

Teacher Facilitation of Whole-Class Discussion in Secondary History Classrooms

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Abstract: The case for classroom discussion as a core method for subject matter learning stands on stable theoretical and empirical ground. However, much of the extant research has occurred in math and science classrooms. The four papers in this symposium examine the nature of whole-class discussion in history classrooms, and begin with the premise that teacher facilitation plays a critical role in the quality and direction of whole-class discussion about the past. The first two papers explore the nature of historical understanding, and the discursive and socio-cultural obstacles that often stand in the way of its achievement in secondary history classrooms. The second two papers take a closer look at teacher learning, growth, and reflection in leading whole-class discussion.

Contribution and Value to the Learning Sciences Community

In her keynote address at ICLS 2010, Pam Grossman noted the virtual absence of the humanities in a conference dedicated to the learning sciences. This symposium seeks to answer Grossman's call on two levels: first, the four papers presented here deal with the subject matter of history and the particular demands of teaching and learning in the history classroom; second, the papers examine the nature of whole-class discussion, a method that, while not *exclusive* to learning in the humanities, certainly constitutes one of its "signature pedagogies" (Shulman, 2005). Perhaps it is unsurprisingly, then, that much of the extant research on classroom discussion has occurred in math and science classrooms. By bringing together four papers on teacher facilitation of whole-class discussion in history classrooms, this symposium contributes not only to the LS community, but to our understanding of classroom discourse more generally.

Overall Focus and Major Issues Addressed

Our symposium takes a look at the nature of whole-class discussion in history classrooms. All four papers begin with the premise that teacher facilitation plays a critical role in the quality and direction of whole-class discussion about the past. The first two papers analyze classroom discourse through multiple theoretical lenses that attempt to parse the myriad—and often conflicting—goals represented and actively or implicitly promoted by teacher, students, the curriculum, and classroom norms. Both papers attempt to answer the question: what stands in the way of the achievement of historical understanding in whole-class discussion? And to what extent does teacher facilitation open or close the door to student historical understanding?

The second two papers take a closer look at teacher learning, growth, and reflection in leading whole-class discussion. One of these papers frames discussion facilitation as an improvisational method and examines two history teachers' development in discussion facilitation over the course of a semester, one of whom participates in an improv class that serves as an intervention. The other paper is a self-study of two teacher educators' facilitation of a summer workshop for history teachers on how to lead whole-class discussion. The workshop was designed to encompass the three components of a pedagogy of enactment (cf. Grossman, Compton, Igra, Ronfeldt, Shahan, & Williamson, 2009). The authors reflect on the extent to which their own pedagogy adequately modeled and reflected the pedagogies they were presenting to their teachers.

The following questions underlie all four papers in the symposium: Why is whole-class discussion important in the history classroom? What is the nature of historical understanding in whole-class discussion? What role should teachers play in facilitating discussion? What implications do these findings have for teacher education and professional development?

Potential Significance of the Contributions

The case for classroom discussion as a core method for subject matter learning stands on stable empirical and theoretical ground. Theoretical justifications for classroom discussion are rooted in models of participatory democracy and reasoned discourse, as well as in sociocultural theory, which maintains that learning is situated and mediated by language, and that novices learn by observing and participating with experts in cultural activities. Empirically, a considerable body of literature illuminates how classroom discussion promotes and

supports student learning and reasoned inquiry. However, much of this research has occurred in mathematics, science, and reading classrooms. To date, none of the research on classroom discussion has examined whole-class text-based discussion in secondary history classrooms.

One big question to emerge from this body of research concerns the teacher's role in scaffolding and supporting reasoned discourse. Researchers agree that productive student discourse is unlikely to occur in a classroom where teacher talk consists *exclusively* of Initiation-Response-Evaluation (I-R-E) patterns (cf. Cazden, 2001; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1997), yet suggestions for effective teacher facilitation vary. Some researchers have recast I-R-E sequences as potentially useful under certain circumstances. Wells (1999) found instances when the "third move" of the sequence served to follow-up on, rather than evaluate, student thinking, and O'Connor (2001) distinguished between exploratory talk, when the teacher might hesitate to correct a student's misconception, and summative talk, when the teacher might review a concept in order to reestablish students' knowledge. Wolf, Crosson, and Resnick (2004) also found that the quality of student responses depended on the types of questions that teachers posed. Clearly, the teacher plays a more critical role as facilitator in whole-class discussion, as opposed to small-group discussion, where teacher involvement is at best intermittent.

The four papers in this symposium address the role of teacher facilitation of whole-class discussion in history class. In the first paper, Reisman defines the goal of text-based historical discussion as entry into the *historical problem space*, where students come face to face with the strangeness of the past. She identifies instances of substantive whole-class text-based discussion from classroom video taken over the course of six-month intervention in five 11th grade classrooms that implemented a document-based curriculum, and highlights particular teacher discourse moves that may have opened or closed the door to the historical problem space. In the second paper, Shane-Sagiv analyzes a spontaneous classroom discussion that occurred in a 10th grade high school class in Jerusalem when students learned about young socialist immigrants to early 20th century Palestine. Shane-Sagiv identifies the forces—including teacher practice—that worked to pull this discussion, and ones like it, into the present and away from historical understanding. In the third paper, Barker observes, interviews, and studies two history teachers as they teach history with discussion and reflect upon their discussion-facilitation styles. One of the two teachers participated in a 10-week "Improvisation for Professional Practice" course that served as an intervention to support the improvisational nature of classroom discussion facilitation. Lastly, Barker and Fogo present their findings from a self-study of a professional development workshop on classroom discussion that they led with history teachers. The authors discuss a promising pedagogical model for bringing practice-based instruction into professional development, and reflect on their own successes and shortcomings in implementing this model. We are fortunate that Joseph Polman has agreed to be the discussant on this panel.

We believe that, together, these papers contribute not only to our understanding of whole-class discussion in history class, but also an appreciation for the challenging role that the teacher must play in facilitating and curating educative discursive experiences for students. Our four presenters represent a range of institutions and roles. From public and private institutions of higher education in California, New York, and Israel, we are researchers, teacher educators, professional-development providers, curriculum designers, and former public-school teachers. We hope that by sharing what we have learned about discussions in high-school history classrooms, we will launch a community-wide conversation about how we might best support and prepare teachers to facilitate meaningful, reasoned, and provocative deliberations about the past.

Entering the Historical Problem Space: Whole-Class Text-Based Discussion in History Class

Abby Reisman

Overview

The present study examined whole-class text-based discussions in 5 classrooms that participated in a six-month curriculum intervention in 11th grade history classrooms. This study asks: (1) To what extent did the presence of inquiry-based curricular materials foster whole-class disciplinary discussion? And (2) What was the nature of teacher facilitation of classroom discussion about historical texts? Analyses explored whether relationships existed between particular teacher moves and higher levels of student historical understanding.

Historical Problem Space

The framework for this study draws from the research on student historical thinking, as well as from the philosophy of history. In attempting to reconstruct the past, the historian enters into what I am calling the *historical problem space*, where the strangeness of the past butts up against the human desire to render it familiar. The strangeness of the past becomes a sticking point for students who struggle to explain unusual historical customs or behaviors (cf. Ashby & Lee, 1987; Dickenson & Lee, 1984; Lee, Dickenson, & Ashby, 1997). Ultimately, entrance into the historical problem space requires careful and deliberative reading of

historical texts, and the formulation of claims that reflect the tentative nature of historical knowledge. This study examined whether and how teachers were able to foster disciplinary deliberation and textual analysis among adolescents studying the past.

Method

Over the course of the six-month intervention, five treatment classrooms were observed twice per week and videotaped once per week, for a total of 20 videotaped lessons per teacher, 100 videotaped lessons total. All five teachers participated in four-day summer training, and three follow-up workshops. The teachers ranged in age, years of experience, and background in history. Videotaped classroom lessons were analyzed and instances of whole-class discussion were identified using four criteria: 1) the teacher had to pose the lesson's central historical question explicitly at the start of the discussion; 2) students must have read at least two documents *prior to the discussion*; 3) the discussion had to include at least three distinct student turns that responded to the central question; 4) the discussion needed to have lasted at least four minutes. These criteria maximized the probability that the discussions would contain instances of substantive text-based discussion about the past.

Transcripts were parsed into teacher and student turns. Teacher turns were divided into two moves: "generic" and "historical". Classified as *generic* were any moves that are not particular to historical discussion, for example, when a teacher encouraged student participation or basic elaboration on a point. Historical moves explicitly prompted text-based historical argumentation. An intentional effort was made to use existing language, in light of the call to develop a "common technical vocabulary" of instruction (cf. Grossman & McDonald, 2008, p. 186), and several codes below include citations to prior work where the term was applied or coined. Here, however, the terms specify history-specific disciplinary moves: (1) *Modeling (text-based discussion)*: Teachers model how to use text to support a historical claim or how to agree or disagree with a classmate's interpretation of evidence; (2) *Revoicing (a text-based historical claim)*: Teacher reformulates/refines student text-based claim in order to highlight/clarify the relationship between the claim and warrant (cf. O'Connor & Michaels, 1996).; (3) *Uptake (of text-based historical claim)*: Teacher follows-up student textual reference with a question or requests or provides a *counter-argument* (cf. Nystrand & Gamoran, 1997; Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003); (4) *Marking Text (for historical interpretation)*: Teacher directs student attention to a particular document and asked an interpretive question about it (cf. Beck & McKeown, 2006); (5) *Textual Press*: Teacher asks student to substantiate claim with textual evidence (cf. McElhone, 2012); (6) *Stabilize content*: Teacher authoritatively (most often through an I-R-E sequence) reviews content knowledge relevant to the discussion at hand. A final code, *Presentist Question*, was developed to account for instances when the teacher posed a question that was ahistorical or prompted students to turn from the documents and to bring contemporary worldviews to bear on the topic. Consequently, presence of this code was considered evidence of ahistorical discussion.

Findings and Implications

Nine discussions fulfilled the criteria established above for substantive text-based historical discussion and these totalled 132 minutes of disciplinary whole-class discussion from over 7000 minutes of footage.. Furthermore, only three of five teachers who used the intervention materials led substantive text-based discussion. Although I cannot engage in causal or even comparative analyses, I argue that certain moves may have opened or closed the door to deeper historical understanding. By examining each teacher in turn, I suggest that presence and absence of certain moves may shed light on each teacher's beliefs about the goal of whole-class text-based historical discussion.

Due to space limitations, I will provide a single example. Ms. Addams's facilitation style was characterized by high textual press and uptake. In the following exchange she led discussion around a central question: Was Abraham Lincoln racist? As she asked each small group to report their conclusions, she insisted that students support their claims with evidence from the documents:

T: John, what did your group say?

S1: That he was racist.

T: That he was racist? Why?

S1: Because the way he talks about them.

T: Okay. What?

S1: Because the way he talks like bad about them like they're not equal.

T: Okay, do you have a certain document or quote that you're referring to?

S1: (Shakes head).

T: Okay I need that evidence. Where does he specifically say they're not equal? Document B? Can you quote it?

S2: Where he says, um, "I agree that the Negro is not my equal in many respects."

T: "I agree that the Negro is not my equal in many respects." Okay. I know some people actually used this quote for the other side—it just depends where you end your quote. Historians can do that, right? You decide where you're going to end your quote? Because what does the rest of this sentence say?

S2: Perhaps.

T: Perhaps. Definitely in color we're not the same, which is true, right, that has nothing to do with inferior/superior, it means just saying we definitely don't look the same, and *perhaps* we're not the same intellectually. Maybe. He doesn't say for sure. So it's just, just to show you, that historians, anyone, can just decide—what do you choose to present? . . . So you can end your quote earlier.

Addams's response to S2 sheds light on her instructional goals. Addams noted that S2 quoted only part of Lincoln's sentence, and she suggests to the student that either segment of the sentence could be used to bolster a claim, depending on the position one wished to argue. The full quote reads: "I agree that the Negro is not my equal in many respects, certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment." Although Lincoln's words ring as unambiguously racist to our ears, some historians have argued that Lincoln's use of the qualifier "perhaps," in the context of a debate over slavery in 1858 before a pro-slavery audience, represented a radical departure from the views held by many of his contemporaries (Fredrickson, 1971, 1975; Wineburg, 1998).

Historians would take umbrage at the thought they pull quotes from context to support a particular view. Yet, Addams's goal here is not to illuminate the context of 1858, but rather to stress the importance of providing a textual warrant to back one's claim. The claim-warrant relationship constitutes the core of any argument (cf. Toulmin, 1958). Addams's insistence that students supply warrants to substantiate their claims reflects her commitment to their academic development and college readiness.

Why should an emphasis on argumentative warrant work at cross-purposes with careful textual analysis and entry into the historical problem space? The answer lies in how one arrives at the argument. To better understand, we must turn to a popular writing scaffold known as the "Quote Sandwich" (cf. Lieberman, 2010). In a "Quote Sandwich," textual evidence represents the lunchmeat, tucked between two slices of claim and analysis bread. While arguably useful as a structural support during the writing process, the "quote sandwich," when used as a blueprint for student text-based claims during historical discussion, inverts the inductive process of historical reading. Rather than prompting students to derive their claims from careful, collective analysis of text, the "quote sandwich" model of discussion prompts students first to stake a claim, and then to find a textual warrant to support it, even one that happens to be decontextualized.

Implications

This study demonstrates that genuine disciplinary discussion about historical texts runs counter to many of the assumptions and expectations that both teachers and students bring to the classroom. First, popular curricular resources consistently present argumentation in discipline-neutral ways. The classroom exchanges presented here suggest that teachers will need a more robust model of historical argumentation if they are to help students engage meaningfully with historical texts. The second obstacle lies in contemporary classroom norms that champion student-centered learning and pillory authoritative teacher-centered instruction at the expense of substantive learning. Active teacher facilitation and intervention proved essential for meaningful student participation in two of the three classrooms that featured any amount of substantive text-based discussion. Furthermore, the teacher who was able to bring students into the historical problem space kept students' eyes trained on the documents by marking the text, and modeling and revoicing how to read and how to use quotes as warrants for historical claims. Furthermore, she was also the only teacher to interrupt discussion with I-R-E sequences that reviewed and stabilized content knowledge. Such a teacher-centered, didactic intervention is often seen as heavy-handed, squelching the agency of the child. Yet it is precisely these moves that pave the way to substantive historical discussion and entry into the historical problem space.

Is Communism Against The Laws Of Nature? Or: What is the Conversation in the History Classroom About?

Chava Shane-Sagiv

In this paper I analyze a discussion from a history lesson in a tenth grade Israeli high school classroom in Jerusalem. The aim of my close reading of both the words and tone of the conversation is to demonstrate the following claims, which are based on a yearlong empirical study: (a) spontaneous student comments in ordinary history classrooms contain very little history, (b) classroom discussions of the past create very particular opportunities for challenging student assumptions and beliefs, and (c) teacher practices have a direct bearing on the value of historical lessons to both student knowledge and identity.

Data for this paper was drawn from a larger research program that aimed to explore actual student talk, practices and learning in an ordinary history classroom (with typical instruction, curriculum, and state tests). This research was motivated by the gap that exists between, on the one hand, claims as to the importance of history education advanced in both public and scholarly debates and, on the other hand, the paucity of actual empirical data on the topic.

Theoretical and Methodological Approaches Pursued

During the course of one academic school year (eight months of instruction), I observed, took notes on and audio recorded all 42 history lessons in a tenth grade classroom in Jerusalem. I conducted monthly interviews with the history teacher and a focus group, distributed questionnaires and collected 'artifacts of practice' (Ball & Cohen, 1999). The focus, when analyzing the class discussion, was on 'student talk'. My primary goal was to ascertain what students asked about in these lessons, what they appeared to find interesting, and what they found frustrating. All of the students' questions and in-class remarks in all of the 42 lessons were analyzed, with the aim of discovering patterns of responses to content knowledge, specifically: (a) difficulty in understanding, (b) engagement, and (c) personal identification.

Preliminary codes were generated while data collection took place and then used to systematically analyze the entire set of lesson protocols. Lessons that touched upon a couple of categories were transcribed. Three areas were defined: (1) *lines of reasoning in the history classroom*: following students' talk over time analyzed in light of theories of the multiple lines of reasoning in the history classroom (Halldén, 1994); (2) *judging/misunderstanding the past/history in oral conversations*: student remarks reflecting understanding and misunderstandings of the historical content were analyzed in light of theories on sense-making of the past and history (Lee, 2005; Wineburg, 1998); (3) *blending of academic knowledge and identity/beliefs*: exchanges reflecting emotions/values were analyzed in light of discourse theories concerning the role of teacher talk in blending knowledge and belief in other subject matter classrooms (Lemke, 1990; Wortham, 2006) and in light of theories on this blending with regards to history (Wertsch, 2000).

Findings

Consider the following exchanges recorded in a tenth grade history classroom in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 21st century. Ms. Stern, the teacher, has been lecturing (for not so many minutes) on the Jews of Eastern Europe who, in Ottoman Palestine at the beginning of the 20th century, established *kvootzot* (literally, 'groups') – collective communes in which young socialist immigrants shared housing and clothing in an attempt to avoid what they considered capitalist exploitation. In the 1920s, in British Palestine, some of these small groups turned into larger ones, which came to be known as *kibbutzim*. To this day *kibbutzim* remain scattered across Israel; many, however, have now abandoned strict collectivist practices. Nevertheless, they remain a code word in Israel for socialist/communist ideas and values.

The lesson has settled rapidly into a pretty conventional I-R-E pattern. As an example of the ways the young idealists lived in the *kvootzot*, Ms. Stern has just mentioned in passing that they 'took and returned clothes from collective stacks', she is about to distribute a historical letter from the time, when a lively conversation begins:

1. Natan: it's so dumb to live on a *kibbutz*!
2. Dana: it's actually quite fun to share the same clothes.
3. Noa: what's so fun about it?
4. Tomer: It's terrible! You live off of other people.
5. Mrs. Stern: you live according to your values. [very sharp]

From the start of this conversation it is not clear if the students are referring to life on the historical *kvootzot* of the beginning of the twentieth century, or expressing their opinions about life on *kibbutzim* today, or talking about the sharing of goods in general. All student remarks (lines 1-4) are phrased in the present tense as ahistorical opinions or questions. Nathan (line 1) dismisses life on the *kibbutz* while Ms. Stern had not used that term. Tomer expresses a harsh judgment against communal life (line 4) – but why is his tone upset if he is referring to a past way of life? Ms. Stern snaps at Tomer, employing a harsh tone herself and expressing a positive judgment of this same way of life. Student comments continue:

6. Dina: I don't like it, it's my clothes.
7. Noa: I find it gross to wear clothes that have been worn by somebody else.
8. Ido: communism is against all laws of nature.
9. Tomer: I think it's a lousy life.
10. Ido: communism is against all laws of nature! [very loud]

Once again, all student comments are directed against collective notions of life. The most extreme is Ido's claim (line 8), repeated with greater emphasis (line 10), that communism – a term that Ms. Stern had not used in this lesson – is against the laws of nature. It is at this point that – for the first time – a more hesitant and less-generalizing approach is introduced into the conversation:

11. Shira: but the people who came then had very little, and they didn't need a lot.
12. Noa: but it's not an appropriate life style anymore.
13. Tamar: but back then they came for ideological reasons.
14. Shimi: but it's against human nature! [very loud]
15. Mrs. Stern: why is trying to create an equal society and fighting against social classes against human nature?
16. Ido: but what does one aspire to?
17. Ms. Stern: They aspired to create a world without social classes.
18. Dov: wow. [cynical]

In this last exchange, Shira and Tamar introduce historic claims (lines 11, 13) into the conversation for the first time. They speak about the people of the past, distinguishing between them and those in class and using the term "they." For the different behaviors and values of these people these two students give an explanation in terms of needs and ideology, which had both been addressed by Ms. Stern in a prior lesson. However, instead of building upon these remarks, and taking the conversation back to the beginning of the 20th century, Stern chooses to respond to the repeated general statement about communism and human nature. Stern responds to Shimi (line 15) by asking a rhetorical moral question that is less about the *kvootzot* and more about not letting Shimi's response hang in the air. In response to her rhetorical question Ido (line 16) introduces a further abstract and ahistorical question. Stern tried again to promote her approach, which Dov didn't find convincing (line 18).

Discussion and Implications

- 1) *Talking about the past is never only talking about the past.* Throughout the conversation presented above, as in most conversations across the year, the topic of the conversation shifted rapidly from past to present without this being explicitly mentioned. It wasn't easy to distinguish – during class or in retrospect when analyzing the data – who, when or what the discussion was about.
- 2) *Teacher practice influences the present-past pull.* In the lesson above, as in many lessons across the year, the teacher contributed to the shift of focus away from the past. She contributed both by what she did do – her responses, and by what she didn't do – e.g., not discussing the historical document that she had brought to class.
- 3) *Becoming often trumps teaching and learning.* In the conversation reported above, as in most conversations in this history classroom, signs of student engagement (raised voices, repetition of claims and questions, etc.) are indications that students are working through their beliefs, or desire to do so. The data suggests two surprising correlates, at least in this classroom: firstly, the same is also the case with the teacher, and secondly, (though the exchange provided above might be a partial exception) such discussions are hardly ever directly connected to the content knowledge being discussed.

Historical inquiry directs our minds and emotions to humans and human behavior – that of our own as well as that of earlier times. The nuanced addition of 'earlier times' is what distinguishes a history class from a 'civics class', a 'sociology class', and so on. The above data demonstrates how difficult it is, in an ordinary classroom, to 'stick' to the past. For history education, this finding has implications for teacher training, textbook writing and testing. Furthermore, this research has implications for teaching and learning in other subject areas, where one might find analogous scenarios of student engagement leading discussion beyond or past the subject-matter that needs to be covered.

Hundreds of people chose to live communal lives in early 20th century Palestine, a time when socialist and communist ideas were attractive to millions of people around the world. We can dismiss them all as 'dumb' and move on to the next topic, or we can pause and discuss a 'text' that sheds light on the phenomenon (using the methods my colleagues in this session are suggesting or other ones). A conversation focused on the past need not only serve as a stage from which we pronounce what we already know about who we are; it can also *add* to both our knowledge and ourselves.

Improvisation and Teacher Learning: Re-imagining Habituated Forms of Interaction in the History Classroom

Lisa M. Barker

Leading whole-class discussion requires teachers to both carefully prepare and improvise based on students' contributions. How do teachers learn to do the difficult work of orchestrating a rich and, by nature, improvised classroom discussion? How might training in improvisational theatre affect teachers' facilitation of classroom discussion? This presentation addresses these questions through case studies of two high-school history teachers, Zach and Samuel, who attended a summer professional-development workshop on leading whole-class discussion. The author examined the discussions these teachers facilitated during the semester following this workshop.

Research Design

Zach and Samuel taught history in different northern California public high schools. Each teacher selected one of their sections of students to focus on for classroom observations and post-observation reflective interviews collected during the fall semester of the 2011-2012 school year. Zach focused on his honors US History class of approximately 30 juniors, and Samuel chose a section of approximately 20 juniors in Advanced Placement US History. The author observed each classroom four times – twice toward the beginning of the semester and twice toward the end – and conducted post-observation interviews to learn how Zach and Samuel reflected on the discussions they led.

After the first two observations, Samuel took a course called “Improvisation for Professional Practice: Inspiring Innovation in the Workplace.” Taught by Rob Carrol, this course met once a week for ten weeks and served as the improv theatre intervention. Within the course, Samuel participated in a variety of individual and collaborative exercises that invited him to try out and reflect on principles of improvisation alongside approximately 15 other professionals from a variety of relational practices (e.g., psychologists, parents, corporate leaders).

Data sources for each teacher include four videotaped observations of classroom talk, classroom artifacts used during observed talk (e.g., handouts, texts), and five audiotaped interviews. Improv intervention data sources included field notes, artifacts, and audio recordings of small-group reflection. The primary data sources used in analyses were the interviews and classroom observations. These data were used to document changes in the nature of Zach and Samuel's verbal moves during facilitation of classroom discussion, and to triangulate observed changes with reflective commentary provided during interviews. Interview transcripts were coded for evidence of how teachers understand and define classroom discussion, such as what they saw as the purpose of discussion and how they viewed the role of content, classroom climate, the teacher, and students during classroom talk.

Episodes of *extended* (i.e., lasting at least two minutes) *whole-class talk* were transcribed from the videotaped classroom observations. The author defined ‘whole-class talk’ as any talk format that included – through listening or speaking – the entire class (e.g., teacher-led whole-group recitation or discussion; student-led half-class ‘fishbowl’ discussions that all students can see and hear). Transcripts of whole-class talk were divided into *communication units*, one or more words that function as an independent clause; thus, a single person's turn can have multiple units. Each unit was coded for whether the teacher or a student was the speaker, and then by *linguistic function(s)*, or if the unit served to direct, inform, question, respond, or offer a short response (e.g., “Yeah,” “Okay”). Units coded as ‘respond’ were subcoded for kinds of *uptake*, or the purposeful picking up on student responses in order to frame new questions (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1997). The author created a typology of uptake for the purposes of this study.

Findings

Over the course of the semester, Zach seemed to change how he defined discussion and how he saw his role during discussion. As he reflected on the discussions he led, he expressed a desire to let students do more of the heavy lifting in terms of demonstrating knowledge, listening to one another, and building off each others' ideas. He characterized his original sense of his role during discussion as one who steers students toward particular historical arguments through a set of leading questions. He had since re-imagined this role as enforcing norms for active listening and uptake. This shift in vision seemed to manifest in the quality of Zach's responses to student contributions. Specifically, he used two moves to make space for student comments: (1) He made a conscious effort to let students answer questions, rather than filling in the gaps for them; and (2) he used an uptake move the author calls *Post* to encourage students to respond directly to one another. After a student offered an idea, Zach ‘Posted,’ or asked a question that gave the rest of the class a space to respond directly to that student's thought before moving on to a new idea.

The frequency, sequence, and quality of Samuel's questions and uptake also seemed to shift as the semester progressed. The nature of these changes, alongside Samuel's interview commentary and an analysis of Rob's debriefs of improv exercises, suggest that Samuel may have responded to Rob's teaching by noticing, naming, and importing into his history classroom aspects of Rob's style of discussion leadership. While describing what he noticed about Rob's facilitation of discussion, Samuel mentioned both Rob's overall facilitative manner and the particular moves Rob made during his facilitation of whole-group debriefs. Among

Rob's moves, Samuel mentioned the open-ended quality and sequence of Rob's questions, the generous 'wait time' Rob used to give participants time to think after each question, and how Rob responded to student contributions by mapping specific student ideas onto the essential understandings Rob wanted students to gather during the course.

There was also evidence that Samuel began to import features of Rob's *template of talk*, or how Rob choreographed questions and uptake to guide participants toward key insights about the nature of improvisation. Samuel may have imported three features of Rob's template of talk: the use of open-ended, authentic questions to launch discussion; the move of mapping student contributions onto essential understandings; and – a talk move of Rob's that Samuel didn't reference in his interview data – the use of *Press* to probe student thinking. Similar to the notion of 'conceptual press' in mathematics (Kazemi & Stipek, 2001) and reading comprehension (McElhone, 2012), 'Press' is a move in which a speaker responds to a comment with a request for further explanation, elaboration, clarification, or evidence (e.g., "Say more about what you mean by X."; "What in the text makes you think X?").

Discussion and Implications

Although the Common Core State Standards for Speaking and Listening assume that teachers are adequately prepared to explicitly teach discussion skills and facilitate discussion that promotes comprehension and collaboration, this research shows that even teachers who are very motivated to investigate and improve their facilitation struggle to do so. Across subject areas, schools, and programs of preparation, teachers consistently wrestle with how to facilitate discussion and, therefore, with how to support students in exhibiting the speaking and listening capacities outlined by the Common Core.

At the same time that this research has highlighted the difficulty of re-imagining habituated forms of interaction, it offers hope that change in instructional practice is possible. Within just one semester, Zach and Samuel used higher levels of uptake to a greater degree over time, which suggests that they may have been listening more carefully to students' contributions as the semester progressed. When triangulated with interview and intervention data, Samuel's shifts in facilitation suggest that the improv course afforded a space for experimenting with new facilitative manners and modes of interaction. The improv course provided ongoing opportunities for participants to experience, understand, and exercise the central principles of improv as well as reflect on the relevance of these principles for their professional practice. These reflections, as facilitated by Rob, offered Samuel weekly representations of the practice of orchestrating discussion. Based on interview data and the observed shifts in the quality and frequency of Samuel's talk moves, he seemed to import improv principles into his facilitation of whole-class talk.

As research takes on the hard work of investigating improv-based interventions and elusive improvisational classroom interactions, we inch closer to understanding how teachers develop and enact the capacity to respond purposefully in the moment to students' ideas.

Reflection on Action: A Self-Study of Pedagogy and Practice in a Teacher Professional-Learning Workshop on Classroom Discussion in History

Lisa M. Barker and Brad Fogo

Our symposium culminates with a presentation that highlights how we have applied our research findings to teacher professional learning. In particular, we examine an intensive summer professional-development workshop on leading whole-class discussion. The authors (who co-taught the workshop) conducted a self-study designed to answer the question: What do the goals, assessments, and activities of the workshop reveal about the instructors' (1) underlying pedagogy of professional development and (2) conceptions of the instructional practice of leading whole-class discussion?

The workshop was called "Investigating the Civil Rights Era: Inquiry-Based Discussion in the History Classroom." Located on a university campus, the workshop lasted approximately 50 hours over eight days (Monday-Thursday, 9am-4pm, for two consecutive weeks) in July-August 2012, and included 16 history teachers from Northern California public high schools. The goals for teacher learning were that, by the end of the workshop, teachers would:

1. Deepen their understanding of a specific historical era – in this case, the causes and effects of post Second World War civil rights movements in the United States.
2. Understand why discussion is important and what components and moves comprise the complex instructional practice of leading whole-class, text-based discussion.
3. Be able to plan for these components and enact targeted moves, including establishing norms for interaction; selecting and excerpting rich written and visual texts to prepare for, propel, and deepen discussions; devising questions, tools, and opportunities for students to practice interacting with

texts and each other; listening actively during discussion, monitoring student participation, and using uptake to respond to student ideas; and assessing and providing feedback on discussion.

The workshop provided time for teachers to prepare for the following school year by designing and enacting discussion-based lesson plans based on topics and questions of their choosing.

This choice to build time within the workshop for teachers to plan for and rehearse the instructional practice of leading discussion exhibited our commitment to design teacher-learning experiences that adhere to Kazemi and Hubbard's (2008) notion of a 'pedagogy of enactment,' or opportunities to "simulate the sorts of situations teachers confront in the midst of instructional practice and thus engage teachers in the ways of knowing involved in classroom teaching" (p. 438). In their investigations of how people are prepared for relational professions – namely, the clergy, teaching, and clinical psychology, Grossman and colleagues labeled the three components of a pedagogy of enactment as *representations*, *decomposition*, and *approximations* of practice (Grossman, Compton, Igra, Ronfeldt, Shahan, & Williamson, 2009). The authors suggested that one way to support teachers as they acquire new practices is to structure opportunities for them to (1) observe, (2) unpack, and (3) try out aspects of real-world practice within the context of their professional learning experiences. The workshop followed this three-part framework as it modeled the practice of discourse facilitation (i.e., representations) before "breaking down [the] practice into its constituent parts for the purposes of teaching and learning" (i.e., decomposition) (*Ibid.*, p. 2058). Throughout the workshop, teachers also had multiple, carefully sequenced opportunities to enact (i.e., approximate) these decomposed practices with colleagues. Although off-site, among-peer approximations cannot be as authentic as teaching young people in the context of an actual school, they offer rich opportunities for teachers to rehearse and receive feedback on a complex set of skills in a safe, supportive, low-stakes setting.

Findings

Borrowing from the work of Williamson (2006), we conceptualized the instructional moves required to lead discussion as a set of "strategies for getting students *into*, *through*, and *beyond* discussions" (p. 195). Within each of these three phases is a range of sub-practices; for example, within the 'through' phase, a teacher must listen actively and respond to students' contributions.

While we applied a full pedagogy of enactment (i.e., including representations, decomposition, and approximations of practice) to some of the sub-practices we had targeted, other components of leading discussion were given less or, in some cases, no emphasis. For example, the workshop provided opportunities for teacher-participants to observe, examine, and enact the practices within the 'into' and 'through' phases of discussion, including selecting, adapting, and sequencing rich texts of multiple genres; providing scaffolds (e.g., from simpler to more complex texts, from smaller to larger groups) that support student learning about texts and talk; to listen actively; and to respond to student thinking. Other practices – such as establishing and enforcing norms for interaction, using visual text in discussion, monitoring student participation, synthesizing the content of a discussion, and providing feedback on students' participation – although represented and decomposed, were not fully explored through structured opportunities to approximate practice. The sub-practice of self-reflection on one's own facilitation was partially approximated but never visibly modeled or debriefed. Finally, two of our targeted practices (designing questions and assessing and evaluating students' understanding), although made audible (i.e., "This is important."), were not made visible (i.e., "This is what this looks like.") nor practical (i.e., "This is how you go about doing this."). In hindsight, the 'beyond' phase of discussion received the least time and attention, and the planning and facilitation phases received the bulk of our focus as a teaching and learning community.

Discussion and Implications

As teacher educators who conduct research on the instructional practices we target in our workshops, we strive to establish explicit connections between our findings and the design of subsequent professional-learning experiences. At the same time, we see self-study as a way to stay critical of our pedagogies – to be honest about the extent to which our empirical knowledge aligns with our pedagogies, as well as the extent to which these pedagogies align with our practice as teacher educators. By making transparent these cycles of inquiry, we aim to contribute to the growing body of knowledge of what makes for effective discussion leadership and what teacher-education practices best support teachers as they acquire these skills.

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