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Engaging Children in Dialogic Classroom Talk: Does It Contribute to a Dialogical Self?

Chiel van der Veen, Marjolein Dobber and Bert van Oers

Introduction

> Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (Arendt, 1961)

In today's globalized world, classrooms have become places where different cultures, worldviews, religions, and perspectives meet. This gives students increased opportunities to broaden their horizons, enter new worlds, become acquainted with a vast range of ideas and perspectives, and reflect on their own perspectives. Consequently, this might give them increased possibilities for novel ways of thinking and acting. Despite the great potentials of culturally and religiously heterogeneous classrooms, they have a downside as well: children (and teachers) might experience this melting pot of cultures and perspectives as threatening, confusing, and difficult. It requires the effort of teachers to make these classrooms reach their full potential. This is where we (as educators) should decide whether we love the world and our children enough to prepare them to deal with diversity, tensions, and differences; provide them with tools to take advantage of the range of perspectives they encounter; to prepare them to understand the plural other, as well as the plural

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self (i.e., a multi-voiced self); and to renew a common world that is open and livable.[1] In this chapter, we will argue that this requires well-developed dialogical capacities (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Watkins, 2003) that can be supported by inducting children into dialogic classroom talk in which different perspectives meet and are negotiated, and in which the voices of others interact with and might become part of the self (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). As a first step, we will use cultural-historical activity theory (e.g., van Oers, Wardekker, Elbers, & Van der Veer, 2008) to further elaborate the notion of dialogic classroom talk and connect it with the Dialogical Self Theory (e.g., Hermans, 2001; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Second, we will use classroom observations from our recent studies on the possibilities of dialogic classroom talk in early childhood education to show how dialogic classroom talk gives children space to think together and how during this type of talk different perspectives (or voiced positions) interact and result in shared understanding (van der Veen, van Kruistum, & Michaels, 2015). Further, we will argue that a dialogic classroom culture, as opposed to a monologic one, might also become part of children's self; a dialogical self that is essentially polyphonic (multi-voiced, Bakhtin, 1981) and willing to understand the other and to revise his/her understanding in light of new arguments (cf., Bereiter, 1994). Finally, we will discuss implications of our conception of dialogic classroom talk for educational practice and argue that this type of talk might have great value for the development of a dialogical self that is able to deal with diversity.

What Is Dialogic Classroom Talk?

When one observes a whole-group classroom conversation in a typical classroom, in a typical school, in a typical (Western) country, one will probably notice that the teacher asks most questions, talks much more than the children, and is mainly focused on the reproduction of cultural meanings (i.e., factual knowledge) by the children. This process of transmission often takes the form of the well-known Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) sequence in which the teacher poses a closed question, followed by a response of the student, after which the teacher gives feedback on the response (often in terms of right or wrong) (Mehan, 1979; Wells & Arauz, 2006). This can be seen as a monologic discourse, as the

[1]This is not to say that classrooms should not also be places where children can experience a sense of belonging. Learning to deal with diversity and otherness means to learn to develop dialogical relations with persons that we might, at first, experience as different, maybe even threatening. It is through these dialogical relations that the plural other might become part of a plural self. When children in classroom settings learn to take the perspective of and understand the other, this might give all children an increased sense of belonging. In one of our studies (van der Wilt, van Kruistum, van der Veen, & van Oers, 2016), we have shown that children's communication skills – skills that give children increased possibilities to develop and maintain dialogical relations – are closely related to the degree to which they are accepted by others.

interaction is dominated by the teacher and children are supposed to recite fixed meanings. Is this a problem? Partly, it is. Although these monologic forms of classroom talk have their importance for the transmission of (cultural) knowledge to successive generations, classroom talk that is overly teachersteered and merely focused on the reproduction of knowledge does not give room for children's shared thinking and meaning (re)construction. Dialogic classroom talk, on the other hand, gives children space to 'think together, and cross the boundaries of their own understandings' (van der Veen et al., 2015) and interact with the voices of others.

From the perspective of cultural-historical activity theory, classroom talk is seen as an ensemble of multi-voiced interactional processes embedded in sociocultural practices and conducive to learning as an elaboration of a shared topic. We will use three interrelated parameters to characterize a cultural-historical conceptualization of dialogic classroom talk and show how it encourages children's shared thinking, understanding and meaning (re)construction (van der Veen et al., 2015) and might contribute to the development of their dialogical capacities.

First, there should always be a shared discussable topic (or object) that gives direction, purpose and coherence to the dialogue, and determines which positions can be brought to the fore in the context of a specific classroom dialogue. A shared topic determines the why and the what of a dialogue. In education, however, oftentimes this topic is intentionally (and/or strategically) selected by the teacher. These intended topics of a teacher do not always coincide with the topics that are of interest to the students. Furthermore, the perspective of the teacher on a topic is often different from how this topic is seen from the perspective of the students (Marton & Tsui, 2004). In other words, there might be a gap between what a teacher wants students to be talking about, what students think a teacher wants them to be talking about, and what is of vital interest for the students themselves. Following Engeström (2012), we argue that these gaps and tensions can be rich starting points for dialogue that aims to identify, transform and extend a shared topic in a process of negotiation. In this process of negotiation, children (as well as the teacher) are bringing different positions on the topic forward. These voiced positions are driven by the vital interests of a student as well as by the point of view they take on the intended topic of the dialogue.

Second, in dialogic classroom talk children should be given space – or following (Wegerif, 2008), spaces of creative reflection – to negotiate their different voiced positions so their self might become part of the dialogue and the multivoiced dialogue can result in the formation of a participant's dialogical self. In these spaces, teachers encourage children to cross the boundaries of their own thinking, of their own voiced positions, and try to understand the position of the other. In this process, the different positions or perspectives are negotiated so both the group and the self can progress in thinking. This is closely related to what Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) refer to as the creation of a 'dialogical space'. In these dialogical spaces, initial positions or perspectives meet and are elaborated or negotiated and new positions or perspective might emerge.

How can we characterize the role of teachers in this process of creative reflection and how do they encourage children to move beyond their own voiced positions (in Dialogical Self Theory these voiced positions are referred to as I-positions)? Teachers can be seen as orchestrators who temporarily position children's voiced positions in relation to the topic of the dialogue (van der Veen et al., 2015). In order to give children space for creative reflection, they move beyond the well-known IRE-sequences and use the so-called third evaluative turn to open-up the dialogue. In dialogic classroom talk, teachers use these third-turns frequently to (a) encourage children to share, expand, and clarify their initial ideas or positions (*Can you say more about it?; So you are saying …?*), (b) encourage children to carefully and critically listen to each other's ideas (*Who thinks they understood what Lisa said and can put it into their own words?*), (c) support children to deepen their reasoning (*Why do think that?; Does it always work/go that way?*) and, (d) to encourage children to think together and negotiate meaning (*Can you add onto his idea?; Do you agree/disagree? Why?*) (Michaels & O'Connor, 2012; van der Veen, de Mey, van Kruistum, & van Oers, 2017; van der Veen et al., 2015).[2] Using the aforementioned third-turn talk moves, teachers can encourage children to elaborate on their voiced position or build on the positions of others (with the help of the multiplicity of voices that are present in the dialogue), critically listen to each other's voiced positions and try to understand the perspective of the other.

Third, dialogic classroom talk should contain elements of a polylogue in which relevant socio-cultural voices outside the physical space of the classroom become part of the dialogue (Dobber & van Oers, 2015; van der Veen et al., 2015). Polylogue is not just a way of broadening the current dialogue, but is even more important as a medium to bring a cultural-historical dimension into a situated individual's or group's thinking. This is of vital importance as these cultural-historical voices can interact with the different voiced positions and local agreements about the topic and, consequently, can enhance an individual's or group's understanding about the topic. In close connection to the idea of polylogue, Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (2001) talk about these external cultural-historical voices as positions that 'are simply outside the subjective horizon of the self (…) the person is simply not aware of their existence. As possible positions, however, they may enter the self-space at some moment in time dependent on changes in the situation' (p. 254). In the educational context, teachers and students purposefully introduce these external voices as new positions in an ongoing dialogue.

To summarize, we have argued that a cultural-historical (or Vygotskian) conception of dialogic classroom talk should at least meet the following conditions: (a) dialogic talk is topic-oriented. A shared topic determines the why and the what of classroom dialogue; (b) in dialogic classroom talk, teachers give children space in which they are encouraged to think together and negotiate meaning; (c) dialogic

[2]The three-step model in Dialogical Self Theory (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010, p. 72) can be viewed as a similar procedure for the organization of dialogue.

classroom talk contains elements of a polylogue in which possible voices or positions outside the physical space of the classroom interact with an individual's or group's local dialogical agreements.

An Example of Dialogic Classroom Talk

The following example from our research project gives an illustration of how the three aforementioned parameters of dialogic classroom talk play out in educational practice. In the classroom of early childhood teacher Nancy, the students are involved in several activities related to the theme 'the universe'. Some of the students are wondering about the relative distance of the different planets to the sun. This becomes a *shared topic* in a small-group conversation of eight students and teacher Nancy. Teacher Nancy has brought pictures of the different planets so the students can put them on the floor to make a model of the universe. They start with Pluto:

01	Matthew	There's a planet named Pluto.
02	Teacher	Pluto. And what is Pluto?
03	Matthew	The planet that is farthest away.
04	Teacher	Very clever. Did you all hear what Matthew said?
05	All	I did!
06	Teacher	What did he say, Jason?
07	Jason	Pluto is the farthest planet and also the coldest planet.
08	Matthew	I didn't say it was cold.
09	Jason	But I did say so.
10	Teacher	You add onto his idea?
11	Jason	[nods]
12	Teacher	Yes. And why is it so cold? Do you have any idea, Anna?
13	Anna	It is the planet that is farthest away from the sun.
14 15 16	Teacher	And if I were the sun [Teacher Nancy sits in the middle of a circle], and this is the universe [points at the floor], what is farthest away? You may put Pluto in the universe [gives a picture of Pluto to Anna]
17	Anna	[Puts the picture of Pluto behind miss Nancy in the outer edge of the circle]
18	(…)	
19	Teacher	Then we have a planet, Mercury. Who knows Mercury?
20	Jason	It is closest.
21	Teacher	And Talia, can you put it closest to the sun? I am the sun [sits on stool that represents the sun]
22	Talia	[Puts picture of Mercury under the chair of Miss Nancy]
23	Teacher	But is that correct? Can the picture be under the chair?

(continued)

(continued)

24	Thomas	No.
25	Teacher	Why not?
26	Thomas	Because otherwise it would burn.
27	(…)	
28	Teacher	[Teacher Nancy puts the picture of Mercury close to the sun]. Do you agree?
29	All	Yeah.
30	Michel	No.
31	Teacher	Michel, you don't agree?
32	Michel	I think it is still a little too close to the sun.
33	Teacher	It's too close?
34	Michel	Nods
35	Teacher	Why? Can you explain why it should be further removed from the sun?
36	Michel	In one of the books, it wasn't that close.
37	Teacher	Was everyone able to hear Michel?
38	All	Yeah.
39	Teacher	Luckily Dex can explain what Michel just said.
40	Dex	I forgot.
41	Teacher	You forgot. Jason?
42	Jason	In the book, it's a little further away.
43	Teacher	Is that correct?
44	Anna	[Nods]
45 46	Dex	Shall I go get the book? [Dex gets the book and the children compare the model in the book with their own model. They discuss differences and change their model accordingly].

In this example, teacher Nancy uses several talk moves to give students *space* to voice or expand their ideas (line 2), listen to one another (lines 4, 6, 37, and 38), deepen their reasoning (lines 12, 25 and 35) and think together (line 31). Children take responsibility for their voiced positions in relation to the shared topic they talk about. In line 8, for example, Matthew corrects Jason by saying that he was incorrectly quoted. Following, in lines 9–11, Jason makes clear that he intended to add onto Matthew's idea. Next, Anna elaborates Jason's idea. In this process, Matthew's initial voiced position is negotiated and elaborated. As a consequence, the group progresses in thinking about the topic. Furthermore, the elaboration and negotiation of this initial voiced position might also be included in the self (i.e., inclusion-of-other-in-the-self; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). In line 45, Dex suggests to get a book about the universe. With Dex's suggestion, authoritative voices from outside the physical space of the classroom enter the dialogue; the current dialogue is broadened to a *polylogue*. The voices present in the book are taken as 'authoritative' and interact with the group's situated thinking about the topic. They enhance the group's understanding of the topic they talk about.

Connecting Dialogic Talk to Dialogical Self Theory

Research in the fields of education and linguistics has shown that dialogically organized classroom talk is positively related to students' academic learning and thinking (for an overview, see Resnick, Asterhan, & Clarke, 2015; Howe & Abedin, 2013) and their social development (e.g., Howe, 2010). But does dialogic classroom talk have the potential to develop students' dialogical capacities and a dialogical self that is capable of dealing with otherness and diversity? To answer this question, we will first argue how our conception of dialogic classroom talk, as developed from cultural-historical activity theory, might interanimate with the Dialogical Self Theory. Next, we will give a further exposition of our research project that aimed to promote early childhood students' communication skills through dialogic classroom talk. We will present excerpts of classroom talk to show the potential of dialogic classroom talk for the development of students' dialogical capacities and self.

Hermans' Dialogical Self Theory (e.g., Hermans, 2001; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) is a bridging theory that brings together the concepts of self and dialogue for a better understanding of the dialectical relation between self and society. As such, we believe it to be closely related to a cultural-historical conceptualization of dialogic classroom talk. In dialogic classroom talk, interpersonal dialogue becomes part of the self and the self becomes part of the interpersonal dialogue. In this dialectic process, children (as well as the teacher) bring different (and sometimes conflicting) socio-cultural positions (or I-positions, e.g., Hermans, 2001) to the fore from which they 'view' the topic that is discussed. These different positions are closely related to a person's cultural-historical background, his/her situated prejudgments and knowledge about the topic (Gadamer, 2004) and the different socio-cultural practices, institutions, and environments to which a person belongs. In dialogic classroom talk, these positions (and the social environments, history, prejudgments and knowledge connected with these positions) are negotiated in order to reflect upon one's own position and understand the position of the other (van der Veen et al., 2015). Following the work of Bakhtin (1981), we can consider an I-position 'as a "voiced" position, that is, a speaking personality bringing forward a specific viewpoint and story' (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 311) through which an individual (in this chapter a student) 'speaks the words of the group, social class, or society to which the individual belongs and reflects the unity of the group, class or society' (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p. 114). In education, for example, students might position themselves as certain types of students (competent, serious, knowledgeable, lazy or silly), position themselves in relation to a specific group or social environment they belong to (e.g., in our study a student positioned himself as son of a biologist when the group talked about ladybugs), or position themselves in relation to specific experiences, knowledge or skills they have (e.g., in one of the examples in this article, some of the students live on a farm and have knowledge of and experience with shock wire). In classroom talk, these different voiced positions engage and interact with other positions

(and related ideas, knowledge, experiences, etc.) and might change the self in a dialogical manner. This process is closely related to Vygotsky's ideas on the internalization of interpersonal dialogue, where a person's mind, a person's self, is situated in, being formed by and co-constructs interpersonal dialogue. Kučinskij (1983) linked this Vygotskian idea with the work of Bakhtin and demonstrated empirically that the positions of participants in the interpersonal dialogue (Kučinskij speaks about 'sense positions') were indeed integrated into an internal dialogue ('thinking'), making thinking a multi-voiced endeavour.

In this paragraph, we have shown how a cultural-historical conception of dialogic classroom talk is closely connected to the Dialogical Self Theory. Both theories aim to bridge the gap between traditional dualistic notions of self and dialogue. We believe that the language of Dialogical Self Theory enhances our understanding and gives us the conceptual tools to understand how students' different positions in the context of dialogic classroom talk interact with each other, are negotiated, and might become part of a student's dialogical self.

Developing a Dialogical Self in Dialogic Classroom Talk

In opposition to a strictly IRE-driven conversation, dialogic classroom talk encourages exploratory talk (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). In exploratory talk, children explore each other's perspective, build on the ideas of others, and, as a consequence, develop more elaborated ideas than they could have developed individually. Dialogic talk, in particular, moves away from 'authoritative discourse' (reciting his master's voice) towards an 'internally persuasive discourse' (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 340) in which the individual learns to speak for himself with the help of a multiplicity of voices, learns to retell in his own words, and takes responsibility for his narratives. Engaging in dialogic talk with others helps to develop 'inner speech' (Vygotsky, 1994), or inclusion-of-other-in-the-self (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010), in which the social dialogic process is internalized into the self and can be used for individual thinking. From a Vygotskian pedagogical background, we assume that such dialogues settle down in the development of a person's identity (see Vygotsky, 1997). Thus, by frequently engaging in dialogic classroom talk, children's identity or self becomes more polyphonic (multi-voiced; Bakhtin, 1981). Because of this multiplicity of voices within the self, children will also be more willing (or capable) to understand the other and to revise his/her understanding in light of new arguments and perspectives (cf., Bereiter, 1994; see also Watkins, 2003). To understand the other, to take the perspective of the other, children need to learn to take a third-person perspective to reflect on their own understandings in relation to the other. This entails a curious and open way of approaching otherness and diversity and has great potential for developing children's dialogical capacities.

Dialogic Classroom Talk in Early Childhood Education: Exposition of a Research Project

In one of our recent research projects, we developed a classroom intervention in close collaboration with teachers – referred to as the MODEL2TALK intervention (van der Veen et al., 2017; van der Veen, van der Wilt, van Kruistum, van Oers, & Michaels, 2017) – that aims to make classroom interaction more dialogic and, as a consequence, might support the development of children's dialogical capacities and self.

Over the course of three months, we worked together with four elementary school teachers from two different schools and 92 children (aged 4–6). As we wanted to develop and evaluate the MODEL2TALK intervention at the same time, we used a design-based approach (Cobb, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer, & Schauble, 2003). In two iterative cycles, the first author of this chapter and the participating teachers designed and evaluated dialogic classroom dialogues in close collaboration. The first cycle started with a workshop on dialogic classroom talk in which teachers were informed about the purpose of the study, the notion of dialogic classroom talk was discussed, and video examples of dialogic classroom talk were viewed and analyzed. Next, all teachers designed and orchestrated one small-group and one whole-group dialogue every week for a period of four weeks. These dialogues were evaluated during weekly reflection sessions. We fine-tuned the design of the second cycle using the experiences from the first cycle. In the second cycle, all teachers attended a follow-up workshop. Next, during a period of four weeks, they again designed and orchestrated two classroom dialogues per-week followed by weekly reflection sessions. Finally, the study was evaluated during an interview with all participating teachers.

Before the first cycle, after the first cycle, and after the second cycle, we individually tested children's oral communication skills (e.g., turn-taking, clarifying in case of ambiguity, argumentation providing instruction) using the validated Nijmegen test of Pragmatics (Embrechts, Mugge, & van Bon, 2005). Analyses showed significant differences in oral communication scores between measurement occasions with medium to large effect sizes (for details, see van der Veen et al., 2017). This indicates that dialogic classroom talk contributes to the development of children's oral communication skills (see also van der Veen et al., 2017). These skills are a prerequisite for the development of their dialogical capacities. Next, we will have a closer look at two transcripts to expore how dialogic classroom talk might support the development of children's dialogical capacities and dialogical self. Both excerpts are drawn from the full transcripts of the observations from classroom dialogues that were observed in the participating schools and were chosen because they are representative for how dialogic classroom talk was implemented in our research project. After each excerpt, we will give a short reflection.

Example 1: *Every student's position is worth exploring*

In the following excerpt, a teacher and a small group of students are talking about electricity. This excerpt starts with one of the students sharing his experience with electricity.

01 02 03	Noah	I once had electricity. Put it with the animals. And the electricity looked black. But it wasn't switched on yet, but my daddy touched it and he pretended it crinkled. [unintelligible and unclear]
04	Teacher	Do you understand it? [addressed to the whole group]
05	Mason	No.
06	Teacher	Where were you?
07	Noah	I don't remember anymore.
08	Teacher	But you said something with animals?
09	Noah	Yeah.
10	Teacher	And your daddy switched something on. What did he switch on?
11	Noah	Nothing. He just touched something like a wire.
12	Teacher	Oh, a wire? So, you are saying that there was electricity on that wire?
13	Noah	Yeah.
14	Olivia	I understand what he means.
15	Teacher	Can you explain?
16 17	Olivia	Well, that the wire is connected with a socket. And electrical power comes from the socket and if you touch it, then it causes convulsions.

Clearly, Noah (lines 1–3) has a hard time making himself clear. He positions himself as a person that has experience with shock wire on a farm. At the same time, his position as a student with (allegedly) little communicative abilities comes to the fore in his contribution as his contribution is incoherent and both the other students and the teacher find it difficult to comprehend and understand. Nevertheless, they make an effort to understand the ideas that have been voiced by this student. They are turned towards Noah during the conversation, listen to him and are curious and open to what he has to say. In doing so, this voiced position that could have easily been rejected (as often happens with unintelligible, incoherent, and/or inaudible contributions) now becomes a position that is worth exploring with the help of a multiplicity of voices. As such, this student learns to speak for himself – which is always situated in interpersonal dialogue – and gets the opportunity to include the voices of the other in the self (cf., Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Moreover, Noah might move from the position of a student having little communicative abilities (and thereby little to say) towards a student that is able to get his message across with the support of other voices. This excerpt ends with one of the students (lines 16 and 17) – who has been silent thus far – giving both an explanation and elaboration on the first student's contribution. Her contribution shows how both the group and an individual student

progress in thinking when they are given space to think together. And what about the teacher? By using multiple third-turn talk moves (lines 4, 8, 10, 12, 15), she encourages students to elaborate, listen to each other, negotiate meaning, and think together.

Example 2: *Interpersonal dialogue becomes part of the self*

In the second excerpt, a teacher and her students (whole-group setting) have seen a movie clip on ladybugs earlier that morning. During play time, one of the students has found a ladybug in the garden. He wonders whether it is poisonous or not:

01	James	I think poisonous.
02	Alexander	I think it's not poisonous, because Ben [an older friend that is not present in the classroom] said that poisonous ladybugs do not exist.
03	Daniel	They do exist, but this one is not poisonous.
04	Olaf	No, only the yellow ones with black dots.
05	Daniel	Yes.
06	Teacher	Dean, what did you want to say?
07	Dean	And also with orange wings, those are poisonous as well.
08	Teacher	So, you are saying the same as Olaf?
09	Olaf	No, orange wings do not exist.
10	Dean	Yes, that is possible.
11 12	Olaf	Orange wings do not exist, it is just the shield that can be orange, but the wings are under the shield.
13	Dean	Yeah, that's what I meant. That's what I meant!
14	Alexander	Yeah, I think that's what Dean meant to say.
15 16	Teacher	But wait a second, because you, you are saying 'that's what Dean means', but what does he mean, because I don't understand it.
17 18	Alexander	That its shield is orange. Look, just like the ladybugs we have made ourselves [points at the ladybugs they have made during craft education]
19	Teacher	Yeah.
20	Alexander	So, that's what Dean meant.
21	Olaf	Yeah.
22	Dean	The shield is orange.

Alexander starts this exchange by stating that poisonous ladybugs do not exist and, therefore, that this particular ladybug is also not poisonous. In making this claim, he positions himself as a friend of a knowledgeable and more authoritative person (i.e., Ben). Daniel and Olaf start with negotiating this position and argue that poisonous ladybugs do exist. Dean adds onto this new position by saying that ladybugs with orange wings are also poisonous. Olaf does not agree with Dean's remark on the orange wing and gives a further specification by saying that the

wings are not orange, but rather the shield that covers the wings. Dean takes on a third-person position (i.e., meta-position) from which he reflects on his own initial understanding in relation to Olaf's voiced position. This results in a revision of his initial understanding, as he claims that what Olaf said is also what he meant to say (line 13) and revises his initial position in line 22. This example shows how interpersonal dialogue becomes internalized or, in other words, how the voices of others (in this case the voice of Olaf) are included in the self (in this case Dean).

Conclusion and Implications

In this chapter, we have shown the possibilities of dialogic classroom talk for the development of a dialogical self that is able to deal with otherness and diversity. We have argued that engaging children in dialogic classroom talk can contribute to the development of a dialogical self and children's dialogical capacities. To our knowledge, this is the first account of connecting a cultural-historical (or Vygotskian) conception of classroom dialogue with Dialogical Self Theory. We believe that both theories are complementary and interanimate with one another. Just as cultural-historical activity theory aims to bridge the intrapsychological and the interpsychological (or mind and society), Dialogical Self Theory can be seen as a bridging theory (Hermans & Gieser, 2012) that brings together self and dialogue (or self and society). We have argued that Vygotsky's notion of the internalization of interpersonal dialogue is closely related to the development of a dialogical self. What does this imply for educational practice?

First, dialogic classroom talk has great potential for the development of a dialogical self that is capable of dealing with diversity and otherness, and to accomplish 'self-persuasive discourse' in individual participants. Somewhat paradoxically, diversity in the sense of heterogeneity in classroom composition is a prerequisite for the development of a dialogical self. In heterogeneous classrooms, there are many possibilities for students to broaden their horizon as there 'will be a range of perspectives to be shared' (Howe, 2010, p. 190). Following Howe (2010), we argue that mixed and heterogeneous classrooms should be the norm in education. This calls for skillful teachers that are able to give students space to communicate and think together, position the different perspectives, and encourage children to cross the boundaries of their own positions in order to understand the other.

Second, given our highly polarized and divided society, we argue that dialogic classroom talk can contribute to the development of students' dialogical capacities that enable them to deal with diversity. Dialogic classroom talk supports students to approach diversity with openness and curiosity. Hermans and Gieser (2012) state that dialogue is something 'precious' that needs to be encouraged. In education, dialogue (in the sense of dialogic talk) allows students to 'create new and innovative meaning, solve problems in productive cooperation, and take the alterity of other people and their own selves into account for the welfare of themselves and society' (Hermans & Gieser, 2012, p. 13). Dialogue is probably the most

powerful weapon available to fight polarization, hatred, and ignorance and to create a world that is livable, and thus it is important to engage children in dialogue from an early age. We have given examples from our research projects that show how we have supported teachers to move towards a dialogic classroom culture in which students learn to think and communicate together.

Third, moving towards a dialogic classroom culture is not an easy endeavor. For teachers, the equitable inclusion of all students, and encouraging students to share their positions and to take the perspective of the other is challenging. It requires effort and professional development (e.g., Michaels & O'Connor, 2015; van der Veen et al., 2017). In our studies (van der Veen et al., 2017; van der Veen & van Oers, 2017), we have shown that the MODEL2TALK intervention supports teachers to orchestrate dialogic classroom talk. During a relatively short intervention period, teachers showed a significant increase in the use of third-turn talk moves that gave students space to think together. However, more longitudinal research is needed to explore to what extent a dialogic classroom culture supports the development of dialogical capacities and a dialogical self over time and to what extent it affects students' attitudes towards and abilities to deal with otherness and diversity.

Finally, in early childhood education, we can lay the foundation of children's dialogical capacities. It is a setting rich in differences and otherness in which children can exercise dialogue in a playful manner together with a participating knowledgeable teacher who is able to orchestrate these dialogues. To speak with Hannah Arendt, it is our hope that more teachers will embrace the idea of dialogic classroom talk in order to give children a chance to meet new and unforeseen perspectives and to prepare them for the task of renewing and improving today's polarized world. We believe it to be a fruitful alternative to the predominantly monological forms of classroom talk.

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