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The moral journey of learning a pedagogy: A qualitative exploration of student-teachers' formal
and informal writing of dialogic pedagogy

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Students of education encounter a range of pedagogies yet how future teachers appropriate moral principles is little understood. We conducted an investigation into this process with ten international students of education attending an intensive course on 'dialogic pedagogy'. The data comprising student learning journals and essays was coded for the level of questioning, acceptance and irreverence. In the findings, reverential acceptance was more frequent than questioning and irreverence; however, our qualitative analysis also found a large number of micro-transitions between questioning, acceptance and irreverence suggesting a dynamic interplay. Recognising this vacillation as part of a moral journey may support better understanding of what it means to engage with a different pedagogy.

Key words: Dialogic pedagogy; learning journals; Zone of Proximal Development; dialogical approach to qualitative analysis

1. Introduction

Vygotsky's (1981) 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) offers a descriptive model of learning that has proven fruitful for practice and academic debate. Vygotsky's initial formulation of the ZPD conceptualised competencies as “‘buds’ or ‘flowers’ of development rather than the ‘fruits’ of development” (Vygotsky 1978 p.86) with the role of the more competent other centred on socialising the novice into existing forms of cultural competence. For Vygotsky “*human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them*” (ibid. p. 88 *italics in original*). Growing into the existing socio-cultural environment implies careful alignment between the novice and expert as reflected in re-formulations of the ZPD. Scaffolding, for example, involves the expert controlling and completing the aspects of a task beyond the novice's current capacity (Woods, Bruner and Ross, 1976 p. 90). The Intermental Development Zone also emphasizes shared cognitive space as the expert sensitively responds to the developing understanding of the novice (Mercer, 2000). Cheyne and Tarulli's (1999) radical interpretation of the ZPD adds a further dimension with the suggestion that the ZPD involves different distinctions of authority, moving from the dogmatic to the irreverent as the learner becomes familiar with the authoritative sources upon which learning is based.

Cheyne and Tarulli (1999) recognise three different genres of the ZPD highlighting distinctions of authority: Magistral (dogmatic truths), Socratic (open to questioning) and Menippean (irreverent) genres. These distinctions allow for a “conflict of dialogues... [in turn providing] a ground for social unrest and, ultimately, of construction and destruction forming a higher ZPD...” (ibid. 1999 p.25). These distinctions are potentially useful in a range of areas of learning and teaching. We focus, however, on the moral dimension of pedagogy as an orientation of how

the world ought to be and further recognising that becoming educated is a value-laden experience (Raiker and Rautiainen, forthcoming).

A useful case-in-point is 'dialogical pedagogy' based on a democratic view of knowledge creation and teacher-student interaction (Matusov, 2009). Historically, it connects to other pedagogies similarly committed to a particular moral order, including Freire's (1966) 'Dialogue of the Oppressed', Gardner's (1989) Multiple Intelligences and Lipman's (1976) 'Philosophy for Children'. Commitments to egalitarianism as a connection between the classroom and society, in fact, has a very long history (e.g. Dewey's 1916 'Democracy and Education', Rousseau's Emile). Old-style, industrial and traditional models of chalk and talk, Freire's 'banking model' of education, also assume a commitment to a particular moral order – one where virtue lies in hierarchy, not lateral organisation. Although moral assumptions are often implicit in teaching pedagogies, there is little empirical investigation of their impact on student teachers.

Morality is also a central, but underemphasised, aspect of epistemology or theory of knowledge (Sullivan, Smith and Matusov, 2009). The philosopher and theorist Bakhtin has been influential in drawing attention to the interpenetration of morality with knowledge. In education, Hicks, Matusov, Wegerif and Wertsch have addressed this connection. Hicks (2002), for instance, connects literacy difficulties to the clashing value-base of the classroom with the value-base of work-class values. Matusov (2009) argues that the students' knowledge may be unfairly devalued and can work to test teacher assumptions. Wegerif (2010) draws attention to the creative possibilities inherent in a dialogical space of difference and Wertsch (1991) looks at the values that are embedded in institutions and traditions and how these shape the teaching and understanding of narratives – such as history narratives in the classroom. The magistral, socratic

and menippean distinctions offer a more detailed breakdown of how values are resisted, endorsed and appropriated on a moment-to-moment basis.

1.2 Genres of the ZPD according to Cheyne and Tarulli (1999)

The three generic forms highlighted by Cheyne and Tarulli represent three contrasting positions from dogmatic truths, to questioning and irreverence. Table 1 presents explanations, common features and examples for each genre.

Genre	Explanation	Commonly associated features and examples
Magistral	dogma that does not appear to admit to any questioning. In terms of morals, such an utterance would present a clear picture of what is right and wrong in education admitting little dispute often denigrating and/or elevating a particular belief.	The use of rhetorical flourishes and a lack of ambiguity, e.g. <i>“Education should make the world a better place! Have we not failed our students? have we not failed ourselves?”</i>
Socratic	questions dogma whether through the use of direct questions or critical statements. Usually context-specific providing a useful frame for future discussion.	Sometimes these questions may be addressed to self or an imaginary third other, e.g. <i>“what is the point of it all? Do we need a fixed curriculum?”</i>
Menippean	Subversive irreverence towards canon and dogma possibly operationalized as ‘an utterance that contains an anarchic threat’.	Often an interruption also reflected in the grammatical form, e.g. <i>“Dialogic pedagogy (while occasionally seen as wishy-washy) is important”</i> or overwriting of previous statements, <i>“WHY?”</i>

Table 1: The three genres of the ZPD

The aim of this small-scale research was to operationalise Cheyne and Tarulli’s (1999) three contrasting generic codes in order to better understand the moral experience of learning a pedagogy. We subdivided this over-arching question into the following subquestions:

- 1) How do these codes compare across formal and informal contexts?
- 2) What is the significance of the transitions between the codes for learning?
- 3) What do these codes tell us about the moral experience of learning a pedagogy?

2. Data Collection

Twelve student participants attended a 16 hour course on dialogic pedagogy in the autumn semester 2012. The participants comprised domestic Finnish (3) and international students from European, Asian and African countries either on undergraduate exchange periods (4) or completing postgraduate studies (3). The students were majoring in different aspects of education. The course was divided into six sessions in different classroom environments with the hope of recalibrating the students' relationship with conventional education.

The learning journal was introduced as a space to reflect, question and respond to the assigned articles and classroom discussions. The journal aimed to extend the dialogic space of the classroom (Wegerif, 2010) from a publically shared space to a more private dialogue. No guiding questions were provided leaving the students free to decide the format, content and style of their journal. The journals were submitted at the end of the course either electronically via email or as scanned copies of hand-written texts. Some journals included illustrations and photographs, mind-maps and quotations, in addition to more conventional text. Variation exists between the learning journals – from five pages to over thirty pages, reflecting different levels of engagement.

The second data-source is a formal essay. In contrast to the learning journal, the format for the essay and the need to use academic conventions and a standardised essay format were discussed in class. The length of the essay varied from 3-9 pages with most papers between 1500-2000 words. The essay and journal afford formal and informal possibilities for engaging with dialogic pedagogy.

In the first session the students were asked for permission to use their work from the course, including the essays and journals, as part of research project and the students sent their consent via email. Anonymity was assured and the opportunity to read the research based on their work was given. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the paper.

3. Methods of Analysis

3.1. Directed Content Analysis

The initial data analysis sought to gain an overview of the corpus using a ‘directed content analysis’ (Potter and Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In this analysis, the text is coded using codes theoretically available in the literature with the purpose of testing or extending these codes. The unit-of-analysis was the paragraph based on Longacre’s (1979) argument that the ‘paragraph’ is a high-level unit of meaning (in comparison to the sentence or the clause). This approach also complemented the organisational format of the students’ texts. The authors divided the corpus and coded separately before checking and changing as necessary the codes before reaching agreement. Through this analysis we tested the presence of Cheyne and Tarulli’s codes in our data. The results (presented below) confirmed the presence of codes, provided an overview of the dataset preparing the way for a dialogical approach to the qualitative analysis.

3.2 Dialogical approach to qualitative data analysis

Following the directed content analysis we adopted a dialogical approach to qualitative data analysis as outlined by Sullivan (2012). This method is useful for our purposes because it gives

Essay	69(56%)	16(13%)	0	30(24%)	4(3.25)	1(0.81)	0	3(2.4)	123
Journal	130(41%)	50(15.8%)	18(6%)	54(17%)	16(5%)	15(4%)	9(2.8%)	24(7.5%)	316
TOTAL	199(45%)	66(15%)	18(4%)	84(19%)	20(4.5%)	16(3.6%)	9(2%)	27(6%)	439

Table 2: Total figures and percentages for the categorisations

The **Magistral** ‘code’ was the most pervasive according with practice in academic texts to cite approvingly the ideas and research of others and to reach clear conclusions. It is surprising, however, that over a third of the non-assessed, free-form journal paragraphs were Magistral. In contrast, the **Socratic** form was much less pervasive. This is unsurprising as the Socratic is context-specific, reacting against a proposition or a statement. Whole paragraphs that were identified as Socratic often consisted of a series of questions. An important finding through this analysis was, however, that a significant percentage of ‘Socratic’ moments appeared as brief transitions within otherwise Magistral paragraphs resulting in the Magistral-Socratic code.

The **Menippean** form is very close to the Socratic— including the interruption and the critical assumption. We found no examples of the irreverent Menippea, as a full paragraph, in the essays and just 6% in the journals. Possibly the students felt that respect for knowledge should characterise the essays leaving little space for irreverence. In the journals, the percentage of paragraphs that could be defined as ‘irreverent’ was smaller than anticipated. As with the Socratic form, however, Menippea was present within the corpus but more often as an instance rather than a full paragraph. For example, some students wrote ‘but why’ over their own Magistral statements leading to the code ‘Magistral-Menippean’. We turn to these transitional codes below.

As our initial results indicate, overall the participants maintained the same focus and intonation within one paragraph with 69% of the essay paragraphs fitting clearly into one of the three

categories and 62.8% of the journal paragraphs. Nevertheless, a significant number of paragraphs included transitions between the different genres illustrating the interpenetration of these forms of thinking/writing. When it comes to the Menippean, for example, 17.8% of the total journal paragraphs involved Menippea whether through the insertion of bracketed comments, challenging the authority of an assigned text or over-writing statements with why? These transitional codes appear to be of particular interest as they indicate thoughts-in-progress reminiscent of exploratory talk, that is talk which is “hesitant and incomplete [as speakers] try out ideas to hear how they sound, to see what others make of them, to arrange information and ideas into different patterns” (Barnes, 2008, p.5).

Overall, these figures show how thinking, writing and the process of learning involves strands of reverence, irreverence and critical reflection that move apart and intertwine with each other consistent with Cheyne and Tarulli’s (1999) broader position that the ZPD involves relationships of authority and irreverence. To answer our first research question: The Magistral form of dialogue is the most dominant code and the Menippean the least dominant with only minor differences existing between the journals and essays. The dynamic movement, however, between authority, questioning and irreverence appears to be greater than Cheyne and Tarulli (1999) suggest. The transitional instances in particular appear to highlight tension between these forms of learning/thinking leading to our next questions: *what is the significance of the transitions between the codes for learning? What do these codes tell us about the moral experience of learning a pedagogy?* To answer these questions we turn to our results from the dialogical analysis having paid careful attention to the intonation of the participants’ texts and their recounted experiences.

4.2. Results of the Dialogical Analysis

4.2.1. Magistral.

The dominance of Magistral code is unsurprising in the territory of morality as it signifies the moral architecture of experience. The extracts below provide a flavour of how this moral architecture comes into one students' informal and formal writing in different ways. Other shorter snippets of the 'Magistral' dialogue are provided below in Table 3, a 'table of soundbites' (Sullivan, 2012). English was the lingua franca for the course and the quotations remain true to the original texts.

Extract One:

However, we need to forget our concluded and rectangular education because the dialog is an open door so the dialogue of the education is going to be fortunately, an inconcluded dialogue. (Helen, journal)

Extract Two:

The fact of having to prove the own value with marks is difficult to understand: each person is valuable because of the own condition of being human. According to it, a dialogic approach in education means that we can build new knowledge with the interaction with the other, so the other is going to be important for us 'cause we need him/her to develop ourselves. For that, it's needed to accept the ideas of the other are as valuables as the own, it means, accept the value of each person. Also, when the children feel actives in the own learning process it helps them able to make decisions and to ride their life so, of course, they are more self-confident. (Helen, essay)

Note the deontic side of Magistral discourse, particularly in the journal entry. The deontic emphasises duty – “we need to forget”; “its needed to accept the ideas of the other”. We can hear a marching, chanting tone to this exhortative discourse redolent of a religious recital. The discourse exhorts, however, it is also a means for the student to understand and connect to the knowledge (the pedagogy) in terms of a moral worldview. It could be an important first step in

encountering new knowledge to calibrate it to a personal moral-emotional worldview. This is consistent with Cheyne and Tarulli's (1999) argument that Magistral discourse acts as a first step in appropriation of knowledge – one where the learner echoes or recites the authoritative/authoritarian knowledge of another.

In the formal essay, Helen also draws on a Magistral discourse “each person is valuable because of the the (sic) own condition of being human”; “its needed to accept the ideas of the other...”. Dialogic pedagogy emphasises democracy and equality of voices not just as principles around distributing authority in the classroom but as an outlook on life. This language suggests an emotional investment in the material insofar as they appear to be cherished values and a moral investment insofar as they are superior to other values. For instance, from this vantage point, other pedagogies with other values – e.g. those that equate the value of a person with the value of their marks in tests are “difficult to understand”. Comprehension, in other words, is also intertwined with a moral judgement – they are difficult to understand because the values run against the values of dialogic pedagogy.

It is possible that Helen writes this in an effort to appease the teacher, although the lively presence of the more irreverent Menippean dialogue alongside the Magistral in her texts suggests this is unlikely. Perhaps her motivations are unknown to herself. What we do know, however, is that this kind of Magistral dialogue indicates a link between the inner psychology of the reader and the outer space of the classroom. This is partly because dialogic pedagogy requires an inner-change among the practitioners first of all. For instance, the journal suggests that ‘we’ need to forget existing education in order to allow an “inconcluded” (sic)dialogue or dialogue without any pre-determined outcome to take place. In the essay, Helen states that we need to accept the ideas of “the other” for a dialogic pedagogy to take place. Once these psychological conditions

are met, then the existing, competitive and hierarchical space of the classroom may transform to a more democratic space of dialogic pedagogy, one that respects equality and the value of each student.

Table 3 provides further examples of the Magistral dialogue:

Participant	Journal	Essay
Joanna	Sharedness is enriched	Being more dialogic and recognizing the worlds' needs are related, because collective imagination can only occur with the help of a dialogue
Laura	It is often much more interesting to talk with somebody who thinks in a different way than to talk with people who think in the same way.	In my opinion teachers have a very dominant role in conventional education
Kyle	As Michel Foucault pointed in his paper, Bensam's (sic) idea of Panopticon is adopted in traditional classroom design	Dialogic pedagogy will contribute to the education system at present at three points.
Amy	I feel it is important for Dialogic pedagogy, as it distances itself from dogmatism to also be aware of falling into trap of extreme relativism	nowadays these extreme pictures might not be that prevalent... but ... our current education systems is still under influence
Marie	Values were discussed in class. I agree that they are a basic ingredient in a dialogue but I think that more than values we should concentrate to what the other person is saying than arguing if our values are the same.	This chronotope of education, the combination of time, space and axiology, gives us teachers a tool or merely goggles to see the education as a state of mind and a way of seeing things differently (Matusov, 2009).

Table 3: Table of Magistral soundbites

What we can conclude from this table is that the Magistral dialogue provides a point of connection for students learning a particular kind of pedagogy, a helpful condition for understanding. As Marie remarks, "I see this as a starting point – the realization that things can be done differently." We can see here how it also emerges in the journals (see Kyle below) as well as the essays as a codified academic convention, for example citations as a form of endorsement the equivalent of a thumbs-up sign in academia.

Picking up on our analysis of Helen's work, the Magistral also creates a time-space that is quite teleological in spirit – that is, the future, somewhat utopian state of equality is crucially dependent on the inner psychology of the participants involved (e.g. their capacity to forget current indoctrination). This is understandable, particularly when education is goal-driven to improve the lives of students and teachers.

4.2.2. The Socratic

Magistral pronouncements by the students are intertwined with searching questions (what we call Socratic). To break this down further, the Socratic questions around dialogic pedagogy appear to be experienced as an adventure-space, one where they are buffeted both by confusion and the unknown as the students attempt to navigate through this space.

The entries below from Laura give some indication of the Socratic:

Extract Three:

What is dialogue? I really got confused by the terms “monologic” and “dialogic”. On the one hand we said that our whole life is dialogic and that human being itself is dialogic. For example, little children interact with their mothers and in some way they try to understand their view of things. On the other hand we spoke about monologic and dialogic pedagogy. So what defines “dialogue”? If human being is dialogic, how can we interact in a non-dialogic way? If I have a fight and do not want to understand the other person but convince him/her of my opinion, is it than both, dialogic and monologic? On the one side I speak with somebody and I always change myself by being in interaction and communicating, I cannot avoid it. On the other side I do not want to change myself but the other person and I am not “open” for other opinions and I am convinced that my view is the only “right” one. In this case there are both, dialogic and monologic elements. (Laura, journal)

Extract Four:

It is difficult to speak about “conventional education” because there are many different educational systems all over the world. In different countries and also within a country the differences between the systems can be very significant. Therefore it is important to explain shortly my own understanding of conventional education. (Laura, essay)

As we argued earlier, a Socratic dialogue begins to question the authority of the ‘more knowledgeable other’. In the journal, this questioning is quite literal. Laura, for instance, asks questions (arguably to self but also a ‘generalised other’) in the journal extract around the difference between ‘monologue’ and ‘dialogue’. In particular, she asks what defines ‘dialogue’. This is more than just a semantic query, however. She places herself in situations where she argues with another and the pronouns shift subtly from the collective ‘we’ to the personal ‘I’ as the extract progresses. The journal allows her to imagine being non-dialogic, which seems to challenge a more Magistral understanding that humans are always dialogical. In this sense, it is a questioning of self (and her own morals) as well as the more abstract knowledge that the pedagogy delivers.

The essay is borderline Magistral with a similar chanting, deontic tone to Helen. The target of the discourse, however, is “conventional education” (in original scare quotes) suggesting that “conventional education” is a taken-for-granted assumption (scare quotes are quoting the generalised, unreflective voice of another) and this assumption is questioned in the paragraph.

Bakhtin (1984) makes the point that Socratic questioning involves the interrogation of an idea in the abstract as well as the person who articulates that idea. In doing this, an adventure-space opens up, one where the protagonist can suffer and triumph in equal measure in their testing of an idea. These Socratic questions appear to suggest that learning a pedagogy can involve a similar kind of adventure-space (or ‘chronotope’ in Bakhtin’s terms). These are partly imaginary as Nina imagines different situations (one of fighting with another for instance) but also in the essay, more real, where it is ‘difficult to speak’ of a singular construct (suggesting struggle) and she fractures this singularity by drawing attention to difference. In this way, the Socratic dialogue opens a more embodied interaction (where the hero undergoes experiences) with the morality of a pedagogy than the teleological, Magistral type of dialogue.

The table of sound-bites below illustrates other kinds of Socratic codes:

Participant	Journal	Essay
Frank	But the question is why it is so difficult to implement Palmer’s ideas?	NA
Sarah	In education: How it was? - How it would be? - How it could be?	How can children learn to use the dialogue when other teachers use the other way? How can I transfer the approach of dialogic pedagogy in the real school life? I think it can be possible. But these are questions for a new essay.
Marie	I did not quite catch the idea in “being and becoming in the future” but I guess it means that the focus in teaching should be both in the here and future, not only in the future.	For me there has always been a conflict with the idea of young children having complex ideas of the world because of this theory of stages. During this course I realised that dialogic pedagogy offers an explanation to this by describing the learner as an active subject, which I referred to in previous chapter, who brings conceptions and former learning and understanding with him/her to learning experience to construct better understanding and thinking.
Charlotte	But, what opinions shall not be tolerated?	But what would be the consequences of the introduction of a dialogic approach ..., and why?

Table 4: Table of Socratic soundbites

These various experiential configurations of time-space, indicated by rhetoric, are more than curious trinkets of our analysis, instead suggesting that adopting a pedagogy involves the exercise of a moral imagination, a point returned to in the discussion.

Cheyne and Tarulli (1999) describe the Socratic code within the ZPD as a space more symmetrically shared by the novice and expert: a space sensitive to ambiguity, re-accentuations and the negotiation of meaning. Ultimately for Cheyne and Tarulli the Socratic offers “interillumination among the voices in the dialogue” (1999, p.20). In our data, Socratic interludes can be understood as earnest engagement, as authentic questioning of where to sign one’s name (Emerson, 1996). These questions are key moments in taking up a moral position. Indeed as pointed out in the introduction, whatever position is taken up involves a moral stance. Indeed, many of the questions are concerned with how shall I enact these principles in practice? Why has this approach not happened already?

The presence of these Socratic questions and challenges, and the thoughtful reasoning or almost anguish that accompanies these Socratic interludes are rather more like moment of *intra-illumination* than interillumination. As Bakhtin states, “If an answer does not give rise to a new question from itself, it falls out of the dialogue...” (ibid. 1986, p.164). The Socratic moments are students pressing in deeper, increasing the degree of difference rather than seeking conformity. This casts the Socratic in a different light, not as a challenge to authority on the outside, but rather suggesting that the Socratic entries are fundamentally concerned with challenging and questioning that which is on the inside: what do I think, am I prepared to take this risk and sign my name here? In our extracts, it is the Menippea, the absurd and ridiculous, that are more concerned with challenging outside authority, although again we would argue that this is intrinsically connected with the student-authors relationship with self.

4.2.3. Menippean

Both the Socratic and Magistral dialogues occasionally moved back and forth with the Menippean dialogue in the journals. Many examples of Menippean elements within a paragraph appear in the essays, but no paragraph was exclusively Menippean. In the example below, therefore, we outline a Menippean paragraph in a journal entry and return to the Menippean elements of the essays under the ‘transition’ heading.

Extract Five:

Today, for the greatest part of the class we talked about different educational systems in our countries. It was a very interesting activity. Not that I was surprised by how different my experience has been from the rest of the class but because through sharing my stories, I started to realize the absurdity of many things that I had always accepted as the norm. For example, when we were describing the physical appearance of our schools, I started by saying what I had always hated about our schools: barred windows. Then my group mates asked me why the windows were barred and I looked at them and I couldn't find anything to say. I had always hated those bars but had kind of taken it as the norm, that if you don't put bars kids would run away but even to think like that is very absurd. Why had I thought that kids normally have a tendency to run away from school?!!! (Amy, journal)

This paragraph is ‘Menippean’ insofar as the participant experiences absurdity recounted in the context of a reported dialogue with class-mates. This sense of absurdity is directly expressed using three exclamation marks after the question mark – signalling an emotional climax to the paragraph. While she does not countenance that the bars are to prevent people from breaking into the school to steal property, the point from an experiential perspective is that the questioning of her tradition, normal schooling, including the layout of the school, started an emotional reaction (what she always ‘hated’) along with a deep questioning of her school’s normal practices. These

are considered as absurd. There is a collision between her present (re-told) experiences and her past experiences.

The absurd is a key part of carnival and the Menippean. In particular the authority of tradition is overcome or ‘decrowned’ through peculiar *mésalliances*, humour, satire and a sense of absurd.

Here, this sense of absurdity is a key moment in the process of changing her perspective on the assumptions that underpin what ‘normal’ education is. These assumptions, for her, are tied into a moral framework that takes a suspicious stance towards students (assuming they want to run away). It is the sense of absurd that tips Socratic questioning into Menippean questioning. It carries the threat of subversion insofar as the entire traditional history suddenly becomes ridiculous and important to overthrow. Yet, it also carries a connotation of insight insofar as she questions what is ‘normal’.

The table below outlines further moments of ‘Menippea’ characterising the journals and essays.

Participant	Journal
Charlotte	Finally, maybe he could start by judging himself first: what about proof-reading his article, and maybe using words people can understand? Just some feedbacks for his future work...
Marie	What a concerned man with a frown forehead! I heard him raise his voice while reading.

Table 5: Table of Menippean soundbites

As the most subversive voice, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Menippean code is the least present. Nevertheless, its presence is undeniable: “is this really written in English or are my glasses just too dirty... I’ve read it [8 line sentence] twice now and try the third time to get some kind of idea...” (Marie, journal) or “not to read [one of the assigned readings] when feeling depressed!” (Charlotte, journal).

These remarks could be seen as immature expressions of critique, frustrations with academia. However, the Menippean entries are also indicative of investment. In these quotations, they are taking the texts seriously, there is no dismissal or threat of disengagement. It is rather more a protest to be taken seriously as participants in the wider dialogue around education.

As Extract 5 exemplifies, the students are seriously reconsidering that which has until now been taken for granted, a point reiterated by the hovering question marks added multiple times throughout the hand-written journals. They are prepared to risk taken-for-granted knowledge in order to gain something new. Interestingly no journal entries collapses into complete chaos, Charlotte's entries quoted above are the closest examples to proverbially throwing hands in the air, and yet this is followed by seven Magistral entries bringing the journal to a close.

4.2.4. Transitions

This finally brings us to the role of 'transitions' in the corpus, a key analytic insight challenging the Cheyne and Tarulli (1999) framework. It suggests a bi-directional movement between authority, questioning and irreverence that moves into the micro-processes of learning/dialoguing with self and others.

The extracts below exemplify two different kinds of transitions from one student:

Extract Six:

Indeed, this idea keeps coming back in class, that how we teach is a reflection of our values in relation to education and life in general. And I have just read the article by PJ Palmer so I am left with the following questions. I agree with the concept of "hidden wholeness" and that we need to teach for it and through it. But this idea has developed quite recently in my mind, maybe a couple of years ago. But have these ideas been here all along? Have researchers been writing about it for a long time? Or is it part of a new

movement? Are we part of a new movement or have people been trying to bring about change for decades in vain? I believe the wholeness of this world and the importance of element composing it and I believe in teaching for and through this, I really do. But are we fighting a lost battle? Do we imagine that we are coming up with something new but we're not? In other words, are we part of another wave that goes nowhere or part of a wave that brings about change? (Charlotte, journal)

Extract Seven:

Nevertheless, it could be that educational systems decide to adopt the dialogic pedagogy all together in the near future. Indeed, our economic reality is changing and capitalism is evolving towards a phase in which innovation is crucial for countries to stay competitive. Creative thinking and critical thinking, promoted by the dialogic approach, could then find themselves at the centre of the educative preoccupations. This trend can already be seen to some extent in Finland. So it might be that this same economic system which is now oppressing students will empower them. (Charlotte, essay)

We coded the journal above as Magistral-Socratic transitions. The journal starts with a recurring idea (teaching is a reflection of values) that is initially endorsed, in a Magistral statement of agreement but then opens up a series of questions regarding the originality of the idea “But have these ideas been here all along” before returning to a more amplified, insistent Magistral recital/catechism – ‘I believe the wholeness of this world...I really do’ and returning once again to a series of questions that are both rhetorical, left unanswered, with multiple addressees of self and other and deconstructive of what is desirable, possible, apparent and reasonable.

Once again this illustrates the importance of the journal in creating a space for the Magistral and Menippean ways of thinking to collide. In doing so, Charlotte moves between being part of a collective ‘we’ to being a questioning ‘I’ – which, at least impressionistically, acquires an existential urgency as the extract progresses – is she part of a wave that will change nothing or will do something.

The journal helps to make sense of the following essay extract, which we coded as a Magistral-Menippean transition. At first glance, the structure of the essay appears to be Magistral insofar as it delivers a number of declarative statements/prophecies regarding the direction of a world-wide education movement. The ironic twist at the end, however, runs counter to the tone of the essay and journal. This is that the economic system will empower the students. No further elaboration is offered and it appears to subvert and turn the entire tone/logic of the essay and journals on its head. One could be tempted to view this as the sign of an undisciplined incoherence creeping into the essay, however, it is this undisciplined incoherence that signals the Menippean presence. While it is arguable as to what it adds in this particular case, the fact that such sudden departures from a train of thought can take place, signifies a certain creative potential in this undisciplined incoherence.

In terms of morality, shifts between the codes within the paragraphs suggest that the moral assumptions of dialogic pedagogy do not involve a linear journey but instead a tooting and froing between endorsing, questioning and subverting those assumptions. Table 6 presents further examples of the different types of transitions and their key characteristics in terms of their emotional intonation and written form.

Transitions (103 total)	Emotional intonation	Present as...	Quoted extracts
Magistral→Socratic (53)	contemplative jubilant enthusiasm tentative caution curiosity questioning endorsement longing sense of responsibility	statements leading to questions connections between own thoughts and new possibilities and questions retrospective reflection layering of questions	“I am trying to understand this but at the moment all I can say is that it is complex!” (Amy, journal) “I know about the muddled XXX school-system ... trying to explain this disturbed system I realized it even more” (Sarah, journal)

Socratic → Magistral (12)	confessional confusion existential questioning academic interrogation realisation	questions followed by quotations or references to authorities or peers	“Ok, so the love is a kind of lose control and is also necessary for building a community by the dialogue “education is an act of love, thus an act of courage” (Helen, journal)
Magistral → Menippean (21)	sincere cautious curious interrogation aspiration academic	short questions or question marks written over earlier statements insertions interruptions	“A healthy community includes conflict at its very heart. <i>Definition of healthy?</i> ” (Joanna, journal <i>italics later insertion</i>)
Socratic → Menippean (16)	reflection existential questioning interrogation (of self as well as other) revelatory puzzlement earnest intensity	brackets question marks questions present in brackets as subtexts or asides restatements as questions	I asked the same question as always: How can we keep our motivation for self-directed learning? Do we have to possess the same knowledge when we leave school? ... it is impossible to set the same goals for every child and to reach them. (Laura, journal)
Magistral and Socratic and Menippean (9)	existential questioning interrogation admiration confidence puzzlement earnest intensity	quotations questions exclamations	So is our society (macro-capitalist and western) a community? ... maybe and unfortunately no? How can we change it? What about the micro societies? (Helen, journal)

Table 6: Key characteristics of transitions

As can be seen from the right-hand column, the direction of the transitions varies. In some instances the Magistral transforms into Socratic or vice versa, on occasion the Magistral seemingly collapses into Menippea. The seemingly disjointed nature of these transitions is arguably indicative of thoughts-in-progress. The journals in particular are not only constituted of Magistral entries occasionally punctuated by Socratic or Menippean interruptions, but are perpetually flowing thoughts and ruminations spurred on by questions, confusions, sudden realisations and new demands.

Over half of the transitions appear to move from *Magistral statements to Socratic questions* as the participants begin to reconsider that which they have taken for granted. This transition complexifies the thinking of the participants perhaps creating a less comfortable space to be in as

the variety of emotional intonations suggests. From a pedagogical perspective, however, it is particularly interesting to note that through this process the students appear to be responding to authority rather than merely reproducing it. This move appears to suggest a weighing up or critical contemplation before deciding whether to agree with and accept these notions or not, however attractive they may be.

This critical contemplation is also present in the moves from *Socratic questions to Magistral replies*. In the midst of this apparent dialogue with self, the students seem to use Magistral statements from outside authorities to answer their own Socratic questions. In this way, the student participants appear to be seeking and trialling their own voice as part of a larger process of recognising their responsibility as an educator.

Transitions *from Magistral to Menippea* feature 21 times. Cheyne and Tarulli refer to Menippea as an immature or subversive genre dispersing the authority of the Magistral. In our data, however, the presence Menippea seems to indicate a deeper level of engagement not only in terms of sincerity, personally meaningful engagement with the topic at hand, but also a desire to dig deeper, to critically reconsider that which was previously “known”. In this sense, Menippea is an attempt to make sense of the past and to tentatively frame the future.

Similar dynamics appear in the moves from *Socratic to Menippea* although in several of these instances the layering of questions one on top of each other suggests a greater persistence. These questions appear to strip back layers of meaning, denying assumptions as possibly reliable signposts for further action. These transitions are often accompanied by a sense of urgency and

puzzlement when faced with the open-endedness of existence: perhaps the final answer is not out there, but nevertheless, I have to make a decision here in order to be able to responsibly act as an educator. The transitions from Socratic to Menippea also appear to be stirred on by unexpected revelations and interrogation of self, as well as other. On the other hand, Menippea also offers a brief respite from the intense questioning, the absurd breaking through as a moment of relief before pushing in and on again.

The final transitional category in our analysis combined all three genres. In these instances, the students appear to engage with authoritative texts as equals. This is not to suggest that the students assume their responses carry more authority than “experts”, but the students appear to recognise their right to ask questions, to make demands and to expect more of self and others. This category in particular highlights how the students are engaging with established texts and sustaining insightful and complex dialogues with others through the self.

5. Discussion

This small-scale research aimed to operationalise Cheyne and Tarulli’s (1999) contrasting generic codes in order to better understand the moral experience of learning a pedagogy.

Through our research focussing on the presence and transitions between the codes, we are able to suggest richer conceptualisations of the three codes and to highlight the intrinsic value of learning journeys not only for what will be, but for what has been and is now. In contrast to Cheyne and Tarulli’s more linear progression towards a higher ZPD, the journeys of these students are full of adventure-wonder and earnest engagement. No pathways are the same nor replicable, yet this is a strength if students as future educationalists are required to act with moral

integrity capable of thinking through where to sign their name and why. The freedom to morally imagine appears to offer the students a space within which they can contemplate - "I am trying to understand this..." (Amy, journal) and question and re-assess. Perhaps most importantly the moral imagination permitted on the course allowed the participants to become responsible for their own thoughts, "I see that the ideas presented in this course are the ideas I have been thinking earlier, but now I have proper words for the ideas" (Marie, journal).

This significantly contrasts with the often immediate pressures for practical action and immediate judgement that teachers and educators face in schools. It can perhaps be hoped, however, that through this process it is not only "a genre's dialogic encounter with other, rival genres [that] promotes a genre's greater self-consciousness" (Cheyne and Tarulli, 1999 p.24), but it is students' dialogic encounter with self through the voices of others that promotes greater self-consciousness for the students.

In answer to the question regarding the significance of the transitions between the codes for learning we would say that they indicate the manner of engagement between the student and established authorities and, perhaps more importantly, the transitions are indicative of the way in which students strive to take-up their responsibilities as educators. In answer to the question as to what do these codes reveal about the moral experience of learning a pedagogy we can say that these codes chart the pathway travelled by the students recording their experiences, observations, reactions and intimations along the way. These codes are not indicative of a final resting place, but rather an on-going dynamic engagement in the moral journey of learning a pedagogy. The codes provide a space and a means for the students to express the concerns and questions, understanding and priorities as they form as tentative ruminations and begin to take root.

To briefly conclude, it can be said that the particular pedagogical framework that teachers use is informed by a morality and that the process of learning a pedagogy is also a moral endeavour. Here, however, the morality is ‘tested’ – and this should be encouraged and a dialogical approach can be useful in framing these activities. Future research could examine comprehension not only as cognitive activity but also as a moral activity involving a movement between reverence and irreverence towards the learning material.

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