WHOSE DISCOURSE?
DIALOGIC PEDAGOGY IN A POST-TRUTH WORLD

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From there to here[1]

It's nearly 60 years since Ned Flanders launched his observer protocol for coding classroom interaction.[2] The Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories, FIAC, included seven for teacher talk but only two for student talk; and while the 'teacher talk' categories identified discourse moves - the teacher 'praises', 'accepts ideas', 'asks questions', 'gives directions' and so on - the student categories were confined to 'response' and 'initiation' and gave no clue as to the purpose or content of either.

FIAC thus reflected not just what kind of teaching predominated in 1960s US classrooms - the 'recitation script' of closed teacher question, recall student answer and minimal but usually judgemental teacher feedback - but also whose talk mattered most. It also established an observational template which, though much adapted and updated, has in its essentials proved remarkably durable. Too durable, perhaps.

At about the same time, Douglas Barnes, James Britton and Harold Rosen, exploiting the potential of the newly-invented cassette tape recorder, were trying something very different.[3] Taking transcriptions of talk they had recorded in British classrooms, they studied them holistically rather than atomistically, attending as closely to the talk of the student as to that of the teacher. Rather than classifying and counting individual moves (though they did this too) they qualitatively investigated extended exchanges; and they attended to context and meaning, both of which the FIAC methodology excluded.[4] Serious omissions if you accept Barnes's touchstone proposition that 'speech unites the cognitive and the social'.

Somewhat dispirited by what they found, Barnes, Britton and Rosen concluded:

> We need to find ways of helping [students] without putting words into their mouths. We could ... be less concerned to elicit from them verbatim repetitions to time-honoured formulations than to ensure that [they] engage in a struggle to formulate for themselves their present understanding. Discussion is an essential part of that process.[5]

That was in 1969. By the early 1970s, Sinclair and Coulthard were studying the exchange structure whose near-monopoly so exercised Barnes, Britton and Rosen. They called it, as we

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know, initiation, response, feedback or IRF.[6] Meanwhile in the US, Courtney Cazden and Bud Mehan renamed the third move 'evaluation', hence IRE,[7] and Courtney made discussion inevitable by asking students questions about themselves that only they could answer.[8] In the UK, the work of Barnes, Britton and Rosen influenced the government's 1975 Bullock Report *A Language for Life*[9] (UK government policy on spoken language has gone backwards since that remarkably well-grounded and prescient document[10]) while Barnes found in small group discussion a potent forum for collaborative learning[11] that Neil Mercer and others have built upon.[12] My own entry point, 30 years ago, was via qualitative and quantitative analysis of lesson videos and transcripts during the 1980s,[13] and comparative analysis of video and transcript data from classrooms in England, France, India, Russia and the United States during the 1990s.[14] That led to the talk reform framework I called 'dialogic teaching'.[15] Others have used the same term, but each in their own way, a matter I shall consider shortly.

Fast-forward to 2011, and we find scholars from various countries and research traditions converging on the University of Pittsburgh to share their data and insights on dialogic and discussion-based alternatives to IRF/IRE and to map these alternatives in greater detail. In the book arising from the Pittsburgh seminar, Lauren Resnick, Christa Asterhan and Sherice Clarke synthesised the evidence thus:

> Students who had experienced ... structured dialogic teaching *performed better* on standardised tests ... some students *retained* their learned knowledge for two or three years ... in some cases students ... *transferred* their academic advantage to a different domain (e.g. from science instruction ... to ... English literature).[16]

Performance, retention, transfer ... but Lauren added:

> Two major ... tasks face us. First, we need a larger empirical base for the claim that dialogic teaching is likely to be effective with all kinds of students in various settings and subject matters. Second, we need to find ways of training many more teachers who are willing and able to use academic dialogue as a major component of their teaching.[17]

In a literature survey for the Oxford Research Encyclopedia published in 2017, Jie Park, Sarah Michaels, Renee Affolter and Cathy O'Connor confirmed that dialogic teaching accelerates learning across students, grades and knowledge domains; but they added that such talk is still uncommon and - crucially - there's 'a lack of shared conceptualisations of what [it] is and how best to characterise it'[18]. However, in another literature review Christine Howe suggests that we do at least have a 'shared conceptual core' albeit with 'divergence around the edges.'[19]

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[6]   Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975.
[7]   Mehan, 1979.
[8]   Cazden, 2001; Mehan and Cazden, 2015.
[9]   Department of Education and Science, 1975.
[10]   Alexander, 2014, 357-8.
[11]   Barnes, and Todd, 1977 and 1995.
[12]   Mercer, 2000; Mercer and Littleton, 2007; Dawes, Mercer and Wegerif, 2003.
[13]   Alexander, 1995 and 1997; Alexander, Willcocks and Nelson, 1996.
[14]   Alexander, 2001a, 2001b, 2006, 2008a.
[15]   Alexander 2004, 2017, 2018. Full bibliography at https://www.robinalexander.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Alexander-dialogic-teaching-bibliography-July-2018.pdf
[16]   Resnick, Asterhan and Clarke, 2015a, 1, authors' italics.
[17]   Resnick, 448.
[18]   Park, Michaels, Affolter and O'Connor, 2017.
[19]   Howe and Abedin, 2013.

Define your terms

Let's stay for a moment with the matter of conceptualisation. 'The biggest single problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place': George Bernard Shaw may or may not have said that, but if we want to take up the challenges posed in the reviews I've mentioned we should be clear what we are talking about.

Conveniently, with adjustments to spelling and pronunciation 'dialogue' is the same word in most languages spoken here, though not, I think, in Finnish, Hungarian, or Hebrew. It comes to us via Latin from the Greek *dialogos*, a conversation, and for some people conversation is all that dialogue ever means. But dialogue is also the exchange of ideas, while if you add discipline to the exchange it can be the exploration and resolution of competing points of view.

Similarly, 'argument', our second key term, can mean a mere statement or proposition, making and testing a case, a debate between opposing viewpoints, or a dispute, quarrel or worse. Making a case, having a fight ... In some languages the words for argument in these two vastly different senses are also different, so in this matter, at least, there's no ambiguity.

These basic definitional variations should serve as a warning, especially in a multilingual setting such as this. Translation is not an exact science, least of all in the realm of ideas.[20] We must treat all our keywords with caution.

Let's return to 'dialogue' as conversation. The point at which this simple definition becomes a complex concept is when the conversation acquires a purpose. From this point on, dialogue is *stance* as well as *process.* In classrooms the stance is relational and pedagogical, obviously. It is also epistemological, probably ethical and conceivably ideological. Stance also enshrines *purpose*. Some of us seek, evidentially or conceptually, to *describe* dialogue; others *prescribe* the form it should take. As for 'dialogic teaching', it has both precise stipulative definitions and a generic one. Stipulatively, I use the term my way, others use it their way, and whether the twain shall meet is a matter of luck. Generically, 'dialogic teaching' tends at its lowest common denominator to signify talk that replaces IRF/IRE by discussion, without specifying that discussion's purpose or character. Indeed, used without explanation the term 'dialogic teaching' may be little more than virtue signalling: IRE/IRF bad, dialogic teaching good.

The definitional differences that are most likely to confound communication are those that stem from our disciplinary affiliations. The fact that talk, dialogic or otherwise, interests cognitive psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, psycholinguists, sociolinguists, ethnolinguists, pragmatists, comparative linguists, discourse analysts and conversation analysts might justify celebration that its importance is so widely recognised, except that it further reduces prospects for mutual understanding. For our disciplinary perspectives determine what we look at, how we look at it, and what, having looked, we see.

Attempting to make sense of all this, Adam Lefstein and Julia Snell[21] have posited six overarching concepts of dialogue, or shall we say stances, each with its own questions, values and goals, and for good measure its own guru: dialogue as the interplay of voices (Bakhtin), as critique (Socrates), as thinking together (Vygotsky), as relationship (Buber), as empowerment (Freire), and as interactional form (no guru specified). Lefstein and Snell then juxtapose these stances with four models of dialogic practice: Nystrand's dialogically

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[20]   Explored in relation to some key education terms in Alexander, 2008a, 97-102.
[21]   Lefstein and Snell 2014, 14-24;

organised instruction,[22] Mercer's exploratory talk,[23] the 'accountable talk' of Resnick, Michaels and O'Connor,[24] and my own version of dialogic teaching.[25] Each of these models of practice also embodies a theoretical stance.

More recently, Min-Young Kim and Ian Wilkinson have compared the versions or visions of dialogic pedagogy of Freire, Burbules, Nystrand, Wells, Wegerif, Matusov, Mercer, Boyd, Reznitskaya, Mortimer and Scott, Juzwik, Lefstein and myself before identifying three points of contention that underlie the differences that emerge: the balance of significance given to linguistic *form* and *function* and the way their relationship is perceived (matters on which Maureen Boyd has written persuasively);[26] the degree to which talk is embedded in the wider classroom culture or detached from it; and whether dialogic teaching is viewed as a specific way of organising classroom talk or as a general approach that can be implemented in different ways.[27]

And so here we are, with 126 papers and posters, 80 of them under the SIG 26 banner of 'argumentation, dialogue and reasoning', whatever those words meant to the conference organisers and whatever they mean to each of us. Whether by Friday we shall have successfully advanced the post-Pittsburgh agenda of greater conceptual clarity, firmer evidence of impact and viable strategies for teacher development remains to be seen, though if there's one message so far it's 'define your terms'.

Dialogic pedagogy in a post-truth world

Where next? Anticipating from the titles of papers listed in the conference programme that many of us are already pursuing aspects of that agenda, I want to do something different: to consider the relationship between the discourse norms, or ways of talking and reasoning, that are cultivated inside the school and those that students encounter outside it, and what this might imply for dialogic pedagogy.

In some aspects of students' lives these norms may be more or less in harmony, but elsewhere there may be dissonance. There may the long-standing and well-researched discourse incongruences relating to class, caste, race and gender. There are the obvious differences in codes and registers, and between academic and everyday language. Then we have the habits and values embodied in school curriculum domains and the more or less rational and courteous ways of accessing, interrogating and verifying the knowledge that such domains embody; but on the other hand there's the free-for-all of social media, the ascendancy of ephemeral and anonymous online content over the verifiable and attributable knowledge of book and laboratory, the mischievous anarchy of fake news, the reduction of judgemental nuance to the binary 'like'/'dislike', the trolling and abuse that for too many people have replaced discussion and debate; and the sense not so much that truth claims are open to question, as of course they always should be, as that for many in the public and political spheres truth is no longer a standard to which they feel morally obliged to aspire.

As if to prove his immunity from this basic moral standard, a democratically-elected American president can utter, according to the *Washington Post*, over 5000 'misleading or demonstrably false' statements since his inauguration, or an average of 8.3 falsehoods each

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[22]   Nystrand *et al*, 1997.
[23]   Mercer and Littleton, 2007; Mercer and Dawes 2008.
[24]   Resnick, Michaels, and O'Connor 2010.
[25]   Alexander, R.J., 2017.
[26]   Cf Boyd and Markarian, 2015.
[27]   Kim and Wilkinson, 2018

day,[28] yet still be president. No less noteworthy, 46 percent of Americans believe Trump's claim, despite conclusive evidence to the contrary, that the lies are *about* Trump rather than *by* him. [29]

I've now introduced the T-word, but Trump is far from unique. He displays in extreme form tendencies that have afflicted many other countries that call themselves democratic, my own included, as well as countries that are openly autocratic: the braggadocio, aggression and narcissism of the would-be alpha male; the manipulation of information; the appeals to people's worst instincts rather than their best; the stoking and exploitation of racism, misogyny and homophobia; the sustained attacks on the press, judiciary and other institutions of civil society that provide the checks and balances that good government requires. And, insidiously but dangerously, the erosion of what Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt call the 'soft guardrails' of democracy:

> mutual toleration, or the understanding that competing parties accept one another as legitimate rivals; and forbearance, or the idea that politicians should exercise restraint in deploying their institutional prerogatives.[30]

In the UK, to their credit, legislators have acknowledged the severity of the challenge posed by one of these trends. Earlier this year a parliamentary select committee published the report *Disinformation and Fake News*. Documenting extensive evidence that digital media have been exploited to 'play to the fears and prejudices of people and to influence their voting plans and behaviour', notably in the 2016 US presidential election and the UK Brexit referendum but also in France, Germany, Spain, Africa and Latin America, the committee concluded that 'urgent action needs to be taken ... to build resilience against misinformation and disinformation into our democratic system ... Our democracy is at risk.'[31] Among the report's recommendations was this:

> Our education system should [equip] children with the necessary tools to live in our digital world, so that their mental health, emotional well-being and faculty for critical thinking are protected ... Digital literacy should be the fourth pillar of education, alongside reading, writing and maths.[32]

Yes indeed: children must acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for coping in a digital world. However, I'm less sanguine about the way the recommendation bolts digital literacy onto a curriculum that in other respects remains untouched. Most conspicuously untouched is the belief that the so-called '3Rs' of reading, writing and reckoning (i.e. maths) are what basic education is exclusively about; and that this hoary definition, which shackled Britain's schools for the urban masses in the 19th century but actually goes back 1400 years to St Augustine's Confessions ('legere et scribere et numerare'), can be made fit for the 21st century by adding digital literacy but without challenging the assumption that talk is merely incidental to learning and life. There are words out there as well as algorithms.

Is this, as our conference theme implies, a task for civic education? Civic education was traditionally viewed as information about the institutions and processes of government and the values that are held to underpin them, which in Britain are officially defined as 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and ... respect for and tolerance of those with

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[28] Kessler *et al*, 2018.
[29] Shepard, 2017.
[30] Levitsky, S, and Ziblatt, D. (2018) *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown, 9.
[31] House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2018, 3.
[32] House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2018, 62-3.

different faiths and beliefs, and ... those without faith.'[33]

Though such information is necessary, as a concept of civic education it doesn't go far enough, for it idealises governance, civil society and the role of the citizen, implies value consensus and ignores the messy political and social realities. Some might add that it confirms the school as instrument of cultural and economic reproduction as characterised by Bowles and Gintis in the US and Bourdieu and Passeron in France, if not the school as Althusser's full-blown 'ideological state apparatus'.[34] Is there space in the traditional and somewhat Hirschian[35] view of civic education for the awkward question, I wonder, let alone for the critical pedagogy of a Freire or Giroux?[36]

The handling of talk in schools is no less political. In Britain, exclusive and expensive private schools used to train the nation's future leaders in the art of public speaking and adversarial debate so as to send them into the world articulate, confident and ready to take control. This tradition goes back centuries to when classical and then renaissance rhetoric were fundamental to a gentleman's education.[37] Meanwhile, schools for the ungentlemanly majority of either gender pinned their faith on the 3Rs and at all costs avoided unleashing the subversive potential of talk. The contrast between private education for leadership and state education for followership is still evident in Britain, both in the social and educational profiles of senior politicians and the long struggle of some of us to persuade the UK government to give spoken language the prominence in state schools that it deserves.[38]

Be that as it may, current political trends highlight the limitations of offical views of both civic education and classroom talk, and the challenge facing those who believe, following Dewey, that a deliberative democracy requires a deliberative pedagogy.[39] For, as Kakutani says, 'Without commonly agreed-upon facts ... there can be no rational debate ... Without truth, democracy is hobbled.'[40] Equally, when immediately after the second world war George Orwell warned that 'The present political chaos is connected with the decay of language'[41] he foreshadowed our own present, for the abuse of public language is symptomatic of what in some countries is a democratic malaise and in others is a crisis. And in considering where all this might lead we would do well to remember Hannah Arendt:

> The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction ... and ... between true and false ... no longer exist.[42]

In light of all this, I suggest that any consideration of the relationship between dialogue, argumentation, inquiry and civic education, the theme of this conference, should encompass not only the Pittsburgh agenda - conceptual clarification, evidence of impact, strategies for professional development - but also four further imperatives for discussion and investigation. They are *voice, argument, truth* and *language.* It's to these that I now turn.

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[33]   Ofsted, 2018.
[34]   Althusser, 1976; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990.
[35]   Hirsch, 1988.
[36]   Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2011.
[37]   Simon, 1966; Kennedy, 1999.
[38]   Alexander, 2014 and 2015.
[39]   Dewey, 1997.
[40]   Kakutani, 2018, 172-3.
[41]   Orwell, 1968, 139.
[42]   Arendt, 2004.

Voice

> All I have is a voice
> To undo the folded lie,
> The romantic lie in the brain
> Of the sensual man-in-the-street
> And the lie of Authority
> Whose buildings grope the sky.[43]

That's British poet W.H.Auden, on September 1st 1939: fateful day. Citizenship is the exercise of voice as well as vote. Citizens use their voices to argue for what they believe is right and against what they believe is wrong. Voice is where democracy starts, and voice is what autocracy seeks to manipulate or stifle.

Like our other keywords, 'voice' has several meanings. We speak, shout, scream, whisper or sing, but this physical exercise of our vocal cords expresses intentions, opinions, ideas, emotions, wants and needs: indeed, who we are. Within classrooms Aliza Segal and Adam Lefstein differentiate four senses of 'voice': having the opportunity to speak; expressing one's own ideas; speaking on one's own terms; and being heeded.[44] These four stages in the progress of the classroom exchange, from permission to speak to acknowledgement of what is spoken, are about ownership and rights. Together, they prompt four practical questions for teachers. What do we do to encourage our students to speak? How do we ensure that what they say is treated equitably and respectfully? When they speak, whose voices do we hear? And how do we handle the contributions that don't follow our intended direction of travel?

Aspects of these questions are addressed in the literature on turns and turn-taking, ground rules, communities of discourse and communicative rights and competences, so I'll concentrate on the question about voice in the sense of ownership of what is said. Segal and Lefstein tell us that in their study, here in Israel, students

> enthusiastically contribute to lively classroom discussion and often frame these discussions as dialogical responses that build on each other's ideas, but at the level of *voice* the discussion is mostly univocal, since most student contributions are aligned with the official voice of the teacher and the curriculum and in the rare instances where they emerge, independent student voices fall out of the conversation.[45]

Segal and Lefstein call this 'exuberant voiceless participation', using voice in their sense of ownership of what is uttered. While they acknowledge Bakhtin's much quoted maxim that 'the word in language is half someone else's'[46], they find their observed teachers and students caught between competing epistemologies: on the one hand the principle of co-construction, on the other hand the 'official knowledge' of the school curriculum. This dilemma, say Segal and Lefstein, resolves itself into teaching that may be dialogic in form but monologic in function. Discussion, however lively, yields what the teacher expects and is therefore, in their second and third senses, 'voiceless'.

We're all familiar with the dialogic classroom that is not what it seems. Indeed, the paradox of apparently open pedagogy mediating a closed curriculum was noted over 40 years ago in

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[43]   Auden, 1991.
[44]   Sigal and Lefstein, 2015.
[45]   Sigal and Lefstein, 2015, 1.
[46]   Bakhtin, 1986, 170.

that wonderfully-titled article by Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont, 'Mock-ups and cock-ups: the stage management of guided discovery instruction'[47]. Yet I'm not convinced that matters are this clear-cut, for if Bakhtin is right, then nobody has an independent voice, and that includes teachers. Teachers initiate their students into ways of thinking and knowing developed by others, and their task is in large measure cultural transmission, and indeed social control if you accept Basil Bernstein's classic definition of pedagogic discourse as 'a relay for power relations external to [the classroom]'.[48] Even the goal of developing students' autonomous thinking, notwithstanding the confident claims of dialogists, is normative. Freedom is never absolute.

However, the path from the official curriculum to the curriculum as enacted and experienced in the classroom isn't linear. Governments may specify, but schools *translate* what is specified, teachers *transpose* it and together teachers and students *transform* or domesticate it. It's through pedagogy that a paper curriculum gains life and meaning, and in this matter the agency of teachers and students is critical.[49]

Further, evidence shows that students learn more outside school than their teachers may credit[50] and each student's unique out-of-school biography predisposes classroom contributions to the curriculum as translated and transposed that may be as much their own as the teacher's; though what each student brings to the learning encounter enters the dialogue only if the teacher allows it. But when the teacher does allow the student's voice in Segal and Lefstein's senses of speaking on one's own terms and being heeded, I see no contradiction between the dialogic dynamic and the school's obligation to advance the student's understanding in ways that have been culturally developed and are collectively understood.

If teaching may be dialogic in form but not necessarily in function, it may also be monologic in form but in its content more dialogic than it seems. That's the case when the teacher introduces ideas of different kinds and from different sources to encourage corresponding dissonance in the mind of the student.[51] Curriculum domains are the result of centuries of co-construction, and good teaching displays this. They are inherently dialogic, even if taught monologically. Dialogic monologue, monologic dialogue: beware the false dichotomy.

From voice to equity

No less important than the overall balance of teacher and student voice is the matter of vocal equity among students themselves. So whose voice is this?

> It is difficult for a woman to define her feelings in language which is chiefly made by men to express theirs.[52]

At first sight this expresses a very modern consciousness, and in her book *Man Made Language*, Dale Spender puts the matter almost identically:

> Women have been obliged to use a language not of their own making ... women [have been allowed] to express themselves, but only in male terms.[53]

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[47]   Atkinson and Delamont, 1977.
[48]   Bernstein, 1990, 168. These matters are discussed in Alexander, 2001a, 432-6 and 521-6.
[49]   The idea of curriculum metamorphosis from what is prescribed to what is transacted is developed through international comparisons in Alexander, 2001a, 552-3.
[50]   Mayall, 2010.
[51]   A case study of one such teacher appears in Alexander, 2008a, 154-172.
[52]   Hardy, 1916, 414.

But what I quoted first was in fact written nearly 150 years ago, in 1874. And here's the plot twist: it was written by a man, British novelist Thomas Hardy, putting the sentiment about man-made language into the mouth of a woman, Bathsheba Everdene in *Far from the Madding Crowd.* So which version of Spender's or Hardy's or Bathsheba's statement about language and gender is 'man made'? And while Spender offers explicitly feminist critique, what exactly is Hardy up to? Does he empathise with women's situation, or does he reinforce male dominance by attributing to men more power than they have? And does Dale Spender unwittingly do the same? Is it in fact male arrogance to assert that language is 'man made', and double arrogance for a male novelist to put that assertion into the mouth of a woman?

I float the matter in this equivocating way because my final concern about voice is this. We know that many countries are deeply divided by inequalities of income, opportunity, education, class, race and of course gender. One of the promises of dialogic teaching is that it distributes classroom talk more equitably, first between teacher and students collectively, then among the students themselves; and that this contributes to the larger cause of reducing social inequality. That's why the Education Endowment Foundation supported the randomised control trial of dialogic teaching with disadvantaged children in three British cities led by Frank Hardman and myself, and it's why they are supporting an even bigger follow-up project with up to 12,000 students starting in January 2019.[54]

Yet while dialogic teaching may have shifted the balance of classroom talk towards students *collectively*, how far has it equalised the voices of different *groups* of students, and how far has talk research as so far undertaken actually tracked this process with the precision it requires? If the word is indeed 'half someone else's' does this apply to every student, or is it the case that for some students, as for certain groups of people in the wider world, the word is *wholly* someone else's and their own thoughts count for nothing? The 2018 controversy about appointments to the US Supreme Court, and its inflammatory outcome, have made this question almost unbearably pertinent.

In reconciling cultural transmission, equity and the development of the student's autonomous (or normatively autonomous) thinking, a great deal hangs on the third move in the spoken exchange. Here the work of Michaels and O'Connor is, I think, of considerable importance.[55] This is the move, again in Bakhtinian terms,[56] that keeps the student's voice within the dialogue, or in IRF/IRE does not, so if we want to assess whether an exchange is genuinely dialogic or merely IRF/IRE in disguise, and whether it promotes student equity and autonomy, it's the third move and its consequences that we should study.

Sigal and Lefstein end their thought-provoking paper[57] by recommending that future work on dialogue should focus on voice as well as talk. I agree: the literatures on student voice and dialogic pedagogy haven't adequately connected and it's time they did, though both literatures should also connect with sociological theories of education, cultural reproduction and social control. Too much research detaches classroom talk from context, culture and history. And, I suggest, from fundamental questions of equity, social justice and the situation of demographic and vocal minorities (the two are not necessarily synonymous).

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[53]   Spender, 1980, 12.
[54]   Alexander, 2018. The new project, *Dialogic Teaching at Scale*, will run from 2019-22.
[55]   Michaels and O'Connor, 2012 and 2015. :
[56]   'If an answer does not give rise to a new question from itself, it falls out of the dialogue': Bakhtin, 1986, 168.
[57]   The first of a trilogy: see also Segal, Pollak and Lefstein, 2016: Lefstein, Pollak and Segal, 2018.

Argument

So to my second imperative: argument. If in English 'argument' suggests bellicosity as well as rationality, then that's where we should start, especially if, as Jonathan Osborne has noted, most students view argument as adversarial[58]. Neil Mercer, too, maintains that the norms of deliberative discourse are not instinctive but need to be made explicit and translated into ground rules.[59] Argumentation is an acquired skill, and helping students to move from mere disagreement to evidentiary argument is a necessary educational task.

It's hardly surprising if students view argument as conflict. They witness the media turning complex issues into battling binaries. They join a Twittersphere that thrives on intolerance. They see politicians asserting cases rather than demonstrating them, using evidence selectively, wrongly or not at all, and gleefully stoking disagreement into war. But the manipulation and selective use of evidence are the oldest tricks in the political game, so it's important that rather than throw up their hands in horror students understand that political and academic argument have different goals and conventions. When argument is about persuasion and power rather than truth, evidence gives way to rhetoric, for as Cicero, master of political rhetoric, said, 'Wisdom without eloquence does little benefit'; though he did have the grace to add, 'But eloquence without wisdom does much harm.'[60]

Talking of Cicero, Kathleen Welch notes that there's a revival of interest in classical rhetoric and its modern variants, especially in university English departments.[61] The last great flowering was during the Renaissance, when the key texts of Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian were rediscovered and in schools and universities the practice of rhetoric was as essential as the study of arithmetic, geometry and astronomy[62]. Rhetoric, too, guided and framed renaissance poetic discourse. Some of Shakespeare's greatest speeches and bouts of oral fencing, for example in *Hamlet*, can be properly understood only if one has a grasp of the rhetorical devices and figures of speech with many in Shakespeare's audiences were familiar.[63] Is this territory to which dialogic pedagogy should return us?

In any event, we cannot be content to frame our discussion of dialogic pedagogy and civic education by polarising academic and political argument as if each were one-dimensional. Douglas Walton, for instance, proposes seven types of dialogic argumentation, each with its own goals, moves, questions and responses: persuasion, inquiry, discovery, negotiation, information exchange, deliberation and eristic argument.[64] The first six are reasoned and rule-bound, and only eristic argument (from the Greek word for 'strife') aims to win by whatever means are available. Political argument can and often does entail negotiation, inquiry and deliberation, but the eristic is always there as the last resort or, for some, the first.

Prominent in eristic argument are the well-known fallacies of syllogistic reasoning: equivocation, or exploiting ambiguity; begging the question; ad verecundiam, or citing an 'authority' who may be nothing of the sort (academics, too, are sometimes prone to this); ad hominem, attacking the person rather than the argument; ad baculum, or threatening dire consequences if one's views aren't accepted; and so on.

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[58]   Osborne, 2015, 406; Kuhn, Wang and Li, 2011.
[59]   Mercer and Dawes, L. (2008).
[60]   Kennedy, 1999, 94
[61]   Welch, 1990.
[62]   Simon, 1996.
[63]   Adamson, Alexander and Ettenhuber, 2007.
[64]   Walton, 2013.

Some of these classic fallacies are numbered among Schopenhauer's '38 ways to win an argument', which start from the proposition that logic pursues truth but eristic aims only for victory. Schopenhauer's list, published in 1831 but still relevant, includes alongside the familiar syllogistic fallacies gems like 'make your opponent angry', 'generalise from the specific', 'claim victory despite defeat', 'persuade the audience, not the opponent', 'interrupt or divert the dispute if you think you are losing', 'puzzle or bewilder your opponent by mere bombast', and 'be personal, insulting and rude.'[65] Sounds familiar?

Just as academic and political argument are not mutually exclusive but overlap on a continuum, so academic argument is not one mode but many. Scientific, mathematical and historical reasoning, to take three obvious paradigms, are manifestly different. Less frequently considered in the dialogic pedagogy literature is argument in the artistic and literary spheres. How do we make or test the case for a work of art, music or literature? Between the 1930s and 1970s the influential and combative Cambridge literary critic F.R.Leavis taught his students to investigate and assess the technical, linguistic and stylistic ingredients of prose, poetry and drama so that they could distinguish the technically original and inventive from the mediocre or routine and even assign dates to samples of writing without knowing the author, which, like 'blind' student grading, certainly aids objectivity.

But moving from assessments of artistic technique and skill to judgements of artistic merit is more problematic. Here Leavis relied on his famous question 'This is so, isn't it?' which puts a literary work's moral seriousness and psychological or experiential authenticity on the line alongside its technical and imaginative mastery. But 'This is so, isn't it?' was always followed by 'Yes, but…', an obligatory rejoinder that commands both convincing justification and rigorous scepticism about every judgement ventured, the literary equivalent of Popper's theory of scientific conjectures and refutations,[66] perhaps. Of course, this process interrogates evidence of a kind and in a way that wouldn't satisfy a physicist, but that's the point: the modes of argument and justification in the arts and sciences are different but not necessarily of unequal validity.

Stephen Toulmin seems to offer a way through. He shows how different kinds of question or claim call for different treatment, and proposes a generic 'layout' of six elements of argumentation that he believes works in most circumstances: *claim* (what has to be established or proved); *ground* (facts, evidence, data or reasoning in support of the claim); *warrant* (justification for the grounds cited); *backing* (additional or alternative support); *qualifier* (limitations on the claim); and *rebuttal* (counter-arguments).[67] This works as well with Leavis's approach to literary judgement as with the examples that Toulmin cites, such as: 'whether … Fröhlich's theory of super-conductivity is really satisfactory, when the next eclipse of the moon will take place, or the exact nature of the relation between the squares on the different sides of a right-angled triangle.'[68]

This is the maddest of canters across a vast and complex philosophical field. My point is that learning in general and learning for democratic engagement require us to be able to make, understand and test arguments *of many different kinds*. So although our conference title implicitly detaches 'civic education' from the rest of the school curriculum, I do not think this is how we should proceed. Every curriculum domain makes its own contribution to the student's understanding of the different kinds of argument that are used in real life settings,

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65   Schopenhauer, (2004).
66   Popper, 1963.
67   Toulmin, 2003.
68   Toulmin, 2003, 12-13.

and the ways such arguments can be promoted, supported, tested, qualified, challenged and, when appropriate, refuted. In that sense, the entire curriculum is, or could be, a preparation and training for democratic engagement.

Truth

'Comment is free, but facts are sacred'. That was the mantra of C.P.Scott, one-time legendary editor of Britain's most distinguished liberal newspaper, *The Guardian*. Futile guidance for White House press officers and presidents with itchy Twitter fingers, of course. Nowadays the boundary between objective fact and subjective opinion is more blurred than it was a century ago. In public life truth is increasingly plural; in academic life it is provisional and contestable.

Indeed, we might wish to consider the possibility that the ground for attacks on received truth by epistemic nihilists in the White House and Kremlin may have been unwittingly prepared by academics like ourselves. 'Truth isn't truth' said presidential attorney Rudi Giulani, to gasps of outrage and ridicule that were even louder than those that greeted Kellyanne Conway when she defended as an 'alternative fact' Trump's claim about the size of the crowd at his inauguration. But in her brilliant book *The Death of Truth* Michiko Kakutani shows how such tropes didn't come out of the blue, but instead took to extremes the post-modernist rejection of the enlightenment belief in objective reality, provable truth, stable linguistic constructs and reason itself.[69]

We know Habermas's response to this: there's an inherent contradiction in using traditional methods of reasoning and arguing to attack those same methods. If the methods are invalid, so is the critique.[70] Yet if there are different ways of knowing and making sense, which there manifestly are - look no further than the school curriculum - and if these embody different tests of truth, then truth itself may also be plural.

Some of Jerome Bruner's most interesting work towards the end of his long life provides a perspective on these matters, though he was no post-modernist. He reduces humankind's ways of investigating, knowing and understanding to just two modes:

> One verifies by appeal to formal verification procedures and empirical truth. The other establishes *not* truth but truthlikeness or verisimilitude ... One mode is centered around the narrow epistemological question of how to know the truth; the other around the broader and more inclusive question of the meaning of experience.[71]

Bruner named the first mode logico-scientific or 'paradigmatic' and the second mode 'narrative', which recalls anthropologist Clifford Geertz's definition of culture as 'the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves'[72]. But apart from the obvious cases of, say, mathematics and science, assigning school subjects to one or other of Bruner's modes isn't straightforward. History, being both evidential and narrative, can be in either mode or both, while locating the social sciences, despite their name, is equally problematic; and in mentioning F.R.Leavis I've suggested that the educated literary response combines informed subjective judgement with empirical evidence.

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[69]   Kakutani, 2018.
[70]   Habermas, 1987s.
[71]   Bruner, 2006, 116.
[72]   Geertz, 1975.

Bruner's distinction might appear to reinforce the old opposition of 'fact' and 'fiction', or of what is supposedly true and what is manifestly made up. But does that distinction hold either? Would the many women to whom Margaret Attwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* speaks so vividly at this time allow that because it's a work of fiction it doesn't deal in truth? Would we be happy for this sweeping judgement to be passed on all those poets, novelists and dramatists, and indeed artists and musicians, whose illuminating insights into the human condition take us well beyond the reach of the social sciences, and who show inner lives and outward behaviour in all their complexity rather than merely attach labels to them? Scottish novelist Ali Smith certainly doesn't think so:

> Fiction and lies are the opposite of each other ... Lies go out of their way to distort, or to turn you away from, the truth. Fiction is one of our ways to get to truths that are really difficult to talk about, that we haven't yet been able to articulate, or see; truths that we come to articulate via a story.[73]

So it's not fact versus fiction, but fact and fiction versus lies, with both fact and fiction aspiring to truth, albeit to truths of different kinds, while lies fabricate it. But once again there's a problem of definition - fiction as something made up, and fiction as literary genre. Ali Smith is talking about fiction as literary genre, but the colloquial opposition of fact and fiction fails to make that distinction, thereby denying the truths that serious fiction, as opposed to mere entertainment, explore and expose, and relegating Bruner's narrative mode and Geertz's 'stories we tell ourselves about ourselves' to the outer margins of trust.

But let's be clear. When commentators complain of 'truth decay' and 'the death of truth' they speak not of a universal epistemic and moral collapse but of a localised political or media malaise, or in academic circles a post-modernist turn. To most people truth matters a great deal, and they see it in terms of trust as much as certainty. Today's truth decay is about the behaviour of the body politic and sections of the print and digital media. It's about people who destroy trust by spreading falsehood and giving comfort to the cynical relativism of the 'alternative fact'. For the rest of us, including teachers and students, keeping faith with the enlightenment may be the best we can do.

Language

I come now to my fourth and final imperative, language, and I do so by way of a well-known approach that explicitly links dialogic pedagogy with civic education and democratic engagement. 'Accountable talk' was initially proposed by Lauren Resnick during the 1990s and later developed with Sarah Michaels and Cathy O' Connor, who now use the term 'academically productive talk'.[74] Accountable talk, as Resnick, Michaels and O'Connor explain it, has three interdependent facets. *Accountability to community*, later modified to *accountability to the learning community*, establishes and maintains the culture of classroom talk that is essential to collective sense-making and learning - listening, respecting others' ideas, building on each other's contributions and so on. *Accountability to standards of reasoning* 'emphasises logical connections and the drawing of reasonable conclusions'. *Accountability to knowledge* requires that speakers base what they say on 'facts, written evidence or other publicly accessible information that all ... can access'.[75]

This triple insistence on *accountability* - communal, rational, epistemic - speaks to the proper conduct of government no less than to that of teaching and learning. In one of their papers

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[73] Ali Smith, 2018.
[74] Michaels, and O'Connor, 2015; Park, Michaels, Affolter and O'Connor (2017).
[75] Michaels, O'Connor and Resnick, 2008.

exploring this relationship, Michaels, O'Connor and Resnick acknowledge, as I have, the mismatch between what we strive for within classrooms and what students may encounter outside them; and 'though … we have made some progress in … classrooms … there is much we still do not know about how best to set up the conditions for truly democratic discourse on a wide scale.'[76] Yet accountable talk remains a powerful ideal. It links classrooms with democratic action, and has been applied through the Michaels and O'Connor 'talk moves' in ways that are both practical and successful. However, as its authors themselves speak of unfinished business[77] it perhaps deserves a fresh look.

For instance, 'accountability to knowledge' might expand beyond its apparent centre of gravity in Bruner's logicoscientific mode to encompass his narrative mode and the full range of school curriculum domains; that is, 'science' as it was defined in British English until the 17th century, or knowledge in its broadest sense and many forms;[78] *Wissen* as well as *Wissenschaft*, and indeed, recalling Ali Smith, fiction as well as fact.

But my main suggestion - and I hope this doesn't sound presumptuous - is that accountable talk merits a fourth strand. I'll call this *accountability to language*, and specifically accountability to spoken language.

What do I mean by this? In the first instance, talk, like argument, must be the object of learning as well as its medium. So in the recent dialogic teaching project led by Frank Hardman and myself, 'talking about talk' was what we called the first of 11 cycles in a 20-week programme combining professional development with teaching, mentoring and video analysis, and it remained prominent throughout.[79] Similarly, Lyn Dawes, Neil Mercer and Rupert Wegerif initiated their *Thinking Together* programme with a group of five lessons fronted by 'talk about talk'.[80]

Out of such foundational activities can come, alongside the ground rules for classroom talk of the kind with which we're all familiar, a heightened awareness and understanding of the nature, power and possibilities of talk; of the interplay between talk's linguistic and paralinguistic aspects; of the dynamics of turn-taking; of code, register, accent and dialect and their social ramifications; of the relationship between discourse form, function and context; and of the language of argumentation.

Such metalinguistic understanding can be sensitised and deepened through audio and video. Teachers in several of my projects have viewed and discussed with their students the lesson videos they initially made for their own study and evaluation, with striking results. These teachers literally 'made talk visible' to their students.[81] Ever the pioneer, Courtney Cazden was doing this, though with audio, several decades ago.[82]

How far might we take this? Here, international comparison would be a useful preliminary, because the systematic study of spoken language is more prominent in some education systems than others. I argue for accountability to spoken language mindful of the fact that in the UK, and especially in England, spoken language within the school curriculum is not just

[76]   *Ibid*.
[77]   Michaels and O'Connor, 2012 and 2015. As noted in Alexander, 2018, with the kind permission of these authors my dialogic teaching framework has gained an additional repertoire in the form of their nine talk moves, renaming them 'extending' moves to emphasise their attention to the third turn.
[78]   Williams, 1983, 277.
[79]   Alexander, 2018.
[80]   Dawes, Mercer and Wegerif, 2000; Mercer and Dawes, 2008.
[81]   Ron Carter (unattributed) in QCA, 2004, 4.
[82]   Cazden, 2001, 7.

under-developed but actively resisted by government, partly as a matter of historical habit, partly for political reasons, and partly out of sheer ignorance.[83] The efforts of Neil Mercer, Jim Rose and myself to change government thinking a few years ago achieved only modest success, even though we enlisted the help of Lauren Resnick by videolink from Pittsburgh.[84]

One interesting line of development to make good this deficiency is Carter's work on the grammar of talk. Using computer corpora of naturalistic spoken English he shows how written and spoken language are different not only in obvious respects like formality and fluency but also in their structure, and that sufficient structural consistencies emerge from corpus analysis in matters like discourse markers, word order, ellipsis, deixis and incremental rather than subordinate clauses for the word 'grammar' to be appropriate.[85]

Carter's grammar of talk is descriptive, not normative. It is an aid to understanding the relationship between structure and meaning in conversation, not a manual for 'correct' speaking, and in relation to a country such as the UK where debates about 'correct' or 'standard' English are both heated and politicised this proviso requires emphasis. A grammar of talk begins to do for talk what literary analysis does for written texts. But it is only a beginning, and if talk is as important as we believe then we might wish to consider whether some of the tools and perspectives of discourse analysis that we use for researching the talk of teachers and students might also have a place in the education of students themselves.

Talking about talk applies equally in the context of civic education, for leaving aside the question of whether we are in an Orwellian age of language decay, talk is the medium through which politicians engage with the electorate, even if at one stage removed via tweets and television debates, so scrutiny of the way they use spoken language is essential to students' empowerment as citizens.

In the UK I've charted four signature discourses through which favoured policies are advanced and contrary views and evidence are marginalised.[86] The *discourse of derision* (a term coined by Jane Kenway and popularised by Stephen Ball[87]), ridicules or abuses opposing views and those who hold them, and has more recently degenerated into a discourse of hate. The *discourse of dichotomy* reduces complex issues to a binary choice between grossly over-simplified alternatives and the polarised politics of them and us and is thus the divisive companion of the discourse of derision. The *discourse of myth* peddles inflated claims about one's own achievements while belittling what other administrations have achieved in order to lower the baseline against which one's promises will be set. And if the discourse of myth is about the destruction of the past, the *discourse of meaninglessness* destroys language itself. It is the grandiose discourse that evades or obfuscates meaning, parades the old as new, and when unpicked collapses into a tangle of tautologies.[88]

It isn't always this bad, of course. The negative discourses of derision, dichotomy, myth and meaninglessness that are so much in evidence these days flout all four of Grice's maxims governing the relation between logic and conversation: *quantity* (a contribution should be

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[83]   Witness the collapse of Language in the National Curriculum and the National Oracy Project. Language in the National Curriculum (LINC) was funded by the UK government 1989-92 but later banned from commercial publication because of its treatment of 'standard' English. The same government withdrew its support for The National Oracy Project (1987-93).
[84]   Recounted in Alexander, 2014.
[85]   Carter, 1997; McCarthy and Carter, 2001.
[86]   Alexander, 2010b and 2014.
[87]   Kenway, 1990.
[88]   'Beyond dichotomous pedagogies', Alexander, 2008a, 72-91.

informative), *quality* (it should be well-founded and true), *relation* (it should be relevant) and *manner* (it should be clear and orderly in delivery).[89] But such negative discourses are countered by the positive discourse of judicious language, serious argument, defensible evidence and intelligibility to which, fortunately, politicians of integrity remain committed. Yet this uneasy juxtaposition of discourses in the public sphere underlines my point: examining how political language works - what it says, what it seems to signify, what it actually signifies and what it achieves - should be at the heart of students' civic education; just as, in their education as a whole, talk should be the object as well as the means of their study.

As I note above, accountability to language as advocated here is about advancing the student's metalinguistic consciousness and his/her understanding and skill with language in use (and indeed, *pace* my model of dialogic teaching, the student's spoken language repertoire), rather than the imposition of a particular and inevitably contested version of 'correct' speaking. Yet having recourse to generic tests of the argumentative power and validity of language as used, such as those proposed by Grice, Walton and Toulmin, or with a specific focus on dialogic pedagogy by Reznitskaya and Wilkinson,[90] or by the proponents of philosophy for children,[91] can make talk a powerful tool for cultural and civic engagement as well as for learning more narrowly defined.

Conclusion

And so to a brief conclusion. Pittsburgh 2011 gave us three tasks: clarify the concept of dialogic pedagogy; expand evidence about its impact; devise ways to help teachers in its use. That work must continue.

In our line of business defining terms is obligatory, especially when they are as fluid as 'dialogue' and 'argument', so that's where I started, adding 'pedagogy' in passing. Mindful of the conference theme, I then explored four imperatives, or four additional agenda items, for exploration when dialogic pedagogy is enlisted in support of democratic engagement. They were voice, argument, truth and language.

Many people these days fear for the future of democracy, especially in the United States but also in the UK, continental Europe, Asia and Africa. Playing on voters' worst instincts and deepest fears, self-styled 'strong' leaders fan the flames of division and intolerance, marginalise dissenting voices, debase argument and language, and treat truth with contempt. The collision of this discourse with what we strive for in schools and universities begins to be reminiscent of the darker decades of the 20th century, Eric Hobsbawm's 'age of extremes'.[92] That was when H.G.Wells warned that 'Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe'[93] but Joseph Stalin retorted: 'Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed.'[94]

Yet there are surely grounds for optimism in the way 17-year old Emma González, in the dreadful aftermath of the Florida Parkland school massacre last February, publicly, courageously and eloquently demolished the arguments of the National Rifle Association

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[89]   Grice, 1975.

[90]   Reznitskaya and Wilkinson, 2017.

[91]   Lipman, 2003; Fisher, 2008; Gregory, 2007.

[92]   Hobsbawm, 1995.

[93]   Wells, 1920, chapter 1.

[94]   Stalin and Wells 1937. The juxtaposition of these quotations isn't contrived. H.G.Wells met and interviewed Stalin in 1934, and the encounter produced Stalin's infamous response quoted above. See *New Statesman*, 18 April 2014.

and exposed the political dealings of NRA and its beneficiaries on Capitol Hill. She, David Hogg and other students displayed exceptional personal qualities for which their school would not expect to take credit, I'm sure. But it also turns out that these students were on the AP US Government and Politics programme[95] led locally by their school's social studies teacher, Jeff Foster, whose influence they made a point of acknowledging. Indeed, on the very day of the shootings the students were investigating political interest groups.[96]

The AP course is rich in information, as you would expect, and includes constitutional documents and landmark legal cases as compulsory reading; but at its heart are discussion and debate, steered by ground rules and used to examine evidence and argument; and particular care is taken to give equal treatment to opposing viewpoints and examine the thinking that shapes them.[97] That, surely, is civic education as it should be; and it sounds very much like dialogic teaching.

NOTE

As presented at the EARLI conference this paper began with a short autobiographical section inserted at the last moment to meet a suggestion that something, however brief, needed to be said about the author's own work on dialogic teaching. In this version of the paper the paper's original introduction has been reinstated, but for the record here is the conference version:

> Keynote speakers shouldn't dwell overmuch on their own work but instead should offer larger perpectives on the theme of the conference to which they've been invited. At least, that's one convention, and I'm happy to oblige. Except … well, this conference brings together people from two SIGs and a wide range of research backgrounds, so it's probably sensible if I start with a few words about that part of my work that bears on what brings us here: our mutual interest in dialogic pedagogy, argumentation and inquiry.
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> In the UK during the 1980s, working with John Willcocks, Kay Kinder and others on projects as diverse as teachers' professional thinking and the pedagogical impact of large-scale systemic reform, I made extensive use of observation, lesson videography and transcript analysis, always backed by interviews so as to access teachers' intentions[98]. Then, during the 1990s, Karen Lennox and I undertook comparative fieldwork in schools in England, France, India, Russia and the United States, using lesson videos, transcripts, photography and interviews as primary data together with policy documents, teaching resources and samples of students' work.[99] Classroom talk was always a prominent focus, but never exclusively so. For it was *pedagogy* more broadly that I was trying to understand (by pedagogy I mean the practice of teaching together with the intentions, ideas, theories, evidence and values that inform it)[100]. So I explored the relationship between talk and other aspects of teaching - curriculum content, time, space, rules and routines, task, activity, assessment and so on - and in the international research extended this to connect pedagogy with policy, history and culture. It's a statement of the obvious that language is central to this pedagogic nexus, because it mediates both culture and learning. That's why the international *Culture and Pedagogy* project culminated in comparative analysis of classroom talk from our five countries, and culture shone through every teacher-student exchange[101].

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[95]   AP College Board, 2018.

[96]   NBC News, 2018.

[97]   And the students made a difference, if not yet against powerful vested interests in Washington DC, then in their own state. In March 2018, Florida's Governor Rick Scott signed the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, (named for their school) which raised the age to buy all firearms to 21, imposed a three-day waiting period for most gun purchases, allowed trained school workers to carry handguns, provided new mental health programmes for schools, and restricted gun access to people who show signs of mental illness or violence.

[98]   Alexander, 1995 and 1997.

[99]   Alexander, 2001a.

[100]   Alexander, 2008a, 173.

[101]   Alexander, 2001a, 391-528.

After that, I maintained the focus on pedagogy, policy and culture while also delving more deeply into classroom talk. As one strand of subsequent enquiry I tried to re-position pedagogy in comparative educational research, for until then it had been neglected.[102] A second strand critiqued the inferences about teaching and learning that governments were drawing from PISA and TIMSS, and indeed the general naivety of policy-directed international comparison at a time of mounting PISA panic.[103] A third strand critiqued the treatment of pedagogy in the UN Millennium Development Goals Education for All campaign,[104] a campaign in which for two decades I worked on the ground with governments, NGOs and schools in India. But there was a fourth strand: translating into classroom strategies the insights I had gained from these projects about talk in teaching and learning, first through preliminary materials to help teachers explore alternatives to IRF/IRE[105] and then by creating a framework for dialogic teaching, with interlocking repertoires of student and teacher talk validated by evidence and guided by principles of procedure.[106] During the next 15 years or so this framework was refined with teachers in various parts of the UK. Then, from 2014-17, in a project led jointly by Frank Hardman and myself and supported by the Education Endowment Foundation, it was subjected to randomised control trial (RCT) with 5000 students and 208 teachers in three English cities. The RCT, led by Tim Jay, was wholly independent. I spoke briefly about this project and its encouraging outcomes at last year's EARLI conference in Finland and the revised and expanded version of that paper has now been published.[107]

That's it, and I've not even mentioned the biggest project of the lot, the Cambridge Primary Review. In its proposals for the aims and curriculum of primary education this adopts a markedly dialogic stance on both knowledge and pedagogy.[108]

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[102]   Alexander, 2001b and 2006.
[103]   Alexander, 2010a and 2012.
[104]   Alexander, 2008b and 2015a.
[105]   Mills, 1996. Karen Lennox Mills did all the videography and photography for the *Culture and Pedagogy* project and, with Michele Schweisfurth, assisted in the trial run of the lesson video and transcript analysis.
[106]   Alexander, 2017.
[107]   Alexander, 2018; Alexander *et al,* 2017; Jay *et al* 2017.
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