ELABORATING "DIALOGUE" IN COMMUNITIES OF INQUIRY: ATTENTION TO DISCOURSE AS A METHOD FOR FACILITATING DIALOGUE ACROSS DIFFERENCE

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Abstract

In communities of inquiry, dialogue is central as both the means and the outcome of collective inquiry. Indeed, features of dialogue—including formulating and asking questions, developing hypotheses and explanations, and offering and requesting reasons—are often highlighted as playing a significant role in the quality of the dialogue that unfolds. We inquire further into the quality of dialogue by arguing that dialogue should enable the expansion of epistemic openness, rather than its contraction, and that this is especially important in multicultural communities of inquiry to acknowledge the cultural, perspectival, and experiential differences that exist alongside of similarities as resources for dialogue. The purpose of this article is to highlight two *discourse practices* that exemplify the nature of discourse as social practice and can be used in communities of inquiry. Attending to these discourse practices may enable teachers and students to reflect upon dialogue as it unfolds. First, we situate ourselves in multicultural classrooms in British Columbia, Canada. Then we articulate three principles of communities of inquiry. Next we describe and exemplify two discourse practices: *heteroglossic attunement* and *lexical awareness*. When attended to by teachers and students, 1) heteroglossic attunement enables teachers and students to begin to identify, reflect upon, and discuss the voices and perspectives that are drawn upon as participants inquire together and 2) lexical awareness enables teachers and students to begin to identify their attributions of thinking and feeling to social actors and to recognize how naming social actors positions them in an evolving set of social relations. Rather than a neutral medium of communication, social speech and dialogue is inherently value laden. Attending closely to the discourse that constitutes dialogue in a community of inquiry is a significant pedagogical tool for both teachers and students to expand epistemic openness and make visible learning as it unfolds.

Keywords: dialogue, communities of inquiry, epistemic openness

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Elaborando o "diálogo" nas comunidades de investigação: atenção ao discurso como um método para a facilitação do diálogo através da diferença

Resumo

Nas comunidades de investigação, o diálogo é tanto um método quanto um resultado da investigação coletiva. De fato, os aspectos do diálogo – incluindo, aí, a elaboração e a colocação de perguntas, o desenvolvimento de hipóteses e explicações, e a proposta e a demanda de razões – são, frequentemente, sublinhados como tendo um papel significativo na qualidade do desdobramento do diálogo. Nos questionamos, ainda, sobre a qualidade do diálogo, argumentando que o diálogo deveria permitir a expansão, mais do que a condensação, da abertura epistemológica, e que é especialmente importante, nas comunidades multiculturais de investigação, reconhecer as diferenças culturais, perspectivistas e experimentais que existem junto às similaridades como recursos para o diálogo. O propósito deste artigo é destacar duas *práticas discursivas* que exemplificam a natureza do discurso como uma prática social e que pode ser usada na comunidade de investigação. Atentar para essas práticas discursivas pode possibilitar professores e alunos a refletirem sobre os desdobramentos do diálogo. Primeiramente, situamo-nos em uma sala de aula multicultural da Colúmbia Britânica do Canadá. Articulamos três princípios da comunidade de investigação e, em seguida, descrevemos e exemplificamos duas práticas discursivas: *harmonia heteroglóssica* e *conhecimento lexical*. Quando atendidos por professores e estudantes, 1) a harmonia heteroglóssica permite professores e estudantes a começarem a identificar, refletir e discutir sobre as vozes e as perspectivas que são configuradas, uma vez que os participantes investigam juntos, e 2) o conhecimento lexical permite professores e estudantes a começarem a identificar suas atribuições de pensamento e de sentimento para os atores sociais e a reconhecerem e nomearem as posições dos atores sociais em relação a um conjunto de relações sociais. Mais do que um meio de comunicação neutra, o discurso social e o diálogo possuem valores inerentes agregados. Atentar cuidadosamente para o discurso que constitui o diálogo na comunidade de investigação é uma importante ferramenta pedagógica tanto para professores quanto para alunos expandirem sua abertura epistemológica e tornar visível a aprendizagem que se desenrola.

Palavras-chave: diálogo; comunidade de investigação; abertura epistemológica

Construyendo diálogo en comunidades de indagación: Atención al discurso como un método para facilitar el diálogo a través de la diferencia.

Resumen

En las comunidades el indagación el diálogo es central tanto en los medios como en los resultados de la indagación colectiva. De hecho, las características del

diálogo- incluyendo la formulación de preguntas, el desarrollo de hipótesis y explicaciones y dar y pedir razones- son a menudo destacados como elementos centrales que hacen a la calidad del diálogo que se despliega. Nosotros indagamos más sobre la calidad del dialogo con el argumento de que el dialogo debe permitir la expansión de la apertura epistémica, en lugar de su contracción y esto es especialmente importante en la comunidades de indagación multiculturales para reconocer las diferencias culturales, de perspectiva y de experiencias, junto con las similitudes existentes como recurso para el diálogo. El propósito de este artículo es poner de relieve dos prácticas discursivas para ejemplificar la naturaleza del discurso como práctica social y puede ser usado en comunidades de indagación. Tener en cuenta estas prácticas discursivas puede permitir a maestros y alumnos reflexionar sobre el diálogo a medida que se desarrolla. Primero, nos situamos en un salón de clase multicultural de la Columbia Británica en Canadá. Entonces articulamos tres principios de comunidades de indagación. Luego describimos y ejemplificamos dos prácticas discursivas: sintonía heteroglósica y conciencia léxica. Entonces, 1) la sintonía heteroglósica permite a los maestros y los estudiantes para comenzar a identificar, reflexionar y discutir las voces y perspectivas que se diseñan en los participantes de la indagación y 2) Conciencia léxica permite a los maestros y los estudiantes comenzar a identificar sus atribuciones de pensamiento y sentimiento de los actores sociales y reconocer cómo nombran las posiciones sociales dentro de un conjunto mayor. En lugar de un medio neutral de comunicación, el habla social y el diálogo están cargados de valores. Atender cuidadosamente al discurso que constituye al diálogo en una comunidad de indagación es una herramienta pedagógica importante para los maestros y los alumnos para una apertura epistémica y visibilizar el aprendizaje que se desarrolla.

Palabras clave: diálogo; comunidad de investigación; apertura epistemológica

ELABORATING "DIALOGUE" IN COMMUNITIES OF INQUIRY: ATTENTION TO DISCOURSE AS A METHOD FOR FACILITATING DIALOGUE ACROSS DIFFERENCE

Introduction

Dialogue is central to communities of inquiry as both the means and the outcome of collective inquiry. But what qualities are required for this dialogue to be considered a "good" dialogue from both the teachers' and students' perspectives? Lipman (2003) identified a number of dispositions and skills that ground critical, caring, and creative thinking, including supporting claims with evidence, developing explanatory hypotheses, building on the ideas of others, respecting others as persons, and seeking to clarify and elaborate concepts that are ill-defined. Further, and central for the joint thinking that constitutes communities of inquiry, is the role of judgment, which tends to follow inquiry as a mixture of "critical and creative judging" (p. 23). To continue to define "good dialogue," we borrow from Lipman's (2003) argument that "what makes good judgments good is their role in the shaping of *future* experience: They are judgments we can live with, the kind that enrich the lives we have yet to live" (emphasis in original, p. 23). Thus, when we consider "good dialogue," our attention is focused upon the role of dialogue in the shaping of future experience and in enriching the lives we have yet to live.

We see *difference* in communities of inquiry as a resource for generative future experiences and enriched social futures. Differences—including cultural, perspectival, and experiential differences—acknowledged and discussed, are significant as opportunities to attend, listen, and respond. Differences invite consideration of additional perspectives and, regardless of whether or not we change our own position, we come to know the world differently, we think differently about the world, and our own experience is transformed. In this paper, we define the human capacity to *think differently*, following Talero (2008) as epistemic openness, as "the way that conversation and meaningful dialogue can suddenly enhance the clarity of one's thoughts, or can even bring about significant changes in one's perspective" (p. 458). While human beings are *always already* open to being affected by living in the world with others, our openness changes under

different conditions (see, on affect, Vygotsky, 1987, 1998). In communities of inquiry, epistemic openness may be expanded or contracted. Although differences are often perceived as reasons for epistemic contraction, we argue that differences are both necessary and valued resources for critical, caring, and creative thinking and, hence, for communities of inquiry. Becoming more aware of, elaborating, and inquiring into discourse practices may help educators and students engage in dialogue that tends toward epistemic expansion, rather than contraction, which, in part, helps us define what makes a dialogue "good."

The purpose of this article is to take up Lipman's (2003) recommendation that it is helpful for educators to examine "some of the more significant, if elusive aspects of the logic of discourse" (p. 161) in order to become acquainted with the ways in which discourse may shape communities of inquiry. This article is divided into four sections. In the first section, we situate the discussion of "good" dialogue in the multicultural classrooms of British Columbia, Canada, our social and historical context. Here, we establish the importance of *difference* within dialogue. In the second section, we describe three principles of communities of inquiry (Lipman, 2003) that make up the contextual backdrop for elaborating dialogue through attention to discourse. In the third section, we examine dialogue as culturally situated and the role of the teacher in creating classroom communities that contribute to generative dialogue. The fourth section offers two discourse practices that have the potential to simultaneously expand epistemic openness and make learning visible. A brief summary and conclusion closes the article.

A Social and Historical Context for Communities of Inquiry

Canada's Multicultural Constitution was officially adopted by the federal government in 1971 and, since then, it has become a foundation for a multicultural framework in education to address the cultural diversity of a growing population (James, 2008). Yet it has not been without limitations. For example, educational programs were initiated that address issues related to race, ethnicity, and language while overlooking the shifting and contextual identities of students

based on social class, sexuality, gender, experiences, interests, and expectations. Consequently, other perspectives have been introduced over the years as better able to inform educational programs and to "more effectively respond to the issues, needs, and aspirations of *all* students" (p. 169). In British Columbia (BC), the Ministry of Education (2008) claimed to support diversity by teaching and "modeling understanding and respect for all persons in practice" (p. 5). However, critics argue that these multicultural policies, since inception, have neither adequately addressed the needs of minority students, nor enhanced intercultural understanding (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994), and need to incorporate inequity and disparities in power and privilege. Others go even further, suggesting that Canada's image of itself, as a cohesive multicultural nation, is not yet reality (Nabavi, 2011).

Recognizing that teacher education programs mirror the educational priorities of the society, Cummins (2014) inferred that "it is not a priority to ensure that teachers and school administrators have the knowledge base required to teach immigrant students effectively" (p. 13). Clearly, there is a need for more effective and authentic multicultural initiatives in Canadian classrooms and communities to recognize the cultural diversity of the students and teachers. Cummins (2001) argued, however, that even though teachers work within an institutional framework, we have choices in the way we structure classroom interactions and the messages we communicate to students. One way that we can structure classroom interactions is through the dialogic space created in communities of inquiry. Thus, increasing awareness of, elaborating further, and inquiring into how dialogue unfolds may enable schools and classrooms to become more culturally relevant for both teachers and students, sensitive to their experiences, and responsive to their needs and interests.

With North American classrooms becoming increasingly diverse in terms of ethnicity, social class, language and ability—but even more subtly heterogeneous in terms of individual experience, interest, motivation, and investment (Norton, 2013; Scrimsher & Tudge, 2003)—students are increasingly drawing from multiple

sources of diversity in their lives. Thus arise both a challenge and an opportunity for teachers as facilitators of communities of inquiry: how do we acknowledge this diversity as a resource? If Canada's multicultural policies neither effectively meet the needs of minority students, nor enhance intercultural understanding in schools (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994), and teacher education programs are not prioritizing ways to effectively teach and reach immigrant students (Cummins, 2014), how do communities of inquiry become "safe havens for diversity" (Turgeon, 2004, p. 105)?

Characteristics of Generative Communities of Inquiry

Lipman (2003) borrowed the phrase, *community of inquiry*, from Charles Sanders Peirce; Peirce had applied it to practitioners of scientific inquiry who, as a community, shared procedures and methods as they pursued common goals. It was Lipman who argued that:

> we can now speak of 'converting the classroom into a community of inquiry' in which students listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions. (p. 20)

Lipman was characterizing a particular kind of classroom interaction for teaching critical, creative, and caring thinking, and through which dialogue is the primary means and outcome of this engagement. He argued that "inquiry is generally social or communal in nature because it rests on a foundation of language" (p. 83), but also that not all communities are characterized by inquiry or dialogue. The quality of the dialogue is, in part, dependent upon qualities of the community. So while Lipman's characterization of communities of inquiry is clear, creating dialogue that reflects Lipman's description can be difficult. This difficulty may emerge, in particular, when the diversity in classrooms becomes a predominant feature and locating or creating common ground is challenging. Further, dialogue may actually fail to be effective unless the communities in which it takes place are characterized by specific qualities of affective and cognitive

significance.

In this section, we start with a basic definition of community as a group of people bound together by mutual interests, where each refers his or her actions to that of others for the maximal benefit of the group and where both participation and benefit are shared (Cam, 1995; Dewey, 1963). To this, and following a host of scholars, we emphasize the significance of difference broadly construed (Bakhtin, 1986, 1993; Bateson, 1969/1972; Young, 1986). In what follows, we elaborate three principles that may enable teachers and students to work toward the community of inquiry that Lipman described, and which, moreover, may contribute to generating the quality of dialogue that moves students and teachers towards epistemic openness. For each principle described, the teacher's role as facilitator of these principles is crucial in creating generative communities of inquiry.

First, good communities of inquiry are both supportive and cognitively engaging. This principle combines the features of caring and affective thinking (Lipman, 2003) and intersubjectivity, a shared focus of attention among all students and teachers that includes both affective and cognitive involvement in communication (Göncü, Abel, & Boshans, 2010). In terms of affective thinking, Lipman asserted that "[i]nstead of assuming that emotions are psychological storms that disrupt the clear daylight of reason, one can conceive of the emotions as themselves forms of judgment or, more broadly, forms of thought" (p. 266). Helping students interact and engage with each other in ways that build bonds between them, and thus build community, "may potentially have a more profound and enduring impact on their circumstances" (Mercer & Littleton, 2007, p. 68), above and beyond simply acquiring facts and concepts. Strengthening affective bonds and including emotions as forms of thought in communities of inquiry not only deepens and expands ways of knowing, but may also contribute to feelings of safety as noted earlier by Turgeon (2004). If the goal is for members of the community to risk sharing, challenging, and even transforming the ways in which they think, honoring affective thinking and creating a space for the expression of emotions is crucial. Vossoughi (2014) defined an "epistemically open

environment" as one in which students "could think through such ideas publically, without fear of punishment or ridicule" (p. 362).

This first principle of communities of inquiry addresses the challenge of building cognitive and affective ground with and between diverse members of a community. Teachers play a key role in this building. Students cannot be expected to "discover or infer this kind of important cultural knowledge for themselves or to live their social lives without it" (Mercer & Littleton, 2007, p. 68). Our interest is in creating possibilities for jointly constructed dialogue goals and meanings, however, small, fleeting, and emergent, amongst teacher and students in a particular community of inquiry. Both affective thinking and intersubjectivity are qualities that contribute to creating a meaningful community: a dynamic relatedness such that another person's actions can transform our own thoughts and feelings and "reveal these differently to us" (Talero, 2008, p. 461). In this way, intersubjectivity is a necessary, though not sufficient, enabling condition for the expansion of epistemic openness.

The second principle characterizing good communities of inquiry is the collective recognition of diversity and difference as a resource, on a broad spectrum, and actively honoring multiple voices and perspectives. Looking at diversity only in terms of differences related to ethnicity, race and language may lead teachers and students to overlook the complex nature of diversity itself and obscure shifting and contextual identities of participants in the community and outside based on these other factors. Alkouatli, Amini and Vadeboncoeur (2015) suggested that the ultimate role of the teacher is to take a meta-view in mediating cultures and differences in classrooms, making visible what is present and ensuring, as well, that what is not present can be included. This means moving beyond preactive influences, those conscious ideas that teachers bring into classrooms, to acknowledge interactive influences that are generated with students (Cazden, 2001). At times, in addition, we may need to look beyond the resources provided by participants in communities of inquiry. Teachers—as more likely to have experience at recognizing and acknowledging cultural, perspectival,

and experiential differences—may also identify voices *not* present in the community of inquiry and bring them in through polylogue, through what Dobber and van Oers (2015) called a "conversation with everybody" (p. 2). In this way, teachers extend the boundaries of the community of inquiry to engage students in a polylogue that holds a place for what the children do not say in the community dialogue and the perspectives that are not present in the room (Alkouatli et al., 2015).

Recognition of diversity as a resource in communities of inquiry, and our commitment to the expansion of epistemic openness, adds a critical dimension to our perspective on dialogue. From the purview of critical pedagogy, teachers and students envision new roles for themselves, and for each other; they open up new opportunities for learning; and they draw upon the diversity amongst themselves and beyond to create optimally meaningful academic and social experiences for *all* students (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). A critical perspective is necessary when aiming to use culturally relevant pedagogic tools (Sensoy, 2007) to ensure inclusive roles and learning opportunities for all members of communities of inquiry. The development of this critical perspective could be considered a necessary analytic stance when examining multiple perspectives in dialogue and texts. It could also be called *doubt*, a defining quality of a community of inquiry: "For there to be inquiry, there must be some doubt that all is well, some recognition that one's situation contains troubling difficulties and is somehow problematic" (Lipman, 2003, p. 94). When positioned as an object of inquiry, cultural, perspectival, and experiential differences, by definition, open the possibility for seeing anew, for considering how we've come to live the lives we live, and for a beginning recognition that we could have lived and may still choose to live differently. This recognition brings with it a sense of doubt, a prerequisite for the construction of new ways of thinking, knowing, and becoming within a community of inquiry.

The third principle in good communities of inquiry is that they provide both learning and teaching opportunities for all members of the community. The dialectic between teaching *and* learning, Vygotsky's (1987) concept of *obuchenie*, is

exemplified through, "highly interactive relations involving all participants in creative activity and growth" (Scrimsher & Tudge, 2003, p. 298). From this perspective, the teacher not only teaches, but also is taught in dialogue with the students. Inquiring together to construct knowledge through dialogue means that attention, power, and potential are continually negotiated (Freire, 1970; Göncü et al., 2010; Scrimsher & Tudge, 2003). Dobber and van Oers (2015) also referenced a shift in the framework of participation, a shift in power that occurs when the teacher becomes *co-inquirer,* rather than *director* of inquiry. Being open to students' experience, knowledge, and expertise as sources of learning for all participants in the community of inquiry—including the teacher—makes obuchenie another dimension of the expansion of epistemic openness.

Considering the quality of the community itself as the context in which dialogue unfolds—especially in terms of these principles of affective and cognitive generativity, difference and diversity as resources, and the dialectic of teaching–learning—is significant because the sociocultural environment is more than just one variable of many affecting human development. This environment is both a site where development unfolds, as well as a *source* of that development (Vygotsky, 1935/1994). Social speech as the primary cultural tool, not only mediates teaching and learning, but also mediates engagement with the broader culture (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). The quality of our dialogue, which is inseparable from the context in which it occurs, contributes to the preparation of students as they engage more actively in public life (Ruitenberg, 2007).

Intersubjective Dialogue

Dialogue, as a form of social speech, is a primary means of developing thinking, as described by Vygotsky (1935/1994):

> Originally, for a child, speech represents a means of communication between people, it manifests itself as a social function, in its social role. But gradually a child learns how to use speech to serve himself, his internal processes. Now speech becomes not just a means of communication with other people, but also a means for the child's own inner thinking processes. (p. 353)

Vygotsky's (1987) description of how dialogue with other people becomes ways of thinking for oneself illustrates the internalization of social speech as inner speech, or verbal thinking. Informed by Vygotsky's work, Lipman (2003) argued that when the dialogic process of inquiry is internalized by the participants, "they come to think in *moves* that resemble its *procedures*. They come to think as the process thinks" (emphasis in original, p. 21; see also, Lipman, 1996, 2009). While this points to the importance of dialogue, it does not describe qualities of good dialogue. We now turn our attention to identifying some qualities of such dialogue.

Mercer and Littleton's (2007) analysis of children's talk yielded the view that "not all kinds of talk are of similar educational value" (p. 61). They identified three types of talk including *disputational talk*, characterized by disagreement, criticism, and individual decision making; *cumulative talk*, in which students build positively upon the contributions of others without critical engagement; and *exploratory talk*, whereby students actively engage in constructing meaning together through the sharing and building upon of ideas, challenging and counter-challenging, and exchanging reasons, justifications, and hypotheses. Of the three types, exploratory talk, characterized by co-reasoning, building, challenging, and evaluating, is considered productive classroom dialogue (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Keefer, Zeitz and Resnick (2000) had similar descriptions of what constituted productive classroom dialogue, which included constructing shared understanding by working through differences and divergent viewpoints and using "cumulative discursive steps" (p. 64). In describing students engaging in such productive discussion, they suggested that students "might be more prepared to change their views—in other words, to seriously listen to (and even construct) arguments that run counter to views that they might initially hold" (p. 61). In suggesting that students might not be prepared to change viewpoints if the discussion was not productive, Keefer et al. (2000) identified a connection between productive classroom discussion—*good* dialogue—and epistemic openness.

The notion of epistemic openness was proposed by Talero (2008) based upon Merleau-Ponty's (1962) discussion of "positive indeterminacy" (p. 7), as being open to being affected by another, as well as the notion that "[w]hat is happening now is given as inherently incomplete, on its way to becoming something else" (Talero, 2008, p. 457). In dialogue, and specific to dialogue as the basis for approaches to research, Talero (2008) described experience as dynamic, incomplete, and epistemically charged and, thus, resistant to empirical investigation. The concept of epistemic openness has also been applied in classroom contexts in the research of Vossoughi (2014) who further refined the definition of epistemic openness in classroom situations as playing a pedagogical role. It is "the practice of an intellectual generosity that is developmentally generative, privileging multiple sources of authority and meaning, and treating students' sense-making as valid and full of potential" (Vossoughi, 2014, p. 355). This pedagogic approach to epistemic openness is consistent with the three principles described earlier.

A quality of human being and becoming, the significance of epistemic openness was also recognized by Lipman (2003) as epistemic movement and as the moves made in thinking, in particular, in relation to mental acts like questioning, listening, differentiating, inferring, and judging. Epistemic movement is required for psychological actions to develop into reasoning skills. It is this quality of epistemic openness that stands behind exploratory talk and dialogue in a community of inquiry. The participants in both must be more open than not to being affected by what is shared through the experiences of co-participants.

Two Discourse Practices: Tools for Thinking, Relating, and Transforming

Attending to what Vygotsky (1987) called social speech, or speech for others, allows teachers and students to become aware of and/or attuned to the voices and perspectives that they are hearing and using as they contribute to communities of inquiry, along with the ways in which social actors and characters in texts are positioned. In this section, we detail two discourse practices— heteroglossic attunement and lexical awareness—that play a significant role in

dialogue in relation to identifying and acknowledging cultural, perspectival, and experiential differences. These practices are particularly well suited to expanding epistemic openness in educational contexts. Raising an awareness of both practices and, further, inquiring into these aspects of discourse with students, is likely to enable both teachers and students to become more aware of and agentic in their use of language in dialogue and to enhance communities of inquiry as spaces of critical pedagogy and literacy (Luke, 2000, 2012; Vossoughi, 2014). Incorporating these discourse practices into dialogue, in turn, helps us clarify some of the qualities that make dialogue in communities of inquiry responsive to diversity and, therefore, good dialogue.

Heteroglossic Attunement

The first discourse practice, heteroglossic attunement (Vossoughi, 2014), is grounded in Bakhtin's (1981) notion that speech includes various voices, or speaking consciousnesses, engaged dialogically. While Bakhtin identified an utterance as spoken or written by an individual with a unique perspective, he described how each utterance builds upon the words and ideas of other people in a process known as "heteroglossia," or multivoicedness (Vadeboncoeur & Portes, 2002). Voice refers to "a speaking subject's perspective, conceptual horizon, intention, and world view" and, at the same time, given dialogicality, voices exist in social relation, never in isolation (Wertsch, 1991, p. 51). All dialogue, thus, includes voices that are offered up and taken up to be used by participants to communicate, at times crafted and populated with new intentions.

As we formulate, offer, and request reasons, as we challenge, probe, and consider what counts as evidence, we can attend to the discourse practice of *heteroglossic attunement* (Vossoughi, 2014) and develop an awareness of voices and perspectives in speech. *Heteroglossic attunement* involves recognizing, attending to, and inquiring into the plurality of voices and perspectives in the communication of others and institutions, as well as in our own utterances. Teachers and students within a community of inquiry may decide to attend to "discerning the multiple voices at work in spoken or written texts … and recognizing dominant discourses

in order to analyze, play with, or subvert them" (Vossoughi's 2014, p. 359). Together, members of the community of inquiry may identify and inquire into the multiple shades of meanings and ideological echoes inherent in every utterance (Vossoughi, 2014). Analyzing perspectives in talk and texts through dialogue opens spaces for seeing how we, ourselves, marshal multiple voices and perspectives to advance our own perspective and craft a response. This not only provides space for conceptual exploration, but emotional space for self-exploration and expression.

In order to engage in dialogue that makes possible the identification of and reflection on voices and perspectives in talk and text, students need to be encouraged to identify voices and reflect on these as examples of a range of different perspectives available. What voices are heard in this text? Are there different voices for each character? Is the author's voice heard and, if so, how does it differ from the characters? A consideration of perspectives could be made, alongside discussion regarding the problems of essentializing and stereotyping perspectives. When we talk about these characters, and draw connections with people in our own lives, to what extent are the voices similar? How do we speak about people who seem to belong to a particular cultural group or share similar experiences? How does what we say reflect social voices and perspectives that we have been exposed to through the media, our social networks, and dominant discourses? Rather than reifying differences once recognized, teacher and students could examine the relative points of contact—similarities and convergences that exist alongside of differences—as well as work to locate voices socially and historically in relation to other voices.

Lexical Awareness

Attending to social speech also enables teachers and students to become aware of how they are positioning social actors and characters in stories through *lexical awareness.* What we are referring to as *lexical awareness* here expands *propositional attitudes* foregrounded by Lipman (2003), who highlighted the importance of inquiring into the various functions of verbs in discourse by

drawing on Austin's speech act theory. For example, the differences in word choice and meaning between: "*George knew that* John was ill, *Mary thought that* John was ill, … *Frank was certain that* John was ill, … *Melanie agreed that* John was ill" (Lipman, 2003, p. 147). Each verb represents a psychological state that is an attitude toward a particular statement, in this case "John was ill." Psychological states, both cognitive and affective, can be identified through particular verbs and developing lexical awareness includes a recognition that the words used to attribute cognitive and affective states to social actors positions them in particular ways: George's certainly derives, in part, from the statement that he "knew" and Mary's tentativeness derives, in part, from the statement that she "thought."

For us, lexical awareness enables teachers and students to attend not just to the verbs used in propositions to ask how a proposition is formed, but to inquire into noun use as well. Lexical awareness extends to the power of using particular names and labels to categorize groups of people and through the choice of and meaning made of nouns, as when groups of behaviors, or people, or cultures are labeled. Words shape how the ideas and reasons shared in communities of inquiry are heard and how they affect others, including the judgments involved in deciding what to inquiry into, seek to clarify, reflect upon, and, potentially trouble. For example, how does using the word "economic immigrant," instead of "immigrant," change the dialogue? How does the dialogue shift again when "refugee" is used? As another example, consider the variation in meaning when the words used to describe young people who are not enrolled school shift from "drop out" to "push out," or the difference when we speak of "at risk students" or "students placed at risk." The act of naming a particular group, for example, and then repeating this name or label naturalizes a certain perspective; acts to normalize a dominant or hegemonic worldview (Fairclough, 1995). Inquiring into this naming—its context of use and history—is one method of reflecting on and disrupting dominant labels that are used axiomatically.

Both heteroglossic attunement and lexical awareness require the ongoing development of an awareness of discourse: What meanings seem to hang on the

words we use when we discuss certain subjects or describe people in particular social practices? Both discourse practices enable teachers and students to reflect upon the voices and perspectives shared in dialogue; in an overlapping sense, they work together to highlight how discourse dialectically builds upon and informs the psychological states, for example, the thinking and feeling, of participants in dialogue. Acknowledging that there is always a range of ways of building meaning through dialogue, and that some perspectives and lexical choices value difference more or less and are more or less epistemically open, enables the participants in dialogue to reflect upon and engage in social speech more mindfully; a significant point not lost on scholars like Vygotsky (1987), Bakhtin (1986), and Lipman (2003), as well as critical discourse analysts, like Fairclough (1995, 2001, 2003), who have argued for the possibilities afforded by attending critically to discourse.

Summary

In communities of inquiry, dialogue is central as both the means and the outcome of collective inquiry, thus, the question of what makes a dialogue good is significant as is clarifying the qualities of dialogue that warrant attention. Features of dialogue have been highlighted by Lipman (2003) and elaborated through his own work and the work of others, yet, less attention has been paid to his call for the examination of the significant, although elusive, features of discourse. The purpose of this article was to describe and exemplify two discourse practices that could be used in communities of inquiry to highlight the meanings made and to reflect upon the role of language-in-use, discourse, as a social practice. *Heteroglossic attunement* and *lexical awareness* are discourse practices that can enable both teachers and students to identify and acknowledge the cultural, perspectival, and experiential differences that exist alongside of similarities as resources for dialogue. Heteroglossic attunement enables the identification, examination, and subversion of voices that inform dialogue in communities of inquiry. Lexical awareness—in this article with a focus on verbs used to identify propositional attitudes and nouns used to categorize and label actions, groups of people, and/or

cultures—becomes an enabling condition for the recognition that the discourse used in communities of inquiry carries with it its own history of use, something that is often beyond the conscious awareness of speakers, especially speakers in the moment of dialogue (Wertsch, 1998).

While we recognize the weight of responsibility on teachers and students in communities of inquiry, an attention to discourse advances the goal of inquiry immeasurably by deepening the dialogue beyond the *what* of ideas and positions shared, to *how* they are shared, the reasons why they were shared that way, as well as how they could have been shared differently and to what ends. Thinking together critically, caringly, and creatively requires this attention to how the words, phrases, voices, and discourses we use shape each of us in the moment and shape our social futures. Working toward this awareness provides us with one of the most significant means for intentionally creating futures that value diversity as a resource and expand epistemic openness.

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