

## Dialogue and Team Teaching

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### **Biographical Details**

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## Dialogue and Team teaching

### Abstract

Although dialogue is a common word in educational theory, its full significance is diluted if it is seen as a matter of exchange or negotiation of prior intellectual positions. In fact, the *dia-* of dialogue indicates *through*: dialogue moves through participants and they through it. Dialogue allows participants to have thoughts they could not have had on their own, yet to recognise these thoughts as developments of their own thinking. On this understanding of dialogue, education is a transformative rather than simply accumulative process. Similarly, team-teaching is often thought to involve no more than the summative logic of sharing loads and adding perspectives. In dialogic pedagogy, however, team-teaching refers to the way that the supportive relationship between teachers in opens opportunities for students to join the team as teachers. Although teachers and students have different responsibilities, all learn through a collective dialogue. The article draws on our practice of dialogic team-teaching large first year classes.

### Keywords

Dialogue, Feedback, Holding space, Patience, Team teaching

## Introduction

Dialogic pedagogy begins with the paradox that teaching is an impossible project. No matter how determined or knowledgeable they are, teachers can, as independent agents, teach students little or nothing. The role of teachers is only carried to fruition when *students* act, grow and learn. Rather than an action that one person performs for or on another, teaching is what teacher and student do together. By the same logic, learning is also a collaborative exercise, and, moreover, a necessary element of teaching. Real learning, like real teaching, occurs in the dialogue that constitutes the meeting of teacher and student (see Felman, 1982).

People often assume that the *di-* in dialogue refers to two parties, in contrast to the one party of a monologue. The corollary of this conventional view of dialogue is that it is based on a variety of exchanges between two prior and identifiable positions—that is, it arises from interaction, competition, opposition and the reconciliation of positions. In fact, however, the *dia-* of dialogue indicates *through*. As Bohm (1985) puts it, dialogue implies ‘a new kind of mind’ that carries and is carried by the participants: the dialogue moves through them and they through it. Dialogue is not located in any or even in all of the individual participants, but rather in a whole that is incommensurable with the sum of the finite parts. Thus, Merleau-Ponty argues that dialogue is a relation arising *between* participants, controlled by no one:

Speaking to others (or to myself), I do not speak of my thoughts; I speak them.... Not [as] a mind to a mind, but [as] a being who has body and language to a being who has body and language, each drawing the other by means of invisible threads like those who hold the marionettes – making the other speak, think, and become what he is but never would have been by himself. Thus things are said and thought by a Speech and a Thought which we do not have but which has us. (1974: 19)

In this article we will show that the pedagogic potential of team teaching only becomes apparent when its dialogic possibilities are recognised. While the term refers to a diverse range of practices (see Goetz, 2000; Smith, 1994), team teaching is often thought to involve no more than the summative logic of sharing loads and adding perspectives. This is to maintain the exchange model of dialogue. In fact, team teaching can more radically transform the learning-teaching relation. By creating a holding space and holding time that transform the classroom, it can produce a dialogic community among all participants in the classroom. When there are no longer individual sources of energy and knowledge, the dialogue involves everyone as learner and everyone as teacher.

The article draws on our own practice of team teaching. Although we have designed and coordinated our courses together since 1990, in the late 1990s we began experimenting with joint rather than sequential lectures, developing techniques that allowed us to introduce an increasing variety of dialogic components to the lecture. In 2000, when our faculty cut costs by shifting from one to two hour lectures and from two to one hour tutorials, we took the opportunity to creatively reconsider the role of lectures and tutorials. Lectures became fully interactive large classes, leaving tutorials free to focus on collegial academic skills development. While it is difficult for a solo lecturer to depart from a monologue, a teaching team can focus large classes (up to 300 students in our case) around dialogic activities that have been traditionally associated with tutorials or seminars (Game and Metcalfe, 2007). By having more than one teacher present in front of the class, the position of the knowing teacher is diffused. If students can see teachers engaged in dialogue, working out difficult questions between them, they come to trust teachers, seeing them not as people with a complete knowledge, but as people devoted to learning and thinking. Team teaching opens opportunities for students to join the team as teachers and learners. Although students and teachers have different responsibilities, we are all learning through our collective dialogue.

## **Dialogue**

Classroom relations constantly shift between different social logics. One form is based on exchanges between self-conscious individuals motivated by subjective purpose. The other is based on the relaxation of identity and subjectivity that comes with a dialogic relation. While these different states imply each other, each arising in relation to the other, they involve fundamentally different senses of being, space and time, of who, where and when we are.

Bohm made this point in a description of a weekend dialogue in which he participated:

In the beginning, people were expressing fixed positions, which they were tending to defend, but later it became clear that to maintain the feeling of friendship in the group was much more important than to hold any position. Such friendship has an impersonal quality in the sense that its establishment does not depend on a close personal relationship between participants. A new kind of mind thus begins to come into being which is based on the development of a common meaning that is constantly transforming in the process of dialogue. People are no longer primarily in opposition, nor can they be said to be interacting, rather they are participating in this pool of common meaning which is capable of constant development and change. In

this development the group has no pre-established purpose, though at each moment a purpose that is free to change may reveal itself. The group thus begins to engage in a new dynamic relationship in which no speaker is excluded, and in which no particular content is excluded. (1985: 175)

Dialogue arose on this weekend when there was a shift from the negativity of identity logic to the openness of dialogue. At first, people were defending positions and identities. But there was a change, Bohm says, when people realized that what they were doing together was more important than the protection of the self.

The significance of this dialogic shift for educational theory is that participants change their cognitive capacities when no longer self-conscious individuals.

People who identify with knowledge take it personally, seeing the world and others only for what these say about themselves, as a mirror of themselves.

People in dialogue, however, are able to *hear* the differences offered by others, because they are not personally affronted. They can *imagine* the experience of others, and therefore understand how different perspectives can co-exist.

Through the play of differences, they are making something that they share with others but which is no one's personal property. Same and different are no

longer qualities attributed to discrete individuals: each participant makes a unique contribution but no-one can say who contributes what. Everyone is connected to this 'common pool of meaning', but connected in their unique ways; everyone learns from the different possibilities in the common pool, but everyone learns in a way that makes particular sense to them.

Education is this drawing out of potential. The meeting of what is common and what is different is the primal encounter referred to by such pedagogic terms as interest, inspiration, engagement, wonder, fascination, curiosity and relevance. Through meeting the differences of others, we meet the difference in ourselves. We change by becoming who we are: what we know of the world reveals unexpected potential when recontextualised through dialogue. It follows that dialogue is always a learning experience, and that there is no learning without this dialogic meeting with difference. Moreover, if there is no learning, no sense that one experience significantly differs from another, there is no sense of aliveness.

Deep learning only occurs through this engagement. Using their own bodies and lives as learning tools, participants in dialogue *live* ideas. In holding an idea, playing with it, they feel its inner form from within their own. It is therefore not simply metaphorical to say that dialogue transforms us, opens new worlds,



and expands minds. It is our difference as beings that allows us to see the world differently: no longer confined to subjectivity, we discover unexpected potential through being in embodied relation with the world. These ontological shifts are everyday aspects of classroom life. To learn more about the world, we must learn how to live in it differently, and we do this *through* dialogue (see Brookfield and Preskill, 1999; Metcalfe and Game, 2006.)

### **The teacher's responsibility**

If the teacher does not control the classroom dialogue, what do they do? The teacher's primary responsibility is to facilitate informed dialogue among and between teachers and students, retaining an awareness of the learning process itself. This requires the creation of a safe learning space where participants are neither self-conscious nor self-protective, and where, therefore, they can make the ontological shift required if they are to get *into* dialogue.

These pre-conditions for dialogue can be understood in terms of Winnicott's concept of potential space or holding space (1991), terms that describe the state where the once isolated individual feels carried by the enlivened environment. In this space, people experience a wholeness that cannot be described in terms of a dichotomy between inside and outside; it is a space that involves a sense of

organic rather than chronological time, where the future is experienced as the unfolding of present potential (see Metcalfe and Game, 2002). Based on the relational logic of both-and rather than the individualist logic of either/or, potential space is the environment that allows mother and baby, therapist and patient, teacher and student to carry each other. In all of these learning situations, the holding or potential space allows possibilities to be held open; there is a sense of safety in this openness that does not rely on self-assertion.

Winnicott argues that all deep learning experiences are modelled on the example of the young child playing in the presence of an un-intrusive mother. When students are in the presence of someone who guards them without interference, they learn to trust their authentic responses to new situations. The implication of Winnicott's argument is that teachers need the patience and courage to avoid pre-empting the student's learning process, to avoid giving the student answers for which they are not prepared. Teachers need to stay present to the emerging dialogue, rather than being distracted by their preconceptions and their own subjective fears and desires. While Winnicott insists that no one entirely escapes these subjective states, he argues that maturity is the ability to be aware of them and therefore learn from them when they arise (1990: 30-34). This awareness turns what might have been a distraction into a return to the here and now of the classroom.

The aware teacher works, like the engaged student, on the crest of knowledge. They come across as genuine and passionate because they are good learners. Since the teachers live and breathe their knowledge, there is no final way to say what is known, for knowledge is continually being reformulated as life offers new connections. The deep form of knowing that teachers need is characterized by a simultaneous unknowing. To allow new connections to emerge from classroom dialogue, teachers must hold lightly those that they have previously made, allowing their knowledge to re-form around new starting points that arise in the class. *This* class is not the same as any other class.

Whereas feedback is commonly understood as an external form of evaluation, every response and every recognition in a dialogue is feedback. Feedback is a moment in the life of a system that doesn't demarcate boundaries between inside and outside (Bateson, 1972). The dialogue works because both teachers and students are simultaneously receiving and giving feedback, are simultaneously learning and teaching from each other (see Noddings, 1984: 177). It is the openness to receive that accounts for the effortless and lively energy of the engaged classroom. The aware teacher provides constant feedback through their openness to receive it.

As with feedback, the authority of the aware teacher is not an external imposition on students but arises from their responsive attention to the class (see Arendt, 1961; Gordon, 2001; O'Byrne, 2005). The teacher can be trusted as a leader because they serve the needs of the class rather than allowing their subjective concerns and preconceptions to intrude. Embedded in the rituals and practices of the classroom, authority allows students and teachers to be open, rather than being self-conscious or self-protective. The trust involved in organic authority allows teachers to be respectfully honest with students, helping them to develop a capacity for authentic work. This highlights the fact that the teacher's facilitation of dialogue is not a non-confronting laissez-faire process of letting students do what they want, but is instead a process of challenging students to go beyond their preconceived ideas, expectations and desires.

This discussion of the teacher's responsibility highlights the fact that aware teachers are characterized by the maturity to maintain open relationships, avoiding the premature closures that accompany the defensive desire for self-certainty. In short, teachers must have learned to tolerate unknowing and the uncertainties of life. This applies equally in their relations with students, their relations with their disciplinary specialties, and their relations with themselves. In all of these, they need to maintain a faith in a process without finding false consolation in expectations (see Murdoch, 1970; Gaita, 2001).

Good teaching, then, is never just a matter of technique and strategy. It necessarily involves ethical questions about goodness. As Murdoch says:

The self, the place where we live, is a place of illusion. Goodness is connected with the attempt to see the unself, to see and to respond to the real world.... [V]irtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is. (1970: 93)

As teachers, we can never finally master the responsibilities of the good teacher. The good teacher knows that they are forever learning how to teach and that they need continuous support from others if they are to meet the world as it really is.

### **Team teaching and the teacher's responsibilities**

This discussion of the teacher's responsibilities allows us to appreciate the virtue of dialogic team teaching. The presence of other teachers as witnesses allows the teacher to get out of themselves and see the world through the eyes of others (see Winnicott 1991: 61). Team teaching that is dialogic is based on an open flow

of feedback that encourages teachers to be aware of how they are responding to the class. Teachers teach each other.

Many solo lecturers fear the prospect of team teaching because they imagine the other as judge of their vulnerabilities. This presumption fails to recognize the ontological transformation of dialogue: in dialogic team teaching, no teacher is in the position to judge an other for they are carrying the other in themselves. In the same way, it is the teachers' carrying of students within themselves that guards against any tendency to unify as teachers against students. The witnessing in a dialogic classroom takes the form of support rather than judgement and surveillance.

The need for support is particularly clear in large classes. As Bligh (1975: 163) astutely remarks, it is not easy to move a tutorial style dialogue into a large lecture. The problem arises because of the multiple responsibilities of the teacher. If the class is to be dialogic, teachers must give their full attention to the responses of particular students while remaining aware of the dynamics of the whole class. At the same time they must be aware of the place of this particular discussion in terms of the needs of the whole class. They must balance the tension between the overall plans of the class and the course and the suspension

of purpose required for the dialogue to unfold. They have to continually adjust plans to meet the reality of this class and this day.

Solo lecturers tend to give monologic lectures because they have difficulty combining these responsibilities. The full potential of the classroom can present them with more possibilities than they feel they can handle; they fear that the different responses of students will throw them off course. By simplifying social relationships so that the teacher only has one task to do, the monologic lecture channels relational potential into narrow and pre-established parameters. When teachers give classes together, on the other hand, the mutual support they provide allows them to safely hold open the classroom relations. The potential of the class and the difference within the class are now resources rather than threats. The supportive relation allows lecture time and space to be used more flexibly and creatively. An attuned teaching team can readily and fluently carry within its relation the various responsibilities of the teacher. The dialogue between teachers allows them to think together and think differently at the same time.

### **Team teaching a first year course**

To ground the rest of this discussion, we will now consider our own experience of teaching a large first year sociology course. Our course, *Relationships: Sociology and Everyday Life*, attracts up to 400 students and is organised around short classic readings by famous sociologists and social philosophers. The course teaches students to apply this theory in analyses of social relations, from the intrapersonal to the interpersonal to the international.

The course is organised around large team taught dialogic classes (between 100 and 300 students in each one) which are a cross between traditional lectures, tutorials and seminars. Because these classes harness the dialogic potential of a large community, they develop a powerful energy that carries both teachers and students beyond their preconceptions. The value of students being able to listen to each other's discussions of important issues should not be underestimated. A key function of large classes, not easily replaced technologically, is the opportunity for simple *presence*, for the community that emerges from congregation. This provides an enthusiastic and open-hearted energy that counteracts many of the debilitating effects of the individualising dynamics common in universities. Students learn to appreciate and respect their own possibilities when they are surprised by hearing their shy and private inklings enunciated by others.



The keys to the creative responsiveness of these classes are preparation and structure.

*Preparation: workbooks*

To prepare students for the role they are to play as part of the team in large classes, we require them to keep a workbook. Workbooks are the course's lynchpin. Each week, *before classes*, students write about the readings and do an exercise that applies the readings to an everyday experience. We expect at least an hour's writing per week, and most students fill a large notebook during the session. The exploratory nature of workbook writing teaches healthy reading practices: instead of feeling scared and jealous of difficult texts, students learn how to work with them, in a dialogic way.

The workbook is a supportive disciplined working space that teaches students how to stay with and draw out their thoughts and hunches. The student's relation with their workbooks parallels the dialogic relations between teachers, between students, and between teachers and students. The workbook allows students to focus unself-consciously on a particular line of thought, bracketing off the perfectionist self-criticism that inhibits the learning process. Because this free flow is captured in writing, students have the chance to reflect on it later, and develop it further, and more rigorously, by asking themselves the same sorts of questions that their

teachers would ask. The workbook produces a dialogic relation between students and their work, allowing them to teach themselves, to draw themselves out. By learning to trust in this process, students develop patience, that is, a relationship to their own anxieties, fears and frustrations, and a faith in the support provided by a steady work routine.

Like students, teachers must prepare themselves for class, by working through the readings in their workbooks. We re-read all readings each year, allowing our changing research interests and our new students to highlight different elements. We cannot teach unless the readings have come alive again to us. Like students, we prepare by recording our reading process and course reflections in workbooks. We also use our workbooks to record our reflections on and plans for the course.

Even though we have been teaching this course for many years, the re-reading process allows us to re-imagine the classes week by week, adapting the curriculum specified in our course handbook to the interests and needs of the year's particular group of students. Drawing on our archive of workbooks, we select appropriate exercises and activities, and augment them with new ones. To maintain student interest, we try to vary the types of activities week by week, choosing a sequence of activities that helps students develop their analytical skills

and face the conceptual issues that are troubling them. Our first meeting of the week begins with new pages in our workbooks and ends, through a dialogue that neither of us controls, with lists of planned activities.

Each of us takes from this first meeting some special preparation to do for the class, such as an exegetical activity, or the development of a resource for a class exercise. Then, on the day of each class, even if it is a 'repeat' class, we meet again to talk through our plan, activity by activity, imagining it from the students' perspective, ensuring that our activities are fine-tuned and that we have a feel for the whole class. At a subsequent meeting, we include tutors in these processes of reflection and imagination, discussing the success of previous classes and sharing ideas for the coming ones. The teamwork in these meetings is essential to the success of our classes: our different perspectives and experiences ensure that we do not become inattentive to the needs of the course.

### *Structure and freedom in large classes*

Large classes are a dialogic opportunity for teachers and students to clarify readings, to draw out the implications of key concepts, to explore the empirical scope of issues and to test out the usefulness of ideas. In the course of our preparation, the class has been broken into structured components, none taking longer than 20 minutes. These usually include one or both of us giving short

prepared discussions on a key aspect of reading, but there are also collective discussions of passages from the readings, and collective analyses of cultural phenomena that relate to the topic and theme of the week, as well as small group discussions, short writing exercises, and collective brainstorming sessions. The diversity of modes in the class recognises the different ways in which students learn.

Structuring the class in 20 minute components provides a supportive temporal quality to the learning process, allowing for patience and respectful relations.

This structure helps teachers avoid a tendency to rush to an end, giving teachers and students time to relax, time to attune to each others' wave lengths and get a *feel* for the issues under discussion. The students' comments are the feedback we need in order to adjust what we'd planned to say and do. We go into each activity without needing a certain outcome, because we know there are regular opportunities to take stock and refocus. Whatever point the discussion has reached will offer possibilities for the next activity.

By itself, this modular structure might not produce a patient holding environment. Anxious lecturers might have difficulty holding their nerve, self-conscious lecturers might have difficulty withholding their preconceptions. With team teaching, teachers can support each other in attentive and unself-conscious

states. Their relation provides the organic structure that allows them to be fluent and responsive to the unfolding dialogue. The presence of a supportive witness heightens their awareness of any tendency to ask leading questions or give premature answers.

With the organic structure of the team teaching relation, teachers can perform multiple activities simultaneously, remaining aware of how each moment relates to the whole class and whole course. One teacher can fully engage in a particular line of discussion *because* they know the other is listening to the place of that discussion in the broader setting of the class. The witness allows the talker to fully attend to the student, who in turn finds their thoughts drawn out because they are being heard with respect and without reserve. A peer observer from the Learning and Teaching Centre of our university made the following observation of a large class:

Because Ann and Andrew were both actively involved throughout class, one of them could focus intently upon a student's comment, and respond in a way which deepened the student's analysis of a concept or idea, while the other scanned the room, looking out for other speakers and gauging the feel of the group to decide where to take the discussion next. This enabled them to be totally attentive and

engaged with the student who was speaking, whilst simultaneously encouraging widespread participation – around one third of students contributed during the two hour period. This dialogic approach to team teaching created for students the opportunity to engage in an extended, intense, high quality, analytic, creative and scholarly conversation in which the whole group joined. The students' response to this approach throughout the class indicated its success in effectively engaging and stimulating them - I have not been in a lecture theatre before as either a student or teacher in which there was this level of sustained and active student participation in discussion. Through their dialogic approach, the teachers supported their first year students in attaining a level of analysis that was extraordinary and inspiring, rivalling that which I had previously experienced in postgraduate discussions.

In short, by creating a potential space between themselves, teachers create that space in the classroom. As a student put it in an anonymous course evaluation, 'I love the team teaching, seeing the teachers' own thoughts and relation together. This implicates me further as I feel more part of it. There are new voices, a growth of ideas and knowledge.' By referring to *seeing the teachers' own thoughts and relation together*, this student is drawing attention to the openness of the state that

the teachers are experiencing between themselves. In the Winnicottian classroom, the students *are* this between, the reserve of potential upon which creative thinking relies. This is why students feel implicated in the team teaching, and drawn out by the dialogue that they make possible.

Teachers working dialogically rely on students to draw them out, to help teaching find what is called for at this moment in the class. By watching teachers think out loud, students lose their fear of speaking unfinished thoughts. They learn how to suspend their desire to get everything right, and instead learn a love of the learning *process*. The dialogic lecture theatre models the state of being that is necessary to open thinking, maturity and a life of learning. It is a model that students learn through their part in it. The peer observer commented:

When Ann or Andrew responded to a student, they were actively engaging with the student's ideas, not merely continuing their own course of thinking. An understanding of the concepts unfolded in the room as the insights of students built upon each other. Students were making meaning and not simply coming up with the 'right' or expected response. This was facilitated by the teachers' careful listening, and encouragement of students to develop their own interpretations of the concepts being discussed. For instance, they

responded to one comment by saying ‘It’s a bit more complicated than that isn’t it...?’, and to another student ‘Do you want to say any more?’ and then again after the student elaborated, ‘More..?’, pushing the student further along in analysis. This conveyed the message that they were genuinely interested in students’ contributions. While the approach seemed casual, the nature of their questions indicated careful and precise thinking and preparation.

### *Large class activities*

To make this discussion more concrete, and evocative, we will describe a segment of a recent class. Offered in the third week of the course, this class focuses on the social theorist Emile Durkheim and on the Conclusion to his book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Team teaching allows us to draw on the different relation we each have with Durkheim. One of us is by background an anthropologist, trained through Durkheim’s analysis of religion, while the other is a political theorist who first came across Durkheim, through his methodological writings, as a sociology lecturer. We highlight and use these differences by each focussing on different passages of the week’s reading.

- Andrew begins with a very short introduction, locating Durkheim in the sociological tradition, and giving a context for the Conclusion by drawing



attention to the key ideas of congregation and communion, effervescence, ritual, awe, the sacred and profane.

- In their workbooks, students have been asked to choose and draw out the particular passage from Durkheim's reading that most interested them. They were also asked to connect this passage with an account of an everyday experience in their lives. So, teaching students how to go about their workbook preparation, we begin this task ourselves in the large class, putting on screens the passages that each of us chose.

- We ask students to underline interesting or puzzling words and phrases in our chosen passages, and, from their suggestions, we compile a list that we put on the board. This list, which comes from all of us and none of us, becomes the basis of a collective discussion of the passages. Instead of jumping to a comprehension of the two passages, or the complete Chapter, or Durkheim's thought overall, we patiently work from the questions that present themselves. Taking a point of interest from the list, we ask students to draw out its implications, first by playing with its possibilities, and then by identifying the questions it raises. When a student identifies something puzzling, we ask the class to address the question, by identifying possible meanings and then by identifying what issues are at stake. As these are open

questions that do not presume correct answers, and do not ask for complete answers, all students are able to contribute.

The openness of this questioning process is aided by team teaching. Each of us is aware that space must be left for the other teacher, who will have different responses. This moment of pause is a respectful reminder of the potential of the whole class. When teachers are aware that the class is not their responsibility alone, they are less likely to give the anxious student the ready-made answers they seek. To do so would be to pre-empt the dialogic process that can lead both teachers and students to ideas that they haven't yet had.

To further encourage dialogue, we, the teachers, do our own puzzling out loud, showing the process we use when making sense of what we do not understand. We ask each other and the students for help when we lose our train of thought or cannot see the connections between ideas. If one of us hears the other slipping into an old script, into esoteric jargon, into a leading question, the former, aware of what the students are experiencing, will pull the latter back into dialogue by asking them to explain, to elaborate, to give an example, to say what assumptions they are not making explicit. The teacher

who had lost contact with the here and now is brought back to the class's need for living thought.

The timing of discussions like this can be difficult for solo teachers, who cannot watch the clock if they are to stay immersed in the moment of unfolding dialogue. But the presence of a teaching team gives one of the teachers the opportunity to periodically balance the value of the present activity with the needs of the whole class.

- After the collective discussion of the lists, Ann talks briefly about her chosen passage, starting with the words and phrases that *she* underlined, and showing how she came to understand the potential of these words when she saw them in connection with a particular everyday experience. She highlights the differences in her readings of the passage over the years, and her differences to Andrew's experiences. After she finishes, Andrew spontaneously asks her to reflect on whether Durkheim's own theory of social relations can be used to explore these different relations to a reading. Having heard Ann talk of her ambivalences about Durkheim, students are relieved to be invited to talk of their own struggles with this very difficult text. The class, however, is now in a position to make something interesting of what had simply been an obstacle to reading and thinking. By asking

Durkheimian questions of these difficult experiences, they raise the possibility of creating different reading relations.

- To change the energy of the class, we now show two short videotaped interviews with musicians. We hope to surprise students, by showing that Durkheim's analyses of religion in Australian Aboriginal societies can resonate with experiences of musical performance and of the musician's life practice. This surprise is designed to open students to other possible relevances of Durkheim.

- Students are asked to talk in small groups about these interviews. We want them to have the opportunity to test out, and help each other draw out, their first impressions.

- Ann then asks the students to talk about what they noticed in the interviews. As Ann and the students draw each other out, keeping the discussion as open and lively as they can, students are not paying attention to Andrew, who is listening intently and writing on the board a list of the key terms that are emerging. Ann is entirely absorbed in the discussion with students, trying to get as deep as possible into the quality of the experience, without the desire to lead the discussion to any particular conceptual point. Andrew is thinking in a

different way, about key terms that are used that connect to the broader themes in the class and the course.

- By this stage, there are two apparently unconnected lists on the boards: one with key words from Durkheim, and one with key words to understanding the musical experience. The class now has a chance to connect the conceptual and the experiential. We ask the students to scan the lists and identify connections that highlight the spatiality, temporality and ontology of the experiences that Durkheim is identifying with the sacred. These ideas of space, time and ways of being have been introduced in earlier weeks in the course, in quite different contexts.

While one of the teachers is facilitating the discussion based on the lists, and on this class's content, the other is asking questions about this class's relation to the issues and questions that arose in the previous classes. Which teacher does which task changes fluently during this exercise. This non-linear process of talking about the current week by evoking earlier weeks continues throughout the course. As the weeks proceed there is a developing sense of richness. The different theorists enter the class as interlocutors: students can approach any particular experience from the different perspectives of the different theorists. The possibilities of previous classes are still emerging in

later classes as new connections are made; the possibilities of the whole course are present in any particular class. This is Bohm's 'new kind of mind com[ing] into being'.

- By this stage of the two hour class, teachers and students need a five minute break to gather our thoughts and refresh ourselves.

### *Small classes*

Because team taught large classes perform many of the functions of traditional tutorials, they have allowed us to transform our small classes. The focus of these is now on what students can learn through learning how to teach. We encourage students to work dialogically, developing their academic skills by developing the patience, openness and maturity that they have experienced from their teachers.

In weeks 4 to 7, groups of students are responsible for facilitating a segment of the class. Their role is not to present what they know but to draw out the other students. These facilitations require students to develop skills in the teamwork of team teaching and also give them practice in opening issues for analysis. By encouraging students to imagine themselves as teachers who must be able to imagine themselves as students, these facilitations teach students how to sustain an

open dialogue and keep the life in ideas. During the facilitation, the teacher takes up the position of Winnicott's un-intrusive guardian, learning to listen by not speaking, and creating a supportive space simply through their presence. The teacher contributes more actively during the feedback session in the second half of the class, in which students develop reflective skills, particularly in connection with the process itself.

In week 9, students bring a first draft of their final essay to the class and, through swapping drafts and talking to each other about them, learn to see their own writing through the eyes of others. This insight informs the new piece of drafting they bring the following week, where the process is repeated. This continues until week 13. The teacher again plays the role of un-intrusive guardian, not dominating classes but giving them structure by reading all the drafts, answering questions, and giving general feedback on the writing process. By the time students submit essays, they have learned first hand the patience, as well as the listening and reading skills, necessary for both collaboration and good writing.

This is much more intensive student-centred work than conventional tutorials allow. The team taught large classes make it possible.

## **Conclusion**

Team teaching is often thought to involve no more than the addition of an extra resource or perspective. This view is limited because it maintains the exchange model of dialogue. A truly dialogic team teaching more radically transforms the learning experience. The relation between teachers allows them to support each other, to relax their fears, desires and defences, to be open to the possibilities emerging in the classroom. This in turn allows them to better fulfil their primary responsibility as teachers: to hold the learning relations in the classroom so that all participants feel safe in remaining open in the presence of doubts and questions.

The dialogic community that emerges from team teaching allows both teachers and students to be present to the learning process itself. It changes the space and the time of the classroom so that teachers and students are both teaching and learning. Everyone involved in the class is working at their creative edge, not simply repeating what they already know but finding words for the knowledge that is emerging for them. Moreover, the class allows students to learn first hand the holding capacities and open states of being that are the basis of maturity and an ongoing life of learning.

(6723 words)





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