Strengthening dialogic argument:
What teachers can learn from authentic examples of student dialogue

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Abstract

This paper is inspired by Philip Cam's book *Twenty Thinking Tools*. Cam recommends classroom dialogue as the primary means for students to achieve conscious, strategic, and eventually habitual command of the intellectual moves needed for building and evaluating arguments. Classroom dialogue has indeed been found to be effective for developing students' higher-order thinking skills, but only when students are engaged in dialogic argument. This paper addresses the dual concerns that dialogue is not widespread in classrooms, and that even where it is practised, it rarely involves argument. To address these concerns, an enhancement to teacher professional learning programs is proposed: the use of *authentic examples*, i.e. examples drawn from students' real-life dialogic argument. Reflecting on numerous examples of this kind is likely to boost teachers' confidence and competence as facilitators, with the consequent benefits of broadening the use of dialogue in classrooms and enhancing the rigour of students' dialogic argument. Authentic examples of dialogic argument are surprisingly scarce in the relevant published literature. This paper provides several such examples, together with suggestions for how they may be constructively embedded in professional learning programs.

Key words

authentic examples, classroom dialogue, dialogic argument, novice facilitators, professional learning

> *Ingrained habits of mind are not going to be overcome with a little bit of extra knowledge. To have any real hope of change, we need ... first, a lot of practice. Practice on real world decisions and not on abstract problems.*
>
> Julia Galef, in an interview by Heleo Editors (2016)

Introduction

In his highly-regarded primer for teachers, *Twenty Thinking Tools*, Cam (2006) lays out the strategies of argumentation that he considers fundamental to an education for thinking. Each argument strategy—or 'thinking tool'—serves to hone a specific intellectual move, such as giving reasons, making inferences, establishing criteria, drawing distinctions, and testing assumptions. Jointly, the tools help to cultivate students' philosophical dispositions: to question, to reason, to investigate claims, to evaluate arguments fair-mindedly, to engage seriously with diverse views, and to think discerningly for themselves.

The most fitting context for students to learn to use the tools, Cam maintains, is dialogue. Empirical studies confirm that dialogue does in fact help students to develop higher-order thinking, with improvements recorded in students' non-verbal reasoning (Wegerif, Mercer & Dawes 1999), generation of relevant arguments, counter-arguments and rebuttals (Dong et al. 2010; Kuhn, Shaw & Felton 1997; Reznitskaya et al. 2001), and generalisable knowledge of argumentation schemas (Reznitskaya et al. 2009; see also Dong et al. 2010). Other recorded impacts of dialogue on higher-order thinking include increased use of evidence (Chinn et al. 2001), greater competence in weighing the importance of reasons (Zhang et al. 2016), fuller consideration of alternative perspectives (Chinn et al. 2001; Kuhn, Shaw & Felton 1997; Zhang et al. 2016) and more frequent use of analogical reasoning (Lin et al. 2012).

Yet despite these documented benefits, a disparity exists between the ideal of dialogic communication and the reality of largely monologic teaching, as Reznitskaya and Gregory (2013) point out. This echoes Cam's (2006) observation that it is 'unfortunately all too rare' (p. 28) for schools to use dialogue as a standard pedagogical approach. Moreover, even those teachers who enthusiastically embrace the idea of dialogic teaching reportedly struggle with facilitating dialogue in their classrooms (Reznitskaya & Gregory 2013).

Another concern is that even where students do engage in classroom dialogue on a regular basis, they rarely succeed in engaging in dialogic *argument*. According to Kuhn and Felton (2001, citing Walton 1989) dialogic argument has two major goals. The first is to find common ground with those who hold a conflicting position. By securing commitments or concessions from others in the group, students can establish agreement on shared beliefs and use this to bolster their respective arguments. The second goal is to reduce the force of opposing arguments. By drawing attention to any weakness in those arguments, students can reveal them to be less persuasive than they may initially appear.

Classroom dialogue often falls short of achieving these two goals, and instead takes the form of a superficial and directionless conversation. Students share their opinions in turn, but fail to work systematically with each other's ideas. The resulting discourse may *resemble* genuine dialogic argument—in that students make sequential contributions and express their disagreement—yet it amounts to mere 'pseudo-argument' (Kuhn 2008, p. 146).

By way of illustration, the adolescent subjects of Kuhn's (2008) empirical studies of student dialogue were willing to stake out conflicting positions on controversial issues, and tried to argue compellingly for the merits of their respective positions. Yet in most cases, they merely juxtaposed their respective arguments, paying little or no attention to one another's contributions and failing to engage one another's claims and reasons. They each seemed to believe that if they argued forcefully enough, their own position would prevail, 'outshining any competitors, which [would] fade away without further consideration' (Kuhn 2008, p. 146). Reznitskaya and Gregory (2013) report on the emergence of the same kind of pseudo-argument in a dialogue among fifth graders:

> Student ideas were treated as merely opinions, rather than as hypotheses to be taken up, tested, and reconstructed .... [S]tudents had more opportunities to talk, compared to a traditional classroom. However, their contributions received no further scrutiny by the group, and the time was spent on the sharing of opinions, which remained unexamined and disjointed. (p. 128)

Many teachers who are wary of didactic methods and eager to foster classroom dialogue inadvertently slip into patterns of expression that allow pseudo-argument to flourish. Examples of such patterns are posing 'an endless sequence of ostensibly open questions which ... are unfocused and unchallenging ... [and providing]

habitual and eventually phatic praise rather than meaningful feedback' (Alexander 2005, p. 3).

If dialogic argument is to thrive in classrooms, teachers must be better prepared. They must learn to pay more than incidental attention to what Cam (in press) calls *the hallmarks of teaching for critical thinking*: 'such things as inference-making, justificatory reason-giving, reasoned judgment, clarification, distinction-making, definition, and the use of conceptual criteria' (p. 11). When teachers learn to make judicious facilitation moves that scaffold students' thinking during classroom dialogue, the effects can be far-reaching (Jadallah et al. 2011).

In what follows, I consider the potential of professional learning programs to better equip teachers to attend to the thinking tools and to build students' capacity for dialogic argument.

My remarks apply equally to university education courses for pre-service teachers and to continuing professional development programs for practising school teachers, both primary and secondary. I am thinking broadly of any professional learning context in which there is a focus on promoting dialogic teaching, whether in philosophy or in any other subject that lends itself to dialogic argument.

A proposal

My dual objectives here are to *broaden the uptake of dialogic teaching* and to *engender dialogic argument* among students.

To address these objectives, I advocate a particularly powerful enhancement of professional learning programs—that is, that the exposition of thinking tools be complemented by *examples drawn from actual student dialogues* (hereafter, 'authentic examples').

Authentic examples of dialogic argument may take the form of videos, audio recordings or direct verbal transcripts of student dialogue. Such examples are surprisingly scarce in the literature that prepares teachers to develop students' argumentation skills through dialogue. For instance, in Cam's (2006) *Twenty Thinking Tools*—a nuanced introduction to a wealth of argument strategies—the expository passages are complemented largely by hypothetical examples or descriptive accounts of how the thinking tools may be used in classroom dialogue.

While these illustration types have the virtue of conciseness, teachers exposed to only hypothetical examples and descriptive accounts are likely to be perplexed when they face the realities of facilitating dialogic argument in their classrooms.

Why are authentic examples so hard to find? There are several factors: the difficulty in obtaining parental consent to share recordings of their children publicly; the effort and expense involved in adequately recording and possibly transcribing dialogues; and the reluctance of teachers to expose their facilitation practice to critique.

It is well worth striving to overcome these challenges, however. Empirical studies have 'consistently found that teachers benefit from the immediate, rich, and detailed medium of authentic classroom video as a material in professional learning' (Baecher & Kung 2011, p. 16), and these benefits are not limited to the audiovisual medium. Taking the time to analyse and discuss authentic examples across a variety of media is reported to be professionally valuable (Luo 2015).

What makes authentic examples so valuable? I suggest that they offer four distinct benefits in professional learning programs for novice facilitators (hereafter, 'novices'). The first and second of these benefits relate to broadening the uptake of dialogic teaching, while the third and fourth relate to engendering dialogic argument.

1. Authentic examples are *demystifying*. Novices frequently ask how dialogic argument looks in the classroom. They are likely to have heard general claims of the following sort: 'The use of metacognitive strategies transforms a directionless conversation into an inquiry, during which the participants' thinking moves towards reasonable judgments' (Reznitskaya & Gregory 2013, p. 117). Yet novices typically have few, if any, opportunities to observe live student dialogues. One reason for this is that philosophical enquiry, one of the natural settings for dialogic argument, remains marginal in many countries' education systems. Although philosophy has surpassed other disciplines in developing 'precision tools for thinking conceptually', as Cam (2018, p. 9) puts it, 'harnessing the power of Philosophy to teach children to think is still an idea in its infancy ... It is extremely rare to find philosophy taught as a subject area in the elementary school, or in the junior secondary school' (Cam 2012, p. 118). Sharing authentic examples may therefore be the most practical way for professional learning providers to present novices with a detailed view of what actually takes place in dialogic classrooms.

2. As evidenced by the literature on case learning, authentic examples are *motivating* (Heitzmann 2008; Luo 2015). Many novices, daunted by the prospective demands of facilitating classroom dialogue, are hesitant to try it. Authentic examples help to motivate initial facilitation attempts because they situate learning in specific contexts and inspire novices' curiosity. In these respects, authentic examples resemble case studies, which are known to 'engage our attention, lodge in our memory and capture our commitment' (Shulman 1992, p. 23).

3. Authentic examples *uncover students' reasoning*. In the course of classroom dialogue, students continually formulate more or less logical arguments. Teachers can help students to evaluate these arguments by posing questions such as:

   > What objections might be raised? How would the argument handle counter-examples? Where does the argument suffer from a lack of clarity, consistency, or plausibility? How might the argument ... be revised or strengthened to meet objections? Does an alternative argument better defend the same position? (Goldberg n.d., para. 6)

   However, the vagaries of students' natural speech can make it difficult to ascertain, much less evaluate, the arguments they are trying to convey. In the course of classroom dialogue, students typically use idiosyncratic turns of phrase, voice nebulous ideas, and make implicit assumptions and inferences. Portraying students' natural speech is therefore an important feature of authentic examples; it provides opportunities for novices to practice detecting, examining and appraising the arguments that are implicit in students' spontaneous talk.

4. Authentic examples *develop novices' practical knowledge of when and how to intervene* in the flow of classroom dialogue (Tigchelaar & Korthagen 2004). It is well known that teachers often struggle to bridge the gap between the theories they learn and the practice of teaching. In the context of learning to facilitate dialogic argument, there can be a troubling gap between understanding the thinking tools in the abstract and applying them in actual classroom situations. Engaging seriously with authentic examples is a means of bridging this gap. It is for this reason that case-based instruction in which novices study complex, real-world classroom situations has 'become a mainstay in many education [degree] programs ...; [it] supports and nurtures ... teachers as they evolve from novices to experts' (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems 2014, p. 101).

Immersion in authentic examples confronts novices with a wide variety of unexpected situations demanding prompt decisions; it further calls for reflection on the merit of those decisions. Such decision-making and reflection are indispensable for developing practical knowledge, that is, 'the power to analyze and master a tangled circumstance' (Merseth 1996, p. 732, quoting Pearson 1951, p. 178). Extensive literature on case learning confirms that the study of detailed examples develops novices' analytical and critical thinking, decision-making, and reflective judgement (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness 2002; Luo 2015; Merseth 1996; Nath 2005; Shulman 1992).

Indeed, authentic examples afford novices the vicarious experience of a *range* of dilemmas that they would otherwise encounter only across months or years or facilitation practice. Dialogue transcripts—especially when accompanied by audio or video recordings, which compellingly illuminate non-verbal communication—forewarn novices of the very kinds of problems and micro-decisions they will face in their own professional practice. Exposure to authentic examples can therefore be expected to accelerate novices' competence in enquiry facilitation: a welcome boost in a complex domain in which 'subtle judgements and agonizing decisions' (Shulman 1992, p. 28) are the stock-in-trade.

Empirical research bears this out. Examining the use of classroom video in teacher professional development, Borko et al. (2011) cite a range of studies indicating that the demands of interpreting classroom video parallel the demands of teaching, and that teachers who analyse recorded examples of student thinking are better equipped to promote student thinking in subsequent classes.

If routinely embedded in professional learning programs, then, authentic examples could be expected to help novices rehearse responses to a wide range of scenarios—including, importantly, the appearance of pseudo-argument in their dialogic classrooms.

Examples don't speak for themselves

It is refreshing to discover the occasional resource about dialogic teaching that contains numerous authentic examples, providing a rare and vivid impression of the 'feel' of student dialogue. Fisher's (2012) *Teaching Thinking: Philosophical Enquiry in*

the Classroom and Robinson's (2013, 2014) videos of philosophical enquiry in schools are among such resources.

Merely *displaying* a series of authentic examples, however, is not sufficient to equip novices for facilitating dialogic argument. The examples must first of all be aptly selected to prompt analytical thinking. They must then be explored deliberately. Failing this, Erickson (2014) cautions, novices may 'find themselves at sea ... in a stream of continuous detail they don't know how to parse' (p. 146).

Providers of professional learning have various strategies at their disposal for helping novices to interpret authentic examples. One strategy is to pose substantive questions that focus novices' attention on the examples' salient features; another is to facilitate productive conversations (Borko et al. 2011).

A further strategy is to provide 'yeasty layers of commentary' (Shulman 1992, p. 28). As Shulman (1986) points out, generalisability does not inhere in the examples themselves, but rather in the interpretative power of the people who examine them. Few experts in dialogic argument are as successful as Reznitskaya and Wilkinson (2017) and The Philosophy Foundation (2011) at revealing the mechanics of students' thinking in particular examples, and how these are shaped by particular facilitation moves.

Expert support can also serve to scaffold novices' skill development, as novices imagine themselves in the role of facilitator and rehearse skills such as appropriate interjection. 'We should not lose sight of the fact', Cam (1994) advises, 'that genuine know-how and discernment come about through the application of knowledge and understanding to practical issues and problems' (p. 13). Worley (2009b) offers similar counsel: 'Good thinking is better learnt ... by "doing" and "modelling" rather than by [propositional] "learning about"... [T]o be able to think well ... one needs to be well acquainted with the methods of good thinking: one needs to practise them' (p. 149). Although Cam's and Worley's remarks were made in the contexts of sharpening students' ethical decision-making and critical judgement respectively, they each stand as a testament to the utility of authentic examples for building proficiency in any domain.

In the next section I present seven authentic examples of the sort that providers of professional learning could use constructively. Five of the examples come from my

own work as a facilitator and trainer of novices at The Philosophy Club.[1] The remaining two examples are drawn from the work of others.

Two types of authentic examples

The examples I present below are of two types: 'model facilitator' examples that invite novices to analyse how a facilitator fosters students' thinking, and 'adopt the mantle' examples that invite novices to play the role of facilitator and decide how best to proceed.

Cutting across these example types is students' varied proficiency with the thinking tools. In some examples, students are already adept at making particular intellectual moves and the facilitator has the opportunity to *highlight* this proficiency. By 'underlining these moves when they occur,' as Cam (2006, p. 3) says, the facilitator promotes students' metacognitive awareness and consolidates their learning. In other examples, students have not yet mastered particular intellectual moves and the facilitator has the opportunity to *elicit* these moves by 'requesting them and explicitly reinforcing their use' (Cam 2006, p. 3).

'Model facilitator' examples

Model facilitator examples provide opportunities for novices to analyse and interpret both the students' contributions and the facilitator's interventions (Luo 2015).

I use model facilitator examples extensively in my own professional learning programs. Their value to novices is evidenced in feedback such as: 'I feel like my philosophy barometer has been switched on' and 'It was fantastic to see examples of what you were teaching us about through videos, audio and transcripts, just to see it in action. It made clear how capable kids are of engaging in deep philosophical thought' (The Philosophy Club n.d. 1).

[1] I transcribed the dialogue with the consent of participating students and their parents from audio recordings made, likewise with consent, during The Philosophy Club's student workshops in the period 2012-2014.

Example 1

The transcript below is excerpted from a dialogue among 8–10 year olds about identity and change. The students' dialogue followed the facilitator's narration of Worley's (2011, p. 86) version of the classic 'Ship of Theseus' thought experiment. As the story goes, the Ship of Theseus has all its wooden components gradually replaced by metal ones; later, a poor sailor collects the discarded wooden parts and reassembles them into a functioning ship. The facilitator begins by asking the students to consider the original ship (made of wood) and its replacement (made of metal).

Facilitator: Is this ship the same ship?

Student 1: It's a different type of fabric that they used.

Student 2: It's the same model with different materials.

Student 3: It's a new ship with [functionally] the same parts.

Facilitator: Do you think the material matters to whether it's the same ship or not?

Student 4: Metal has different atoms than wood, and atoms mean a lot, so I think it's a new ship.

Facilitator: A new ship; a different ship. Does anybody think it's the *same* ship?

Student 2: I think it's the same ship.

Facilitator: And what makes it the same?

Student 2: It's in the same form or shape as the old wooden boat. The wooden boat would have broken into tiny pieces of driftwood and rotted out and the metal would have sunk and rusted. But if you upgrade your ship, it's still the same ship. Every ship has its own soul, like a person has its own soul. Like, the Japanese believe that every object has its own soul.

Facilitator: In the story, the poor sailor built a ship for himself out of all the relics from the original ship. So we've got the original wooden ship, and we've got the ship that had all its wooden parts replaced with metal, and then we've got the ship built out of the cast-off wooden parts from the original ship. So my question for you is: which is the Ship of Theseus?

Student 2: Maybe some of the soul or essence just couldn't let go of the ship. So they're probably both Theseus's. They've both got spirit in each. They've both got the same form.

Student 1: If you ask Theseus, he'll point to the metal one. ■

The Philosophy Club (n.d. 1, pp. 2-3)

Even this brief transcript contains much for novices to analyse. As the students wrestle with philosophical concepts of qualitative and numerical identity, the facilitator intervenes strategically to support students' use of various thinking tools. The facilitator seeks disagreement ('Does anybody think it's the *same* ship?'), elicits students' reasons ('And what makes it the same?'), asks students to evaluate a given criterion for judgement ('Do you think the material matters to whether it's the same ship or not?'), and eventually clarifies and extends the question to involve a comparison among the three ships described in the story. Examples like this showcase facilitation in action, affording novices the opportunity to analyse just *how* model facilitators succeed—and where they sometimes fail—in highlighting and eliciting students' intellectual moves.

Example 2

Here we have another 'model facilitator' example. This transcribed dialogue, in which the students investigated personal identity, flowed from their exploration of the Ship of Theseus story:

Facilitator: What is it that makes you still *you*, even though you change as you grow up, and eventually grow old?

Student 1: You look the same … you *are* the same.

Student 2: You can't just say 'you are the same' because that's just a circle.

Student 1: Well, your name is the same.

Student 3: You've got the same heart.

Student 4: The same family members ... same mother.

Student 5: You still have the same body parts.

Student 6: Same DNA.

Student 7: Same blood cells.

Student 8: Same mind.

Student 9: Same personality.

Student 2: Same experiences ... the same memories.

Student 10: You *like* the same things.

Student 11: I think something that never changes about you are your fingerprints, and the way that your toes are shaped.

....

Facilitator We've made some progress here. You've thought of a lot of ways in which we remain the same throughout our lives. These are our *criteria* for being the same person. Now, can you fault these criteria? Can you think of any exceptions?

Student 2: Well, you would have the same mind, but different things *in* your mind. Different points of view.

Student 11: You don't really have to have the same appearance to be you. I could have a makeover and still be me.

Student 6: You don't need to have the same body, because you could have plastic surgery and still be you.

Student 2: You could get a prosthetic leg. Or you could get all your internal organs and body parts transferred.

Student 3: Your mother can change. You can have step-mums.

Student 6: Anyone can change their name and still be the same person.

Student 9: Your heart can change because you can change from being a really mean person to someone nice.

Student 7: And also you can have a heart transplant, which is *literally* changing your heart.

Student 8: You *can* get a different personality. Like, when I'm an old person, I'm going to be like: 'Get out of my yard, you young whippersnappers!'

Student 10: You could lose all your memories. But you probably would still be you. You've *got* the memories that you forgot, but you don't know where, tucked away somewhere in your brain ... you can't find them. But you are still you anyway. ■

The Philosophy Club (n.d. 1, pp. 4-5)

Working together, the students succeed in generating a diverse set of criteria according to which a person's identity may be thought to persist over time. When prompted, the students succeed in calling many of these criteria into question, to the point of dismantling virtually the entire set. (For a detailed analysis of another student dialogue inspired by the same stimulus material and covering similar territory, see Worley 2009a.)

'Adopt the mantle' examples

'Adopt the mantle' examples invite novices to decide how best to foster students' thinking. They present facilitation scenarios that call for reflective decision-making (Luo 2015).

The value of these examples is conveyed in the following feedback from a participant in a teacher education module that employed video vignettes in conjunction with analysis, personal reflection and group dialogue: '[G]iving teachers scenarios and asking them what they would do ... trains teachers to react appropriately and also gives them a pool of scenarios and responses to store in their memory and refer to when similar situations arise' (Hewitt, Pedretti, Bencze, Vaillancourt, & Yoon 2003, p. 496).

Example 3

Like the previous one, this example illuminates the use of criteria—but here, novices are invited to adopt the mantle of the facilitator themselves. In this example transcribed from a video (Makhoul 2016), we have a young child, aged five, talking with her mother:

Child:	I will eat whatever there is on the table, but not chicken or meat ... because they're animals, and I like animals ...
Mother:	How about fish?
Child:	Fish? Fish—is it an animal?
Mother:	Yeah.
Child:	I won't eat that either. I won't eat animals! ■

In this dialogue, the child shows herself to be already adept at making judgements by reference to a criterion, so she would be well served by having this proficiency highlighted. Novices presented with this example of dialogue could be invited to identify which thinking tool the child is using, how exactly she is using it, and how a facilitator might best respond in order to draw her attention to her achievement. It is not a trivial matter for novices to begin with the task of identifying which thinking

tool is in play. Shulman (1996) points out that asking *'What is this a case of?'* (p. 201) stimulates teachers to do precisely the intellectual work that makes examples so fruitful for professional learning.

Example 4

This example may help to illustrate how novices, tasked with highlighting students' proficient use of the thinking tools, might deal with a more complex exchange of ideas. The transcript below reflects part of a dialogue about free will among students aged 7–10:

> Student 1: Actually, you don't have free will. You don't have free will [even] if you think you do. Because if I thought I could walk through that glass [wall], I wouldn't be able to, just 'cause I thought that ... Eventually when you were doing something that you'd think you were able to do, you would have to find out at some point that you can't ...
>
> Student 2: So you can't walk through that [glass wall]. You still have free will inside the rules of—the laws of the world.
>
> Student 3: There are two types of rules. One of the rules is a law, and there's a second type of rule which is like—
>
> Student 2: One of those rules is inside the other one.
>
> Student 3: —One of those rules is like, you can't smoke in spots where it says 'You can't smoke in this spot', and then the other one is a rule of life, almost, or a rule like you can't walk through glass.
>
> Student 2: The rules of a game is *inside* the rules of life. It is. ■
>
> The Philosophy Club (n.d. 1, p. 22)

Novices projecting themselves into the role of facilitator might attend to the use of distinction, noting that a student distinguishes between natural or physical laws (alluded to as 'laws of the world' or 'rules of life') on the one hand, and human or societal laws (alluded to as 'rules of the game') on the other. Novices might also recognise the helpful use of example, with a student citing the impermeability of a glass wall as an example of a natural law and a prescribed smoking ban as an example of a human law. Novices might further observe that the final insight—that human laws exist within a broader framework of natural laws—reveals that student's use of conceptual exploration—specifically, categorical thinking—to

systematically organise subject matter for 'a clearer, more coherent view ... [that] paves the way for deeper understanding' (Cam 2006, p. 21). Finally, having perceived the students' successful use of these various thinking tools, novices would need to consider how best to alert students to the thinking tools they have perhaps unwittingly used.

Example 5

Some authentic examples reveal students' *lack* of proficiency in using the particular thinking tools needed to progress a dialogue. The transcript below, drawn from a video-recorded dialogue (Queensland University of Technology, n.d.) among students aged five and six, constitutes one such example. In this class, the facilitator was using borderline cases (Cam 2006) to help deepen students' understanding of the concept of stealing:

Facilitator: 'Your friend has done a drawing that you really like. You do one exactly the same.' ... Are you able to give us a reason why your group decided [this case] goes under *not stealing*?

Student 1: Because when you're stealing, it's taking something from someone and keeping it. But you're just copying the idea. You're just stealing the *idea*, not the thing.

Facilitator: Hmm ... So if you're taking someone's idea, is that stealing their idea?

Student 1: It's stealing their idea. Except it's a different type of stealing. It's not *stealing* stealing, it's the other type of stealing.

Facilitator: What's the other type of stealing?

Student 1: It's where you're just copying. It's not stealing, it's copying.

Facilitator: Oh … So what's the difference? Can you then make a distinction between copying and stealing? How are they different?

Student 1: When you're stealing is like, if you see something you like that your friend has, that they built, and you want it, you don't steal it, you go home and make one, exactly the same. And it's not stealing, it's just copying.

....

Facilitator: Just on [Student 1's] idea of: 'it's not stealing, it's copying', he said, because you've got the idea. Stealing is you're *keeping* something.

Somebody *owns* it. And then you're *taking something* from them. Is that what you're doing with their idea? What do you think, [Student 2]?

Student 2: Yes, it is stealing, because you're still stealing something: their idea. You're not stealing their picture, you're just stealing their idea of doing it. You're stealing something, but it doesn't look like you're stealing like the piece of paper.

Facilitator: So it's not a physical thing, but it's still their idea, so you think it's stealing. What do other people think about that?

....

Student 3: Copying *is* stealing. Because even though it's not the usual stealing, it's still stealing.

Facilitator: Why? Why is it still stealing?

Student 3: Because you're stealing someone's good idea they came up with themselves. And if they find out that you've stolen their idea, they might be, like, really downhearted that you have.

Facilitator: So, would it ever be OK to copy someone's idea?

Student 3: If they let you, yes.

Facilitator: I'm going to write that down, too. 'You don't ask their permission'. ■

After the first student equivocates ('It's stealing ... Except ... It's not *stealing* stealing ... It's not stealing ...'), the facilitator attempts to elicit the use of distinction by asking: 'Can you then make a distinction between copying and stealing? How are they different?' This is a helpful intervention, but the student appears to miss the cue. Instead of drawing a distinction, he elaborates on his belief that the act of copying an idea does not count as stealing.

Subsequently, the facilitator refers to stealing as taking something owned by someone else, perhaps hinting at an aspect of stealing that may help to distinguish it from mere copying: stealing deprives the rightful owner of something. The students do not seem to register this point, however. Two other students assert that copying an idea *is* stealing. Underlying their conviction may be a sense that copying and stealing both involve appropriation without giving due credit, but this idea is not clearly articulated.

At the end of the excerpt, the facilitator elicits the idea that permission may be granted for copying (but not, implicitly, for stealing). It's not clear whether the students perceive this as a further step towards drawing a distinction.

While the students' young ages must be acknowledged here, it is evident that they struggle with making the relevant distinction: by the end of the dialogue, key similarities and differences between copying and stealing remain obscure. It would therefore be a worthy challenge for novices to adopt the mantle of the facilitator and consider what they would say next in this dialogue to further support the students in distinction-making.

Example 6

The following transcript, featuring nine- and ten-year-old students, constitutes another example that could be used to invite novices to adopt the mantle of the facilitator.

Facilitator: If you imagine a society where there were no rules and no laws, and you could do whatever you liked, would you be happier in that society?

Student 1: I'd be happier in a society where you had to follow average rules like 'No murdering', but you didn't have to follow rules like 'Clean your bedroom or there will be a severe consequence.'

Facilitator: You've made a distinction between some kinds of rules or laws that you think it's important to follow, and others that you have to follow because you get told to, but you don't think they're that important. What makes those two categories of rules different?

Student 1: Well one's actually important, and one's just stupid.

Facilitator: OK, so what makes *not murdering* important in a way that *staying clean and tidy* is not important?

Student 2: I could live in a room with junk on the floor and I'd still be able to survive.

Student 3: Important rules are actually useful. Like 'don't run in the middle of the road'—it's a parenting rule and it's a good idea as well. ■

The Philosophy Club (n.d. 1, p. 14)

After the first student draws a distinction between 'important' and 'stupid' rules, the facilitator attempts to elicit criteria for deciding importance. Subsequent remarks from students imply that the only behaviours that ought to be regulated are those that endanger survival. If made aware of this implication, the students might be inclined to reconsider their assumptions.

Novices could be asked how they, in the role of facilitator, would prompt students to identify and evaluate the implications of what they have said. One approach is for the facilitator to try to harness other students' insights in order to bring the hidden implication to light. As Reznitskaya and Gregory (2013) observe:

> During inquiry dialogue, student misconceptions, gaps in knowledge, and flaws in reasoning become visible to the group and are 'put to the test of *public accountability*' ... Thus, the dialogic process guards against errors in substantive conclusions, as the group continually self-corrects. (p. 117)

Using another approach, novices could be encouraged to think of a suitable follow-up question. For instance, where a student discounts the importance of a rule like 'you must clean your room' on the grounds that mess doesn't undermine survival, a facilitator might ask: 'Are the *only* important rules ones that protect life?' or 'Can you think of a rule that you consider to be important even though obeying it won't preserve any lives?'

Example 7

While students make intellectual moves quite instinctively, Cam (2006) recommends that they learn to deploy the thinking tools not merely in intuitive and *ad hoc* ways, but in conscious, strategic and eventually habitual ways. Facilitating this kind of cognitive development is no straightforward task, however. Students often formulate an argument in a mere sentence or two, and it can be very difficult for novices to discern the reasoning embedded in such fleeting utterances. Consider this remark that a ten-year-old made in the context of a dialogue about outgrowing childhood beliefs:

> Student 1: There is significant proof that Santa isn't real. Significant proof. Like, kids have done nothing bad, and then Santa doesn't come. ■
>
> The Philosophy Club (n.d. 1, p. 40)

Here, the student provides a reason ('kids have done nothing bad and then Santa doesn't come') in support of a claim ('Santa isn't real'). The fact that there is 'a "gap" between the reason given and the claim it is meant to support .... indicates that something is being assumed. The most plausible assumption is the thing that best plugs the gap' (Cam 2006, p. 106). A reformulation of the argument, with the student's plausible assumption stated as an implicit premise, might look like this:

Premise 1 (implicit):	If Santa were real, he would visit every well-behaved child at Christmas.
Premise 2:	At least some well-behaved children are not visited by Santa at Christmas.
Conclusion:	(Therefore) Santa is not real.

It is important for novices to become attuned to the casual expression of arguments with implicit premises because students

> have a tendency to express themselves in *assertions* rather than [complete] arguments ... Any links that inhere between the assertions and the conclusions they are trying to show are true are often implicitly made in their own heads and often unconsciously. For this reason I think the facilitator needs to be able to make explicit what is implicit and this is done by eliciting the connections [students] are making ... (Worley 2008, p. 20).

A facilitator who recognises such arguments as they arise in classroom dialogue will be better equipped to help students identify and test hidden assumptions.

Conclusion

Following in the pragmatist tradition, Cam (in press) has long been preoccupied with integrating theory and practice. In the field of Philosophy for Children in Australia, he has led the charge by developing a broad array of accessible and popular teaching resources with a local flavour.

The proposal offered in this paper builds on Cam's legacy in two ways. First, by demonstrating how authentic examples can be usefully applied to professional learning, it integrates the theory of teaching dialogic argument with real-world practice. Such pragmatism is a cherished value of Cam's, and a *sine qua non* of his

success in creating teaching resources. Second, the proposal contributes to Cam's overarching vision of using classroom dialogue to develop students' proficiency in reasoning and conceptual exploration. As he says:

> To temper our experience by submitting it to the judgment of others is to become more reasonable. I have in mind such things as learning to listen to other people's points of view and to concede the implications of our own opinions, as well as learning to explore our disagreements reasonably and to change our minds when that is warranted on the basis of reason and evidence. (Cam 2008, p. 39)

It is in the service of this vision that I am advocating the use of authentic examples in professional learning, not only to broaden the uptake of dialogic teaching but to engender dialogic argument in the classroom. In the same spirit I have demonstrated how both 'model facilitator' examples and 'adopt the mantle' examples usefully support novices in highlighting and eliciting students' intellectual moves.

I am similarly inspired by Kuhn's (2008) view that dialogic argument is 'the most powerful means of evaluating competing ideas and constructing shared understanding' (p.173), and that the 'skills and understanding associated with [dialogic] argument are truly ones that will *equip students for life*, not just for more school' (Kuhn 2008, p. 173, italics mine).

As a means to this vital end, professional learning programs must prepare novices more effectively to facilitate dialogic argument. This includes providing opportunities to engage deliberately with authentic examples. Without such opportunities, novices will continue to be daunted by the prospect of launching into dialogue facilitation. Moreover, those who do set sail may well find themselves adrift. Let's not leave them rudderless.

A note on the transcripts

The quoted examples of dialogue in this paper were not all transcribed verbatim. For the sake of coherence, when transcribing examples I edited out some instances of speech disfluency, specifically false starts and fillers. In my choice of edits I made every effort to be faithful to the speakers' intended meaning.

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