

Developing pedagogy for responsible leadership:
Towards a dialogic theory of democratic education

Volume 1 of 2

Submitted by Rupert John Edward Higham, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, November 2012.

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.



(signature)

Abstract

This thesis explores the connections between dialogue, education and democracy. It begins by asking: 'what are the implications of dialogic theory for democratic education'? In doing so it draws on concepts from the work of Arendt, Biesta, Dewey and Wegerif: dialogic space as a productive metaphor for education; an ontology of difference in which meaning emerges through dialogue; and authentic democratic action as 'coming into being' in negotiation with others.

It then asks, 'Can we teach for democracy?' by looking at recent practices of citizenship education in Britain. It argues that genuine democratic education must consider students as already being citizens rather than as citizens-in-training, and must offer them opportunities to express their values in action.

A theory of 'responsible leadership', based on a 'pedagogy of challenge', is proposed as a means to enable students to develop the skills and dispositions needed for democratic participation. Short courses in leadership education for teenagers are identified as sites to test this theory.

Two empirical studies are detailed, which use a longitudinal case-study approach primarily based on student interviews. The first was a two-day school-based course for academically able 13-18 year olds; the second was a five-day outdoor residential course for 16-18 year olds.

Both studies found significant development in students' skills and dispositions for learning, including: openness to others' ideas, confidence, greater self-knowledge and better communication skills. In both cases, students' personal dispositions and insights endured. However, lack of opportunities for democratic action after the courses meant that learned collaborative skills were not strongly embedded; this also meant that 'responsible leadership' was not often demonstrated subsequently. Nonetheless, the studies present strong evidence for the transformative power of a pedagogy of challenge, which demands further research.

List of Contents

Volume 1

1. Introduction	9
1.1. The shape of this study	9
1.1.1. Personal background	9
1.1.2. A cumbersome construct	10
1.1.3. A flawed pilot study	11
1.1.4. Following an opportunity: leadership education	11
1.1.5. Looking at what's there: outdoor education	12
1.2. Aims and objectives	13
1.3. Methodology summary	15
1.4. My contribution to co-authored papers	15
2. Towards a dialogic theory of action in education	17
2.1. Introduction	17
2.2. 'Dialogic space'	18
2.3. Dialogic and Difference	21
2.4. Creativity, beginnings, action	25
2.5. Tradition, authority, democracy	29
2.6. Freedom, will, faith	34
2.7. Childhood, intervention, contradiction	39
2.8. Conclusion	42
3. Can we teach for democracy?	44
3.1. Introduction	44
3.2. Citizenship in the curriculum	45
3.2.1. The introduction of the citizenship curriculum in England	45
3.2.2. Balance of theory and practice	45
3.2.3. Accountability and assessment	47
3.2.4. Citizenship in the rest of Britain	49
3.3. Beyond citizenship education	52
3.3.1. Students as 'not-yet-citizens'	52
3.3.2. Student voice as democratic citizenship	55
3.3.3. Citizenship and futures	56
3.3.4. Citizenship, postmodernism and dialogue	58
3.4. Conclusion	62
4. Leadership education as a site for democratic dialogue	64
4.1. Introduction	64
4.2. Student leadership	64
4.2.1. Tensions in the definition of student leadership	64
4.2.2. Student leadership in British schools	67

4.3. Education for responsible leadership	68
4.3.1. Distributed leadership	68
4.3.2. Authentic leadership	70
4.3.3. Defining responsible leadership	72
4.4. Dispositions for learning	74
4.5. A pedagogy of challenge	76
4.5.1. Introduction	76
4.5.2. Conceptualising 'pedagogy'	77
4.5.3. Defining a pedagogy of challenge	80
4.6. Recent literature on student leadership	82
4.7. Conclusion	85
5. Methodology	86
5.1. Introduction	86
5.2. Theoretical framework	86
5.3. Selecting the objects of study	89
5.4. Review of possible methodologies	81
5.4.1. Dialogic as a pragmatic paradigm	91
5.4.2. Issues with studying short-term interventions	92
5.5. A case study approach	94
5.6. Interview technique	96
5.7. Critical incident analysis	96
5.8. Data analysis and coding rationale	97
5.9. Research design	101
5.10. Initial study	102
5.11. Main study	108
5.12. Research ethics, reflexivity and reciprocity	113
5.13. Limitations of research	117
6. Initial study: results	118
6.1. Introduction	118
6.2. In what ways are students challenged on the leadership course?	119
6.2.1. "Outside your comfort zone"	119
6.2.2. Working outside peer and friendship groups	120
6.2.3. Tough questioning and being critical	122
6.3. How do students' dispositions for learning change?	123
6.3.1. Confidence	124
6.3.2. Valuing peers as partners in learning	124
6.3.3. Learning from multiple perspectives	127
6.3.4. Listening skills	130
6.3.5. Impact beyond the classroom	132
6.3.6. Accountability/responsibility	133
6.3.7. Response to pressure of examinations	134

6.4. What are the teachers' and tutors' perceptions?	136
6.5. Does the course influence students' academic performance?	137
6.6. Summary	141
7. Main study: results	143
7.1. Introduction	143
7.2. Results of lateral analysis	146
7.2.1. Challenge and difference	146
7.2.2. Arguments, conflicts and conciliation	164
7.2.3. Relating to others	170
7.2.4. Leading and decision-making	188
7.2.5. Following, abstaining and dissenting	200
7.2.6. Identity and motivation	215
7.2.7. Confidence and the future	229
7.3. Personal Studies	235
7.3.1. Introduction	235
7.3.2. Bron	235
7.3.3. Carla	237
7.3.4. Dan	239
7.3.5. George	240
7.3.6. Holly	241
7.3.7. Jake	243
7.3.8. Kat	244
7.3.9. Martin	246
7.3.10. Steve	247
7.3.11. Course leader's view of the participant group as a whole	249
7.4. Response to research questions	250
7.4.1. Question 1	250
7.4.2. Question 2	252
7.5. Conclusion	253
8. Discussion	254
8.1. Introduction	254
8.2. Implementing a pedagogy of challenge	255
8.2.1. Birmingham course	255
8.2.2. Dartmoor course	258
8.2.3. Summary	259
8.3. Developing dispositions for learning	260
8.4. Encouraging responsible leadership	264
8.5. Testing the theory: insights from educational psychology	268
8.5.1. Czikszenmihalyi and 'flow'	268
8.5.2. Dweck and 'mindset'	271
8.6. Testing the theory: insights from philosophy of education	272

8.6.1. Dialogue is central to ethical education	272
8.6.2. Ethical education is necessarily democratic	275
8.6.3. Democratic education requires opportunities for action	280
8.7. Conclusion: Implementing democratic dialogue in education	282
9. Conclusions	284
9.1. Summary of the argument and findings	284
9.1.1. Implications of dialogic theory for democratic education	284
9.1.2. Can we teach for democracy?	285
9.1.3. Leadership education can promote democratic action	286
9.1.4. Courses' influence on students' dispositions for learning	287
9.2. Contribution made to field of study	288
9.2.1. Theoretical contribution	288
9.2.2. Empirical contribution	288
9.3. Limitations of the findings	288
9.4. Recommendations for further research	289
Volume 2	
Bibliography	2
Appendices	
A. Search model for leadership courses	9
B. Consent form to students, initial study	11
C. Consent form to parents, initial study	12
D. Example interview, initial study	14
E. Observation notes, initial study	22
F. Interview questions, initial study	30
G. Diamond nine exercise categories, initial study	33
H. Coding tree, initial study	34
I. Consent form, main study	35
J. Example interview with student, main study	36
K. Example interview with course leader, main study	42
L. Observation notes, main study	50
M. Interview questions, main study	57
N. Charity task, main study	62
O. Diamond nine template and categories, main study	63
P. Group role cards, main study	65
Q. Coding tree, main study	65
R. Additional quotations in support of findings, main study	71

List of figures

<i>Figure 1:</i> Learning cycle for developing 'responsible leadership' in students	76
<i>Figure 2:</i> Developing responsible leadership and democratic agency through a pedagogy of challenge	265
<i>Figure 3:</i> Mental state relating to an activity's level of challenge and skill	268

List of tables

<i>Table 1:</i> Provenance of codes in initial study	100
<i>Table 2:</i> Provenance of codes in main study	101
<i>Table 3:</i> Summary of findings from the lateral analysis in the main study	144

