophy of education.

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