DIALOGIC LITERACY:
CONTEXTS, COMPETENCES AND DISPOSITIONS

FRANCESCO CAVIGLIA[*], CHRISTIAN DALSGAARD[*],
MANUELA DELFINO[**], ALEX YOUNG PEDERSEN[*]

**Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark*
*** Scuola secondaria di I grado 'don Milani', Genoa, Italy*

Abstract
Dialogic Literacy is understood as being able to participate in productive dialogue with others and is a key competence for learning and active citizenship in a cultural and societal landscape shaped by the 'participatory turn'. The article develops a definition of Dialogic Literacy based on a cross-disciplinary approach combining deliberative discourse, collaborative rationality, and Moral Foundation Theory. Furthermore, it presents a framework that educators can utilize in order to transform classroom discussion into activity that fosters learners' Dialogic Literacy. Finally, the article argues for elevating the status of Dialogic Literacy as an overarching learning goal that should become an integral part of language education.

Keywords: dialogic literacy, knowledge building, dialogic education, dialogue

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Corresponding author: Francesco Caviglia, Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media, Aarhus University, Jens Chr. Skousvej 5, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark, email: caviglia@tdm.au.dk
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1. INTRODUCTION

According to Collins & Halverson (2009), the world of education is undergoing a momentous shift from an 'era of schooling' to an 'era of lifelong learning', with pedagogy moving from didacticism to interaction and relationships shifting from authority figures to computer-mediated interaction (pp. 96–98 and 102–103). Whether we share this vision or not, the capillary diffusion of online communication and collaboration at the workplace and in leisure time, the possibility for many to enter public discourse via social media, as well as the contiguity—both in physical and digital environments—of people from different countries and cultural backgrounds are creating new learning needs and new ways of learning.

This theory-developing article takes as a point of departure some attempts to redefine the dispositions and competences required for active participation in social practices, from education and learning to political participation. For example, being able to "talk to those who disagree with us" and "burst the *filter bubble*"—that is, the tendency by search engines and social media to only connect users with information and views from like-minded sources (Pariser, 2011)—have been suggested as key competences in securing a healthy democracy against so-called 'post-truth politics' (New Scientist, 2016). Participation is increasingly seen as a requirement for solving problems, building social capital and coping with complexity within a community (e.g., Innes & Booher, 2010; Saurugger, 2009; Torfing, 2016). At the same time, the cultural landscape is in the process of being reshaped by a 'participatory turn' (Fabian & Reestorff, 2015; Saffo, 2010) and—especially among young people—participation in a range of physical and digital 'affinity spaces' (Gee, 2005) is shaping the processes of enculturation and learning (boyd, 2014; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins et al., 2009; Jenkins, Ito & boyd, 2016). In schools, wikis and collaborative word-processors have become common practice, at least in the Danish secondary school (Bech et al., 2013).

In a parallel development, much of current educational research has shifted its focus from individual learning towards processes involving learning with others, often in technology-rich environments (e.g., Wegerif, 2007, 2013 and 2016; Luckin, 2010; Matusov, 2009; Miyake & Kirschner, 2014; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2014; Stahl, Koschmann & Suthers, 2014). As a part of this development, Wegerif (2016) and Halbach (2016) recently proposed dialogic literacy as a key competence to be addressed through educational intervention.

The notion of dialogic literacy (henceforth, DL) was originally defined by Bereiter and Scardamalia (2005) as "the ability to engage productively in discourse whose purpose is to generate *new knowledge* and *understanding*" (p. 750). Therefore, they advocate making *dialogic literacy* for knowledge development an overarching objective for education. Bereiter and Scardamalia have developed a full-fledged pedagogy of Knowledge Building (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2006 and 2014)

which integrates their notion of dialogue for generating knowledge, but have not further defined DL beyond their original formulation in 2005.
The concept of dialogue is also central to Wegerif's idea of a Dialogic Education in the age of the Internet (Wegerif, 2007, 2013 and 2016). Wegerif suggests that the Internet offers new opportunities for transforming education into an increasingly dialogic practice. Wegerif (2016) further explores this notion and explicitly advocates dialogic literacy "not [as] a 'new literacy' but [as] a new way of thinking about literacy" (p. 2), having as goals "literacy education for relationship and engagement" (p. 2) promoting "responsive relationship to others and to otherness" (p. 19).

We discuss the epistemology and pedagogy of DL and explore contexts, practices and conceptual tools which are conducive to the development of DL. On the assumption that DL is relevant both in relation to L1 as a subject and L1 as language of schooling, our goal is to provide a theoretical foundation from which DL instruction might be defined and implemented. Moreover, we will expand the argument for elevating the status of DL as an overarching learning goal that should be infused into and beyond language classroom instruction.
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2. BACKGROUND ASSUMPTIONS, RESEARCH QUESTION, STRUCTURE AND GOAL OF THIS PAPER

The idea of DL may have some intuitive appeal in educational intervention, but still remains an elusive and possibly underspecified concept. The word *literacy* covers an array of meanings, from "the ability to read and write" to "knowledge of a particular subject" as in *computer literacy* (literacy, 2017), to the practice of "reading and writing human language", as opposed to *orality* (Gee & Hayes, 2011, p. 14). In Bereiter and Scardamalia's original definition DL is an "attainable competence", in the sense that "people may possess it in varying degrees and that it is *continuously improvable*" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2006, p. 756, our italics). At the same time, DL is a context-dependent competence, in the sense that "the ability to contribute through conversation to knowledge creation in one context does not ensure that the same will suffice in another context" (id, p. 756).

The working hypothesis for this paper is that DL ought to be defined and analysed not only in terms of individual competences that a person *possesses*, but rather as the development of dispositions and competences for participation in processes where 'dialogism' is primarily a property of a 'discursive space' (Wegerif, 2013) - a 'space' that educational interventions can contribute in shaping.

Therefore, we have chosen to investigate the epistemological and pedagogical principles that inform the design of these dialogic spaces. In order to perform our analysis on a manageable object of study, we choose to focus our attention on what we suggest to call 'dialogue for understanding, design and deliberation', this is the space between on the one hand the development of new knowledge, which

is the primary focus for Bereiter and Scardamalia's Knowledge Building approach, and in the other hand the development of "responsive relationship to others and to otherness", which is the primary focus for Wegerif (2016, p. 19). We argue that there is a productive tension between the epistemological and the relational dimensions of DL, which defines dialogue both as a means and as an end in itself.

Throughout this article we will therefore seek to answer the following questions:

- What are the individual dispositions, knowledge and competences that constitute DL?
- Under which conditions can DL emerge and flourish?
- What can educators learn from social contexts and practices that are conducive to DL?
- How can language educators contribute to fostering DL?

To answer these questions, the paper is organised as follows: an overview of the theoretical assumptions underlying the notion of dialogue and DL as proposed by Bereiter, Scardamalia and Wegerif, with a preliminary definition of DL (section 3); a suggestion to focus on the language classrooms as a protopublic dialogic space (section 4); a description of three contexts of research and practice—the Deliberative Classroom, Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy, and Moral Foundation Theory—in which DL is currently practiced, fostered and investigated (sections 5–7); a discussion of what the language educator can learn from the above-mentioned three approaches (section 8); as a conclusion, a suggestion for integrating our first definition of DL with findings from our research cases (section 9). This revised definition of DL is our main contribution with this paper.

Our arguments are supported by research cases based on literature from distinct approaches and frameworks, and many of them may serve as inspiration not only to L1/first language teachers, but more generally to educators who are interested in improving classroom discussion. At the same time, we believe that language education has a special role to play in fostering DL for two reasons: one, language is the key mediational tool of collaboration; two, language education has privileged access to a range of 'texts' to which dialogue and deliberation can be connected.

We believe that being able to address questions that concern a community and try to solve them through collaboration represents a key competence for active citizenship, and that L1/first language education ought to contribute to education for democracy and to the construction of a sense of responsibility and legality (e.g., Indicazioni Nazionali, 2012; Finnish National Board of Education, 2016, Undervisningsministeriet, 2017).

According to these premises, keeping in mind what Sawyer and Van de Ven (2006) proposed in relation to mother-tongue education, we would position ourselves in line with the 'communicative' paradigm with its emphasis on 'whole language' teaching and its idea of a teacher as creator of living communicative situa-

tions. We recognize the positive effects both of the academic paradigm (in particular the practical value and consistency of imitation, memorisation and exercises on small 'bits' of language) and of the developmental paradigm (in particular, its focus on individual expression in one's own and 'authentic' language), however we believe that emancipation ought to be seen as ultimate goals of education and it is within this perspective we position DL.

In the analysis and discussion of the research cases the authors will occasionally bridge the theoretical discussion with their teaching experiences, which include Italian as L1/first language and History (Caviglia and Delfino, in Italy), Media and Communication (Dalsgaard, in Denmark), History of Ideas (Pedersen, in Denmark), as well as Teacher Education (all authors). In other words, our perspective encompasses our being both teachers and educational researchers whose goal is to define a framework for educators to draw on in order to transform classroom discussions into activities that really foster the learners' DL.

3. DEFINING DIALOGUE AND ITS PURPOSE

In this article, we subscribe to the definition of dialogue in educational setting proposed by Bruce and Burbules (2001, p. 1111) as the "pedagogical relation characterized by an ongoing discursive involvement of participants, constituted in a relation of reciprocity and reflexivity." This definition highlights both the relational dimension ('involvement' and 'reciprocity') and the epistemological one ('reflexivity'). Moreover, 'ongoing' underlies a condition in which "over time participants are engaged intersubjectively in addressing the issue or problem at hand" (p. 1111), thereby encompassing asynchronous processes and allowing for asymmetries in roles and patterns of participation, as long as the participants are involved and have a right and equal opportunity of contributing and possess the capability to do so (Sen, 1985).

In a contemporary Western view, dialogue is associated with a progressive pedagogy that is "egalitarian, open-ended, politically empowering, and based on the co-construction of knowledge" (Bruce & Burbules, 2001, p. 1102). However, as Bruce and Burbules themselves point out, "the philosophical origins of this concept, its prescriptive intent, its idealized characterizations, have all tended to promote an anti-empirical approach toward elaborating what dialogues look like and how they work—or fail to work—educationally" (p. 1103). So far, idealized notions of dialogue can even result into practices that are at best ineffective and at worst harmful and oppressive (Ellesworth, 1989).

It is beyond the scope of this article to mention all the facets of research on dialogue that are of relevance for educational research. The notion of 'teaching through dialogue' encompasses pedagogical traditions from Socrates onwards and ranges from educational philosophy with focus on dialogue as inquiry (e.g., Dewey, 1916/2005; Wells, 1999), to principles for teaching dialogue (e.g., Isaacs, 1999a and 1999b), to research on classroom discourse (e.g., Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser,

& Long, 2003; Skidmore & Murakami, 2016), and on exploratory talk (Barnes, 1976; Mercer, 2000) and collaborative inquiry (e.g., Garrison & Anderson, 2003; Garrison, 2016).

In our investigation, we choose to focus on both Knowledge Building and Dialogic Education because they have developed two independent approaches with a proven record of educational interventions that have been validated and refined over more than a decade in the case of Wegerif and more than two decades in the case of Bereiter and Scardamalia (e.g., Scardamalia, Bereiter & Lamon, 1994). Moreover, their approaches build on the two main philosophical threads that give priority to dialogue in education, with Bereiter and Scardamalia in the Socratic tradition that appreciates dialogue "as a way to pursue knowledge and understanding" (Burbules & Bruce, 2001), while Wegerif's background is closer to a tradition that focus on the moral and political superiority of dialogue in education (e.g., Buber, 1970; Levinas, 1981). At the same time, both Bereiter and Scardamalia and Wegerif advocate DL as a principle for understanding and advancing knowledge, and both approaches are closely connected with the evolution in the technologies for communication and collaboration.

In this section, we present an overview of the theoretical background of the two approaches and propose a temporary definition of DL. After examining and discussing research cases about interventions and approaches that foster DL (sections 4-8), we will then integrate our definition with findings that add new elements to the theorisation proposed by Bereiter, Scardamalia and Wegerif.

Knowledge Building

In their paper on DL, Bereiter and Scardamalia are dismissive about the contribution from research on conversation or dialogue skills in defining dialogic competences "beyond the obvious", such as listening carefully and respecting the opinions of others even if they differ from yours (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2005, p. 757). They focus instead on the epistemology, pedagogy and technology for the shared production of knowledge, with the goal of bringing the idea of advancing communal knowledge to the classroom setting. Bereiter and Scardamalia have developed a 'Knowledge Building' approach (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991, 2006, 2010 and 2014; henceforth, KB) that currently informs educational intervention from elementary school (e.g., Zhang et al., 2011) to university (e.g., Cacciamani et al., 2012; Hong, Chen & Chai, 2016).

The epistemology of the KB approach is inspired by Popper's notion of World 3 (Popper, 1974), with later additions from Tsoukas's (2009) theory of knowledge creation. In Popper's epistemology, World 1 is the physical, 'external' world, while World 2 consists of a person's individual beliefs, ideas, feelings and skills. Popper then posits World 3 as the locus of man-made artefacts like theories, concepts, histories which help make sense and get some leverage on the world. Bereiter and Scardamalia maintain that educational intervention should aim at understanding

and developing World 3 artefacts, that consitute the vast array of man-made entities—from a cooking recipe to a narrative, to the theory of evolution—that learners can appropriate (learn), use, improve, discuss and possibly discard when a better alternative is available. Learning is an individual process that belongs to World 2, but according to Bereiter the whole point of schooling in the Knowledge Age is to empower learners to contribute to World 3. Pedagogically, focus on World 3 is a way to distinguish KB from 'reductionist' approaches to education in which the learner individually regurgitates subject-matter contents or just expresses her/his feelings (Bereiter, 2002, pp. 237–242 and 267–270; Scardamalia, Bereiter & Lamon, 1994).

'Open-ended yet goal-directed' dialogue (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2014) is key to the development of new knowledge, and clearly distinct from 'discussion':

> Discussion is aimed at settling differences, whereas dialogue is aimed at advancing beyond the participants' initial states of knowledge and belief. Dialogue is purposeful, but it does not have a fixed goal. The goal evolves or emerges as the dialogue proceeds. Ability to sustain this open-ended yet goal-directed character would seem to be a hallmark of dialogic literacy (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2005, p. 757; our emphasis)

Given its epistemological basis and focus of attention—the KB approach is highly visible in current STEM education, although Bereiter and Scardamalia also insists on its potential for learning in the humanities and the social sciences (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2012).

In the KB approach, a desired achievement for a person or a group is to produce a contribution that 'rises above' the state of knowledge within the community. The primary role of the teacher in a KB classroom is to provide problems, resources and tools for investigating, while technology (e.g., *Knowledge Forum*, the software developed in conjunction with the KB approach) provides theory-building scaffolds (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2014).

The KB approach also suggests a different view of what it means to be critical. Bereiter and Scardamalia (2006) identify two basic approaches to inquiry, 'belief mode' and 'design mode'. When in belief mode, people are concerned with what they and other people believe or ought to believe. When in design mode, people shift the focus rather on the "usefulness, adequacy, improvability, and developmental potential of ideas". According to Bereiter and Scardamalia, formal education dealing with conceptual content has been traditionally conducted in belief mode. Bereiter and Scardamalia further suggest that real-life problems require a different approach to being critical, which translates into pragmatic work in design mode, aimed at evaluating and improving solutions.

Dialogue for understanding

Wegerif draws inspiration from a 'dialogical' thread in educational theory that builds on ideas originally proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin within the tradition of liter-

ary and philosophical studies (see Matusov, 2007). According to Bakhtin, dialogue is the principle for understanding in the human sciences:

> The exact sciences are a monological form of knowledge: the intellect contemplates a thing and speaks of it. Here, there is only a subject, the subject that knows (contemplates) and speaks (utters). In front of him there is only a voiceless thing. But the subject as such cannot be perceived or studied as if it were a thing, since it cannot remain a subject if it is voiceless; consequently, there is no knowledge of the subject but dialogical. (Bakhtin 1986, p. 161; see also Todorov, 1984, pp. 14–28 for a thorough introduction to Bakhtin's epistemology)

The polarity of monologism and dialogism constitutes competing attitudes to otherness and difference, with monologism considering the other "entirely and only an object of consciousness", denying it "any decisive force" and pretending to be "the last word" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 318). Indeed, monologism does not exist in pure form, since all discourse has a dialogical trait due to its intertextual nature (Todorov 1984, p. 60). However, the pluralistic and ethically committed definition of dialogism proposed by Bakhtin does allow comparing utterances along a monological-dialogical axis.

In positive terms, dialogism refers to an attitude to recognise and represent "a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights, each with its own world, combining the unity of an event but nonetheless without fusing" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6–7).

Of key relevance for educational thought and running parallel to the notion of monological vs. dialogical discourse is Bakhtin's idea of intellectual growth ('ideological becoming' in Bakhtin's term; a discussion in Matusov, 2007, p. 218–221 and Fredman, Hull, Higg & Booten, 2016, p. 1395–1397). The possibility of intellectual growth presupposes a shift away from 'externally authoritative' to 'internally persuasive' discursive practices (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341–347). The external authoritative discourse is hierarchical and unconditional deriving its meaning from traditions and institutions. It binds us whether or not it convinces us and does not foster free or critical thinking. The internally persuasive discourse in contrast becomes both ours and other's through the dialogic confrontation with otherness. This shift ought not to be interpreted as becoming persuaded by and internalizing learning contents, but rather as becoming a critical participant in discourse (Matusov, 2007), with 'internal' defined as "internal to the discourse and not necessarily to an individual" (Matusov and von Duyke, 2010).

Wegerif adds two important contributions to dialogical pedagogy. Firstly, he connects Bakhtin's categories of monologic and dialogic discourse with research on the effects of literacy on shaping consciousness (e.g., Ong, 1982; Dehaene, Cohen, Morais & Kolinsky, 2015) and suggests that mainstream schooling practices lean towards the monological axis *mainly* because of the role that the printed word has historically played in institutionalised learning. With this argument, Wegerif reinstates from a contemporary perspective Socrates' criticism of writing as an impoverished form of communication, which lacks interactivity, as presented by Plato in the *Phaedrus* (Plato, 360 BCE/2006). Secondly, Wegerif suggests that communica-

tion on the Internet represents a hybrid form retaining some of the dialogic affordances of oracy, with significant potential for disrupting monological schooling practices and promoting emancipatory education based on dialogic literacy (Dawes, Mercer & Wegerif, 2004; Wegerif, 2015).

In Wegerif's Dialogic Education cognitive development occurs when a 'dialogic space' as "space of potentially infinite new meaning" (Wegerif, 2013, p. 50) opens up between people in dialogue. Such dialogic spaces come into being when participants, in the process of overcoming inadequate understanding, attune their words towards being understood by a 'superaddressee' or 'absent other' (Wegerif, 2013, p. 56; Wegerif, 2016).

Knowledge Building vs. Dialogic Education

On the basis of descriptions of learning sessions in the two approaches we cannot be sure that an external observer would be able at first glance to distinguish between a science lesson inspired by Knowledge Building and one inspired by Dialogic Education. However, in reports about KB initiatives the primary goal seems to be generating new knowledge and understanding, while for Wegerif dialogue seems to be important first and foremost as a practice that nurtures *relationships* (a keyword that occurs 32 times against 9 occurrences for *knowledge* in Wegerif, 2016). Scholars may disagree on whether the epistemological or the relational component should be regarded as more relevant, while a radical thread within dialogic pedagogy maintain that dialogue itself ought to be the ultimate goal and brands any instrumental view of dialogue as 'monologic' (Matusov, 2011). However, knowledge and understanding can themselves be conceptualized in terms of relationships that people can establish, nurture and deepen with the things, ideas or people that are to be understood (Bereiter, 2002, p. 101–104). Moreover, both Bereiter and Scardamalia's KB and Wegerif's Dialogic Education are fully integrable in the subject matters' official curricula. So far, the two approaches seem to propose complementary views of learning and literacy.

Possibly as a consequence of their different focus, Bereiter, Scardamalia and Wegerif seem instead to diverge in their understanding of transferability of dialogic competences.

Wegerif aims at the development of transdisciplinary 'thinking skills' (Wegerif, 2004, 2010 and 2013), while Bereiter and Scardamalia (2005) maintain that "the ability to contribute through conversation to knowledge creation in one context does not ensure that the same will suffice in another context" (p. 756).

However, longitudinal analyses of sustained KB practice in STEM disciplines show how participants tend to adopt vocabulary and argumentation patterns modeled on scientific discourse (Zhang, Hong, Scardamalia, Teo & Morley, 2011; Chen, Matsuzawa & Scardamalia, 2015). Indeed, the natural sciences build on a common body of knowledge about the means ('scientific enquiry') and goals ('scientific ex-

planations') of science. This common ground allows for methodological convergence across STEM disciplines, which results in high transfer value.
The key question for designing processes that foster DL within language education and other humanistic disciplines is therefore to find appropriate contexts and topics that have enough in common to grant transfer value, as we suggest in the next sections.

Dialogic Literacy: a temporary definition

As a bridge between the first section of this article and the following parts, we propose a definition of DL as consisting of

- understanding of dialogue as a tool for establishing relationships, conducting inquiries, decision making; use of this understanding to identify opportunities, or lack thereof, to participate in dialogue;
- oral, written and digital competences for participating in dialogue for inquiry and deliberation;
- awareness of how practices and technologies of public discourse shape our social and cultural environment;
- willingness to participate in public discourse.

This definition incorporates the tension between the epistemological and relational functions of dialogue with its pragmatic function as tool for negotiating solutions to problems concerning how to better live together, which is the focus of the second part of this article.

Looking for Dialogic Literacy in and beyond educational settings

Where can educators look for inspiration for designing activities that foster the learners' DL?

With this question in mind, we have set out to identify research cases that can illustrate discursive spaces that foster DL.
As a point of departure, we have taken Rosa Eberly's notion of turning the classroom into a protopublic space (Eberly, 1999 and 2000, pp. 168–172; see section 4), since this idea conveys important properties of a discursive space that can foster DL.

Furthermore we have sought inspiration in approaches that try to answer the question of "how we best can live together" and approaches that further our understanding of how to improve debate and deliberation on public-interest issues. The approaches we propose are:

- the 'political' or 'deliberative' classroom (Hess & McAvoy, 2015; McAvoy & Hess 2013) as educational practice at school (see section 5);
- the practice and theory of 'collaborative rationality for public policy' (Innes & Booher, 2010) as encountered for example in urban planning, conflict

resolution and 'collaborative innovation in the public sector' (Torfing, 2016) (see section 6);

- Moral Foundation Theory (Haidt, 2012; Graham et al., 2012), an interdisciplinary approach to moral reasoning that aims at explaining why decent people may fiercely disagree on issues requiring moral judgement (see section 7).

In choosing these approaches we also try to connect subject areas which have previously been separate. The approaches are unrelated to each other and to Bereiter, Scardamalia and Wegerif's reflection on DL. There is little or no overlapping in their bibliographies and the people behind them come from different backgrounds and disciplinary affiliations. But at the same time, they all share the same goal of promoting dialogue and counteracting growing polarisation in public discourse.

As we will discuss further below, we believe that these research cases can offer language educators some important insights on the competences that constitute dialogic literacy. We do not by any means imply that these approaches represent the whole range of discursive spaces and conceptual resources that help enabling dialogic literacy. Knowledge creation is an incremental process that is by definition open-ended. Our choice of approaches has been guided by an attempt to balance theoretical understanding with 'knowledgeable action' (Markauskaite & Goodyear, 2016), and by the need to present approaches which are convergent in their effort to provide solutions for living together in a complex society.

4. THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM AS A *PROTOPUBLIC* DIALOGIC SPACE

The following research case introduces an important property of discursive spaces in educational settings. It is based on a rhetoric classroom at university level, which can be seen as the closest equivalent of a L1/first language classroom in primary and secondary education.

By engaging her students in discussion of controversial literary texts (Eberly, 2000), practices of creative writing (Eberly, 1999) and collections of public memory of traumatic events (Eberly, 2004), rhetoric scholar Rosa Eberly has provided examples of how classrooms can be turned into protopublic spaces (Eberly, 1999 and 2000, p. 168–172) where students get in contact with and engage in the public sphere as a "discursive space in which individuals and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment about them" (Hauser, 1999, p. 61).

The notion of 'protopublic' captures important properties of such a classroom. On one hand, classrooms "can never be truly public spaces because of the presence of the teacher and because of the institutional constraints and supports that necessarily follow from that structure" (Eberly, 2000, p. 169). At the same time, within those institutional structures, students "can engage in the praxis of rhetoric, an art

whose telos is [...] judgment", and possibly choose to send out their contributions into public debate (id., p. 169).

Although we only recently encountered the notion of 'protopublic', we recognize in retrospective that it is applicable to some of our most satisfactory teaching experiences that occurred when what was being discussed by students gave them a connection and access to the public sphere. This connection took place, for lower secondary school students, when the students themselves conducted a debate with other students and their families after watching a movie at the school's cineforum (Cannavò e Lupi, 2016) or became able to challenge views held by friends or family with regard to 'urban legends' (Caviglia, 2002; Caviglia & Delfino, 2016), while university students appreciated rising above their understanding of media debate (e.g., on the case of the killing of a giraffe in a Danish zoo; see Parker, 2017 and Caviglia, Fernandez & Levisen, 2017) or moral dilemmas reflected in reader letters to journals (Caviglia, 2000; in this latter case a few students directly contributed to the publication).

At the same time, we must recognize that our classrooms have been in other circumstances less successful in part because the topic did not connect to a public sphere in which the students felt willing and entitled to participate.

The connection to the public sphere ought to be an aim of the whole educational intervention, in order to create and foster a sense of active citizenship. Students' engagement can be anchored to a wide range of artefacts (e.g., fiction, pieces of news, TV-shows, podcasts and also the students' own production) that would facilitate discussion on 'common places' of public interest generated by those artefacts (Eberly, 2000, pp. 170). These artifacts help define contexts, units of analysis and assignments that are concrete and manageable enough to allow the students to have their say.

The following three research cases have been chosen to provide some inspiration for teachers who wish to qualify student participation in public discourse.

5. DL IN THEORY AND PRACTICE (1): THE POLITICAL, *DELIBERATIVE* CLASSROOM

Between 2005 and 2009, Diana Hess and Paula McAvoy have conducted and observed a number of learning activities in which classrooms were turned into a space for political debate and deliberation (Hess, 2009; McAvoy & Hess, 2013; Hess & McAvoy, 2015).

These studies took place in US upper secondary schools ('high schools') within the social studies curricula. A study conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) on the implementation of 'civic education' in 24 countries underlined how its goals were perceived as a cross-disciplinary enterprise that ideally should also reach outside the school and involve parents and the local community (Torney-Purta, Schwille & Amadeo, 1999). At the same time, a successive IEA survey on civic knowledge and engagement at age 14

showed that in three out of four countries a perceived “open classroom climate for discussion”, in which the students are encouraged to speak up and possibly disagree on a variety of subjects, was a strong predictor of civic knowledge and intention to vote as adults (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schulz, 2001, pp. 137–140 and 150–155).

The activities studied by Hess and McAvoy provide a body of insights about fostering this open climate in the classroom by creating a setting in which the students are required to ‘deliberate’ on matters of public policy.

The goals of the Deliberative Classroom

An argument widely shared by teachers engaged in this type of political classroom is that they have a responsibility for helping the students “to behave better than the adults they see in the larger public beyond the school” (McAvoy & Hess, 2013). Lack of dialogue in public discourse has been observed in several countries, for example, ideological polarization in the US (McCarty, Poole & Rosenthal, 2006), ‘divisivity’ (Di Nucci & Galli della Loggia, 2003) or even ‘tribalism’ (Aime, 2012) in Italy, while in Denmark the quality of public debate is perceived at risk and declining (Koch, 2013).

The practice of the Deliberative Classroom must therefore acknowledge and build on a tension between preparing the students for the existing dominant culture while at the same time transforming this culture through education (Stanley, 2010; McAvoy & Hess, 2013, p. 15–16). Hess and McAvoy’s Deliberative Classroom builds on the notion that policy-making is legitimate when citizens engage in a public process of discussion and deliberation with each other and with lawmakers (McAvoy & Hess, 2013, p. 17).

‘Trust’ is the underlying social mechanism that makes it possible for deliberative democracy to thrive (Hauser & Benoit-Barne, 2002, p. 262). Interpersonal trust is conducive to a stable democracy, but there is no guarantee that democratic institutions will produce trust. This is a question of prolonged dialogue and collaboration (Inglehart 1999). Processes of collaborative deliberation thus build on and might further develop trust.

The practice of deliberation

The Deliberative Classroom overlaps only in part with the practice of classroom discussion. In both cases the students listen and talk to each other, but while classroom discussion is aimed at learning through shared inquiry and arguing (Andriessen & Baker, 2014; Laurillard 2012, p. 141–161; Parker, 2003, p. 129), deliberation on issues of public policy has a stronger focus on building consensus and collaboratively solving a common problem.

The settings for the learning activities described by Hess and McAvoy range from deliberation on local issues within the classroom, to a school-wide simulation

of a legislative organism, carried out throughout a whole semester (the case of Adams High school in Hess & McAvoy, 2015, pp.85–108 and McAvoy & Hess, 2013, pp. 22–23). At Adams High, for example, all senior students are required to attend a course in American Government that is primarily built around an extensive simulation of the legislative process: after an introductory stage in which the students learn the mechanics of the legislative process and the rules of 'civil discourse' (e.g., how to disagree on a topic without resorting to ad hominem style argumentation), the students declare their political affiliation, elect party leaders and each class section becomes a legislative committee. Small groups of students get the task of researching a topic and formulating a bill, which is then passed to the appropriate committee. Students lobby for and discuss their bills in plenum both face-to-face and online, until the bills are eventually put to vote (McAvoy & Hess, 2013, p. 22).

Being a good advocate for a viewpoint is not the same as being good at formulating policies (Hess & McAvoy, 2013, p. 28). In the Deliberative Classroom, the students participate in all the stages of the legislative process and can eventually appreciate how difficult it is to be a (good) politician.

Among the outcomes of the Deliberative Classroom Hess and McAvoy mention first of all changes in dispositions: for example, the students become more interested in politics and express the intention of voting when grown up. At the same time, these dispositions develop together with the skills for discussion and deliberation that we suggest to regard as key elements of DL.

Hess and McAvoy, together with the teachers involved in their studies, focus their intervention on teaching about the legislative process and especially on facilitating constructive, respectful discussions through an approach that they call "teaching *with* and *for* discussion" (Parker & Hess, 2001). In their approach, students do learn some contents through the discussions, but they also use these discussions in a reflective way, to learn about the art of discussion itself. This requires scaffolding by the teacher to develop skills in both discussion and deliberation, with focus on learning how to use reason and affect in their argumentation, listen to others, propose and negotiate a solution. McAvoy and Hess identified some Best Practices beyond the most successful examples of Deliberative Classroom:

1. discussing and deliberating on controversial political issues, with different points of view represented among the students;
2. requiring the students to prepare in advance for the discussion through tasks that require for example to watch or read a source or to do a written assignment;
3. encouraging the students to talk to each other instead of directing their comments to the teacher;
4. assuring that nearly everybody in the classroom has an opportunity to speak up, preventing the same few students from monopolizing the debate (McAvoy & Hess (2013, p. 20).

The first two points require to identify good ‘open’ issues and reliable background information to be used as both as a point of departure and as a resource for discussion and deliberation. Hess and McAvoy (2013, pp. 38–40) highlight the need for the teacher to frame issues as either ‘empirical questions’—ones which can be answered through scientific research—or ‘policy questions’, which can be answered through legislation. Questions can in turn be ‘closed’ when there is widespread agreement on the answer (for example, about women's suffrage or the fact that the Earth rotates around the sun) or they can be ‘open’, as in the case of conflicting scientific evidence or conflicting values. Policy questions are easier to define as open or closed: they are open questions if they are largely undecided in public debate as e.g. laws on immigration or abortion; if they are closed, they can be ‘artificially’ reopened, for example in the history classroom, to better understand changes in society about women’s right to vote or the moral legitimacy of slavery. In both cases, the point of departure for discussion is unambiguous.

Things can be more confusing with empirical questions that someone considers open, as it can happen in polarized contexts. Therefore, they strongly advise teachers to take the responsibility of framing empirical questions as open or closed according to the current state of scientific knowledge and come to the conclusion that “teaching closed empirical questions as open miseducates students, which is wrong intellectually, morally, and in the long run, politically” (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 40).

We wholeheartedly agree that treating unfounded claims as legitimate opinions is wrong and potentially dangerous and understand the need for sometimes acting as an ‘enlightened dictator’ in choosing and framing issues in the classroom. At the same time, we also believe that finding reliable information and agreeing on a shared basis of knowledge is crucial to collective decision-making and needs to be included as an element of dialogic literacy.

What does the Deliberative Classroom add to our understanding of DL?

Hess and McAvoy’s Deliberative Classroom proposes a model of educational intervention that bears resemblancewith Bereiter and Scardamalia’s notion of working in ‘design mode’ to advance knowledge and solve problems through collaboration, as well as a commitment to including the other in the process. In addition, this approach highlights the need for understanding some institutional and organisational constraints in the deliberative process, and provides a compelling framework for educational intervention.

We will discuss some of the challenges involved in implementing a Deliberative Classroom in our Discussion, after examining in the next two sessions a different approach to collaborative decision-making and a framework for understanding why some issues involving identity and moral values tends to divide a community.

6. DL IN THEORY AND PRACTICE (2): COLLABORATIVE RATIONALITY FOR PUBLIC POLICY

The notion of Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy (Innes & Booher, 2010; henceforth, Collaborative Policy-making) may sound like an adult, real-life version of the Deliberative Classroom examined in the previous section. However, if a student of Hess and McAvoy's Deliberative Classroom would like to work with Innes and Booher as a professional facilitator of dialogue, that student would require substantial additional instruction, which would include a rethinking of traditional politics and decision-making.

While the Deliberative Classroom mirrors a legislative process based on enlightened top-down governance, in which politicians listen to different actors and eventually negotiate a solution, Collaborative Policy-making builds on an alternative model that confers at least some power to facilitated interaction and collaboration among stakeholders.

This model may at first sound utopian or even politically extreme, but is indeed grounded in insider knowledge of the authors of both traditional and collaborative approaches to policy-making in the US. To exemplify their post-political attitude, Innes & Booher (2010) contains only one occurrence of the word 'conservative(s)' and no occurrence of 'liberal(s)', while these words occur respectively 70 and 64 times in Hess & McAvoy (2015).

Collaborative Policy-making presents itself therefore as an emerging paradigm that is gaining traction as a way of creating innovative solutions and in the process making communities more resilient and adaptive to change (Innes & Booher, 2010, pp. 205–207; Torfing & Hofstad, 2015).

Before examining possible implications of the Collaborative Policy-making approach for educational practice, it is necessary to discuss in more detail its epistemology and model of decision-making.

From the Rational Model to Collaborative Policy-making

Inspired by a pragmatist tradition that goes beyond positivism without being relativist (see, for example, Dewey, 1929/1980; Bernstein, 1983), the Collaborative Policy-making approach presents itself as an alternative to what Innes and Booher call the 'Rational Model', that is an approach based on instrumental rationality and division of labour in public decision making, in which

> "[..] elected officials set goals; with the help of experts they identify problems; experts generate alternatives; experts then evaluate these and reach conclusions about their efficacy; decision makers, on the basis of this information, decide on policies and actions; and bureaucrats implement these." (Innes & Booher, 2010, p. 18)

In the Rational Model experts are ideally independent from politicians, who in turn are ready to change their mind in the face of new evidence. According to Innes and Booher, the Rational model often "works perversely" in the real, politically pluralist

world because of fundamental shortcomings, for instance because expert knowledge is often used to legitimize political decisions, with analyses co-opted or controlled in such a way to produce the desired outcome (id:18).

Innes and Booher propose instead collaborative rationality within a 'community of inquiry' (Dewey, 1916/2005; Garrison, 2016) whose aim is to produce robust, legitimized knowledge relying on interpretive, pragmatic and dialectical processes (Innes & Booher, 2010, p. 17) under well-established conditions and procedures. In their model of collaborative rationality, Innes and Booher (id, pp. 35–37) identify three conditions for a successful process of Collaborative Policy-making:

1. all relevant players must be included in the process, thereby securing 'diversity';
2. the players must need each other to achieve their goals ('interdependence');
3. the players must engage in 'authentic dialogue'.

Without diversity and inclusion, collaboration would yield solutions that are poorly informed, infeasible or unjust. Without interdependence, the actors would have no reasons for engaging with one another. Finally, dialogue must strive to meet the ideal conditions of Habermas' 'communicative rationality' (Habermas, 1981). The goal of such process is not only to solve the original problem, but also to make the community as a whole more resilient and adaptive in the face of future changes and challenges (Innes & Booher, 2010, p. 9).

We exemplify below the process of Collaborative Policy-making through two cases, while giving special emphasis on 'joint fact finding' as first step to initiate and develop dialogue.

Joint fact-finding and 'knowledge for action'

The first case (Innes & Booher, 2010, p. 152–153) is the story of the unemployment indicator that is still used today in the US. This indicator emerged in the 1950s as the outcome of a 20-years long discussion involving social scientists, labour organisations and business people. In the 1930s, in the beginning of the process, each organisation of stakeholders used its own indicators; later, negotiating a common indicator for unemployment became a way to build common ground in the process of discussing the highly controversial subject of welfare policies. Indeed "the focus on design [on the unemployment indicator] forced reflection on policy issues that had been too controversial for discussion" (id., p. 152). Interestingly, when a political party tried to get rid of the indicator during the 1960s, spokespeople from all the interest groups rose up to defend the tool that had become deeply integrated with their work and represented a form of shared 'knowledge for action' (id., pp. 152–153).

A second case, reported within a collection of examples of 'collaborative innovation' in the Danish public sector (Aagard, Sørensen & Torfing, 2014), illustrates

how the Danish Council of Ethics reacted to an assignment by the parliament about the issue of coercion in psychiatric care (Det Etiske Råd, 2012a; Waldorff, Sørensen & Petersen, 2014). The Danish Council of Ethics consists of a group of 17 experts chosen by the Danish parliament, whose function is to act as a counsellor to the parliament on ethical dilemmas regarding health and environment (Det Etiske Råd, 2012b). The committee's typical approach was to build on expert advice, scientific argumentation and hard data, while its discussions were usually close to the public (Waldorff, Sørensen & Petersen, 2014, p. 75). This happened also initially in this case, until the committee realised that acquiring more expert knowledge and documentation was not likely to produce suggestions leading to change in the culture and practice of psychiatric care or to initiating a public debate, as requested by the parliament. Therefore the committee decided to involve representatives of psychiatric patients and their families in addition to health professionals in the community of inquiry. A consultant firm was hired to facilitate the process involving an increasing number of participants and which became visible in the public debate. Experiences of patients and their family were staged by actors and transformed into short films with a narrative frame, portraying for example meetings of former patients with their former caregivers (Det Etiske Råd, 2012c). Through this process, the issue of coercion in psychiatric care was reframed as being also, or maybe primarily, a problem within the culture of the institutions of psychiatric caregiving.

Opting for an innovative approach with unpredictable outcomes, as well as entrusting the control of the process to an external consultant, were initially perceived as a risk to the committee's credibility. Nonetheless, the committee's final report and recommendations had a strong impact on the public debate and initiated changes in institutions thanks to a double legitimacy grounded in the committee's reputation for competence and in the openness and inclusivity of the inquiry process (Waldorff, Sørensen & Petersen, 2014, pp. 82–86).

In the abovementioned examples, knowledge had to be co-constructed and objectified in forms that were appropriated for use in policy-making.

Both examples build on inclusion of diverse participants, a high degree of interdependence among the participants and 'authentic dialogue' that are conditions identified by Innes and Booher as prerequisites for collaborative rationality.

Collaborative Policy-making also offers a sound alternative to decision-making ruled by majority or expert knowledge alone. Experts do play a key role in Collaborative Policy-making, but they are required to produce understandable and 'actionable' knowledge as basis for shared decision making. This model may suggest a path towards fostering an appropriate level of public trust in experts while at the same time highlighting the need for citizens to learn more, also with the help of experts.

What does the Collaborative Policy-making approach add to our understanding of DL?

The Collaborative Policy-making approach further expands our understanding of the decision-making process through a model that is compatible with the notion of 'advancing knowledge' in the Knowledge Building approach, but proposes a different role model. Instead of a team of experts, such as scientists or designers engaged with the development of a new explanation or a new product, the role model for Collaborative Policy-making is a group of informed fellow-citizens who are committed not simply to find the best solution, but also and equally important to collaborate with and to include others in the process of finding common ground and developing solutions by looking for, developing and using 'actionable knowledge'.

Undiscussable topics?

But what if simply framing an issue as a topic for debate is perceived by part of a community as tantamount to treachery? Is there still room for intervention?

Professional facilitators can indeed use techniques for enabling dialogue with the goal of diffusing aggression even if the lack of interdependence makes collaboration virtually impossible. For example, in a TV-debate in the US between pro-choice and pro-life discussants, held in the aftermath of a shooting attack on an abortion clinic, skilled negotiators introduced the discussion by asking the participants to explain their concerns and emotions, thereby making themselves recognizable as fellow-humans by their opponents and allowing some embryonal form of dialogue to emerge (Innes & Booher, 2010, p. 139). However, Innes and Booher's model of collaboration builds on people acting primarily on the basis of self-interest, that in the process of Collaborative Policy-making becomes 'enlightened self-interest', where communal interest plays a role. This is not always the case when non-negotiable values are involved.

Research in cultural psychology tries to answer the question why decent people may disagree vehemently—even *against* their own material interests—on issues that are perceived as pertaining moral values. This is the topic of the next section.

7. DL IN THEORY AND PRACTICE (3): UNDERSTANDING MORAL JUDGMENT

The Deliberative Classroom and Collaborative Policy-making approaches are geared towards managing disagreements and conflicts at a stage in which participants sit at the same table and try moving into a trading zone on the basis of a combination of self-interest and acknowledgment of the other as a partner that acts rationally and subscribes to a degree of mutual respect. Both approaches thus build on the

assumption that participants are rational subjects that act on the basis of a combination of interests and convictions.

Recent research on moral judgment challenges the assumption that opinions and moral judgment are driven by rational motives and address the core of the problem: how is it possible that people who perceive themselves and are perceived by their peers as honest, moral and rational may disagree irreconcilably on ethics issues? And why are value conflicts between groups especially difficult to mediate? These questions have been the point of departure for a cross-disciplinary research endeavour—especially grounded on social psychology, evolutionary psychology and anthropology—carried out by social psychologist Jonathan Haidt with a group of social scientists. The group has developed a Moral Foundation Theory (Haidt, 2012; Graham et al., 2013; henceforth, MFT) which is currently being used and validated through a number of studies on differences in moral or political views within and across countries and cultures (a list of studies is available at http://moralfoundations.org/publications).

In a similar vein as contemporary studies in behavioural economics (e.g. Ariely, 2012), MFT does away with the notion of an *homo economicus* acting by default on the basis of rational, material self-interest and suggests instead a view of human behaviour as the result of the interaction between emotions and individual plus social reasoning.

A first question is therefore how humans have developed a disposition to feel certain emotions in response to certain events. According to evolutionary psychology (e.g., Barkow, Cosmides & Tooby, 1992), some dispositions have evolved because they are (or have been) 'adaptive', that is have helped individuals and groups to prosper (Haidt, 2012, pp. 152–153 and 221–254). For example, humans react with distress to the suffering of their own children and tend to assist and protect them. Such dispositions are widespread in humans across cultures and also recognizable in some animal species. On top of these dispositions, cultures have developed specific sets of norms and values which may include taking care of and protecting children of unrelated people, children of other groups, etc. (pp. 153–155). How can these fundamental dispositions be identified? And how can these same dispositions result in unique cultural norms and different patterns in moral judgment across and sometimes within cultures? MFT has tried to answer these questions by searching for the evolutionary roots of different moral systems observed by anthropologists, by using Shweder's typology of moralities based primarily on values of *autonomy* (especially visible in the contemporary affluent, Western societies), *community* (especially visible in Eastern Asia) or *divinity* (especially observed in India; see Shweder et al., 1997).

On this basis MFT has proposed six clusters of moral concern that should explain similarities and differences in moral judgment on a range of debated issues. Table 1 proposes a synthesis of the original evolutionary challenges, together with contemporary triggers. As it can be inferred from the examples of current emotional triggers, the first three clusters—*care/harm*, *fairness/cheating* and *liber-*

ty/oppression—are shared across cultures and political affiliations, although groups may diverge radically on the issues and contexts on which these foundations apply. Three other clusters—*loyalty/betrayal*, *authority/subversion* and *sanctity/degradation*—are instead more readily shared by conservatives and non-Western cultures (Haidt, 2012, 151–179).

Table 1. A slightly revised version of Haidt's 'Five foundations of morality' (Haidt, 2012, p. 146, figure 6.2), now including the Liberty/oppression foundation and with fairness defined as based on reciprocity.

	Care/harm	**Fairness/ cheating**	**Loyalty/ betrayal**	**Authority/ subversion**	**Sanctity/ degradation**	**Liberty/ oppression**
Adaptive challenge	Protect and care for children	Reap benefits of two-way partnerships	Form cohesive coalitions	Forge beneficial relationships within hierarchies	Avoid contaminants	Living in small groups with potential bullies
Original triggers	Suffering, distress, or neediness expressed by one's child	Cheating, cooperation, deception	Threat or challenge to group	Signs of (legitimate) dominance and submission	Waste products, diseased people	Bullying behaviour
Current triggers	Baby seals, cute cartoon characters	Free riders, cheaters	Sports teams, nations	Bosses, respected professionals	Taboo ideas (com- (communism, racism)	Political oppression, economic inequality
Characteristic emotions	Compassion	Anger, gratitude, guilt	Group pride, rage at traitors	Respect, fear	Disgust	Anger at oppressors
Relevant virtues	Caring, kindness	Fairness, justice (as reciprocity), trustworthiness	Loyalty, patriotism, self-sacrifice	Obedience, deference	Temperance, chastity, piety, cleanliness	Pride. justice (as equality)

To explain how shared dispositions have developed into quite different and occasionally conflicting norms and behavioural patterns, MFT attributes a key role to two innate human traits: tendential, but not unconditioned conservatism and 'groupishness'.

People by default prefer the known to the new and risky (e.g., Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). At the same time, humans live in what Haidt calls 'the omnivore's dilemma', that is a competition between fear and attraction for new things (food, people, places, technologies), which may prove dangerous, but also provide new opportunities for gaining new resources and improving one's status (Haidt, 2012, pp. 171–172). In other words, competing dispositions for continuity and change are the norm in human communities.

'Groupishness'—that is a tendency to appropriate via *cultural learning* the norms and values of one's community—is another trait that explains how humans can be extremely collaborative, but are also easily prone to aggression, typically against members of other groups or perceived traitors (Zimbardo, 2007). According to MFT, individual moral reasoning builds on innate dispositions, but is then shaped through prolonged interaction within the community, until norms and values become second nature. This explains why people often nurture strong feelings about what is perceived as right or wrong: in Haidt's term, morality "binds and blinds" (Haidt, 2012; chapter 9). In this perspective, moral norms define a group's identity and are used both for strengthening in-group cohesion and marking a group's difference from other groups, thereby making collaboration with outsiders more difficult.

Reacting with disgust or even anger against those who violate moral codes is not necessarily a deliberate process. Interestingly, a number of respondents presented by Haidt with moral dilemmas involving for example sexual taboos were unable to rationally explain why a given behaviour was repugnant or wrong, in spite of their strong feelings on the subject (e.g., Haidt, 2012, p. 111).

Human societies are complex and allow and require some degree of variation in individual dispositions and behavioural patterns. Therefore, moral values are also susceptible to be discussed and changed within a community, possibly creating new strong allegiances. This process has been observed, for example, with regard to changes in attitudes towards homosexuality in the US from the Seventies onwards (Loftus, 2001).

MFT in the current academic and political debate

Moral Foundation Theory is consistent with recent work on the evolution of culture and morality (e.g., Pagel, 2012; Tomasello & Vaish, 2013). At the same time, MFT is 'work in progress' and makes no claim to be the ultimate explanation of moral reasoning. MFT can also easily be criticized not simply for its special attention to US politics, but rather for being Anglo-centric in its very formulation.

In spite of these criticisms and possible limitations, we believe that MFT as a whole advances our understanding of moral reasoning and explains why it can be so difficult to discuss moral issues. Moreover, MFT also entails insights that are relevant for thinking politically, that is for finding better ways of living together. Through his investigation Haidt developed a view of morality as a 'taste with multiple receptors' (Haidt, 2012, pp. 131–149), all of them based on dispositions that are in themselves not simply respectable, but also valuable for individual and collective well-being. Both MFT and the more recent Heterodox Academy initiative for promoting ideological diversity among researchers (Heterodox Academy, s.d.; Haidt, 2017) have sparkled an active debate in the media, for example when the liberal New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof initiated a debate about discrimination against conservatives on university campuses (Kristof 2016a and 2016b; see also 'Academia must resist political confirmation bias', 2016). In this respect, MFT brings all hallmarks of being the type of 'knowledge for action' that Innes & Booher (2010, pp. 142–144) identifies as a requirement for finding shared solution.

What does Moral Foundation Theory add to our understanding of DL?

Dialogue and collaboration may be more rational in given circumstances, but MFT shows us that rationality is by no means more 'natural' than hostility and aggression. At the same time, MFT offers a framework for understanding the rationale behind other people's' motives, without reducing these motives to pure self-interest or malice. So far, MFT provides a rational argument for both understanding and resisting views that may differ from our own.

8. DISCUSSION: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE THREE APPROACHES

The three approaches presented in the previous sections helps to shape the knowledge, competences and dispositions relevant for people who engage with other people in discussion and decision making on matters of how to live together.
A strong message for teachers who seek inspiration from Hess and McAvoy's Deliberative Classroom and the Collaborative Policy-making approach is the opportunity of turning the classroom into a space for inquiry and deliberation based on dialogue, rather than a space for self-expression or, in best case, for winning arguments.

An equally important message from the previous section is that—in order to be better prepared to listen to and collaborate with others—it is useful to understand why questions involving moral judgment tend to elicit visceral answers. Therefore, we believe that findings from social psychology and other disciplines that help understanding 'groupishness' andthe reasons why this tendency is a driving force of collaboration should become part of the curriculum taught at schools.

Although a Deliberative Classroom inspired by the Collaborative Policy-making approach may be non-traditional from the point of view of politics, teachers will

recognize a convergence with educational approaches that turn the classroom into a 'community of inquiry' (Dewey, 1938; Schön, 1992; Garrison, 2016) whose participants share cognitive responsibility (Scardamalia, 2002). The role of professional facilitators in Collaborative Policy-making processes (see Kaner, 2014 as example of a handbook) has indeed similarities with methods used for transforming a group of people into a community of inquiry at school (e.g., Dawes, Mercer & Wegerif, 2004) or in the workplace (e.g., Isaacs, 1999a).

The approach to DL proposed until now assumes that teaching is organised within a competence perspective rather than a disciplinary perspective. Some subjects, more than others, could gain positive effects from dialogue (e.g., language and literature, history, geography, natural science), but in many school systems competences need to find a way inside curricula organised by disciplines associated with a specific teacher, who in turn may teach more than one discipline. While we believe that dialogic literacy should be an overarching learning goal fostered through a range of disciplines, in the rest of this article we focus on how the approaches presented above are relevant to language classrooms.

We mentioned earlier in this paper how the language classroom can be organised as a protopublic space for reflection and discussion, and we believe that most language educators would agree that preparing students to become reflective and active citizens is a key goal of education, and that their discipline can and should play a central role in this effort. At the same time, we believe that the approaches presented above, and whose roots are in the social sciences, can provide inspiration not only for interdisciplinary classrooms, but also for more traditional L1/First language classrooms.

The following paragraphs discuss contexts and design principles for a dialogic, deliberative classroom, and some challenges and opportunities in dealing with controversial issues in the classroom. The discussion integrates findings from literature with the teaching experience of the authors, who since 2015 have been including in their teaching practice elements from the approaches presented above and are at the same time re-examining their previous teaching in the light of these three approaches. More in detail, the authors are currently using elements taken from the three approaches within courses in Intercultural Communication at a Danish university (Caviglia), History, geography and disciplines alternative to the teaching of the Catholic religion (Delfino) in Italian lower secondary school, History of Ideas and Social Sciences in a Danish upper secondary school (Pedersen), Italian history and culture (Caviglia), as well as in workshops for teacher education in Denmark and Italy (all authors); moreover, as already mentioned, Caviglia and Delfino are retrospectively examining years of teaching experience as L1/first language teachers.

Overall, this discussion is primarily addressed to language educators, but we are convinced that teachers from all other disciplines that share linguistic duties towards their students and could take advantage by reflecting on the dialogic practices.

Moving from analysis to choice or deliberation

Our approach to advancing knowledge in the classroom had been focused until recently primarily on asking students to produce 'analyses'. The idea of a Deliberative Classroom inspired by collaborative rationality requires therefore a change in perspective. Retrospective analysis of our teaching practice shows that in some successful learning experiences the students were indeed required to take a decision on questions perceived as open, e.g. whether to show to their parents and siblings a leaflet warning against LSD-impregnated stick stamps (Caviglia, 2002), whether to join a protest against the killing of pilot whales in the Faroe Islands (Caviglia & Delfino, 2016) or how to judge the fact that in Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus killed all the maid-servants who had been unfaithful to his wife (book XXII).

Of course, it is important to be aware of our limits and delimit the scope of our intervention when addressing social issues. For example, reading the true story of a boy's escape from Afghanistan to become in illegal immigrant in Italy (Geda, 2010) is by far enough to be able to address all moral, social and legal dilemmas in policy-making on immigration. It would be irresponsible using that story as the only basis for designing national policies. At the same time, reading and discussing that specific story became a starting point for involving the students in writing to the author and to the main character of the book and posing them questions. These activities were also part of a more complex curriculum, where comments and dialogues on real facts were interwoven with statistical data, news from different media, interviews to family members and unknown people with first-person experience of being an immigrant. The activities combined with a focus on the far-reaching consequences of some individual and collective decisions did enhance the students' understanding of a complex societal issue.

In redesigning some of our courses, we are therefore redefining assignments so that students are asked to make judgments and take decisions, and provide an explanation. For example, in a university course on Intercultural Communication, we invited as guest lecturer a language officer who made the students face some of the decisions he had to take while working in Afghanistan, for example whether to fire an Afghan employee who had been accused of sexually harassing a British female nurse. In another university course on Italian culture, we asked the students to evaluate and possible reformulate an editor's answer—written in 1971—to the letter of a mother who did not know how to cope with her son's homosexuality (Associazione Giuseppe Zilli, 1992).

Indeed, both the research literature and the experiences of the authors suggest that assignments requiring to take decisions—where analysis is a means and not the goal of the assignment—improve the students' analytic competences (see a discussion of 'choice based assessment' in Schwartz & Arena, 2013) and feeling of engagement with the contents addressed in schools.

Opportunities and challenges with implementing a Deliberative Classroom

The Deliberative Classroom has some special requirements to which the teacher needs to pay special attention (this list is based on Hess & McAvoy, 2015):

– ensuring that students are exposed to diverse viewpoints;
– securing inclusion of students with different backgrounds and dispositions;
– facilitating and moderating classroom debate, in presence and in digital social spaces;
– negotiating her or his own role in the classroom, avoiding proselytizing but also accepting to share her or his views—when appropriate—in ways that enrich and open up the debate.

Designing this setting in such a way as to integrate suggestions from the Collaborative Policy-making approach (e.g. creating conditions of interdependence, promoting shared fact-finding, defining stricter requirements for qualifying dialogue as authentic) may result in an additional layer of complexity. At the same time, a classroom working together for a few years represents a precious opportunity precisely for creating such a collaborative environment.

But still, even meeting all these conditions is no assurance against the risk of alienating the support from parents and the local community, where adults may be inclined to believe that teachers use the classroom to promote their own views or simply do not accept that some views be presented as legitimate. In Italy, for example, some organisations try to prevent any mention of gender-related issues in the classroom (e.g., Osservatorio Gender, s.d.; see Sasso, 2015). In the face of all these obstacles, both in the classroom and in the relationship with the world outside, it is not surprising that only a minority of educators organize deliberative classrooms on controversial issues (McAvoy & Hess, 2013, p. 34).

Parker and Hess (2001) describe their effort to teach beginning teachers how to lead classroom discussion on controversial issues as a case of “teaching beyond one's own understanding” (Parker & Hess, 2001): a Deliberative Classroom will by definition operate at the edge of the students’ (and possibly the teacher’s) competence.

Indeed, Hess and McAvoy warn against overestimating the power of schools for transforming the political climate, but also insist that the Deliberative Classroom can be a highly rewarding, transformative experience for students and teachers. They observe that students engaging in the Deliberative Classroom seldom change their views entirely, but most of them discover and understand the legitimacy of alternative points of views, thereby becoming more interested and ultimately better citizens.

The Collaborative Policy-making approach enhances the focus on community values in the deliberative process, with its notion of interdependence of stakeholders as a prerequisite for dialogue aimed at shared inquiry, with all participants as partners in finding a solution.

A Deliberative Classroom built on principles of Collaborative Policy-making would therefore propose a truly adult model for the development of communal trust by means of school-based practices that builds on understanding and acceptance of difference as a point of departure for making better decisions.

One challenge in designing a Deliberative Classroom inspired by the Collaborative Policy-making approach is how to create the interdependence among participants that Innes and Booher identify as a key requirement for initiating a collaborative process.

Teachers can choose from a range of topics for which a diversity of opinions are available both in the public sphere and the classroom, but interdependence is a more elusive category. It may be easy to recognize when participants face a local problem involving common spaces and resources, but controversies may easily involve abstract principles in communities whose boundaries are contentious. For example, one reason why discussing immigration and asylum both in Europe and the US prove so difficult is that part of the problem is to agree on who should be considered part of the community and entitled to have a say on the subject. Educational intervention can aim at creating awareness for a deeper level of interdependence among fellow humans, thereby fostering a disposition towards talking to a “community of those who have nothing in common” (Biesta, 2004; Lingis, 1994). But this is a long-term goal, which needs to be complemented with educational interventions in which topics, assignments and frames for participation are designed to make shared inquiry and dialogue potentially productive from the onset. Should educators give a wide berth to ‘wicked problems’ (Rittel & Webber, 1973) and undiscussable topics, or is there room for intervention?

We do not pretend to have a definitive answer to this question, that ought to be examined on a case-by-case basis. The question has two dimensions, one that concerns learning designs and another that is primarily ethical. A Deliberative Classroom on controversial issues requires especially careful design, one in which ‘texts’ and assignments concur to a better understanding of the topic at hand and that reveal dialogic spaces that may not have been evident in the dominant public discourse.

But how can teachers working at the edge of their own understanding become better at handling topics that divide the public sphere? How can teachers balance the need to take some risks as educators with being responsible towards their students? Teachers are therefore required to make ethical choices which include

> Which issues will I address in my curriculum? How will I present them? What am I trying to accomplish? And how do my own opinions about this issue come into play? (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 6)

Hess and McAvoy encourage teachers to take “a pedagogical Hippocratic oath to ‘do no harm’” (Hess & McAvoy, 2015, p. 213). While agreeing on the principles of the oath, we believe that both we as teachers and our students would be better served by practices that are less dependent on individual judgment alone. With

inspiration from the principles of Collaborative Policy-making, we believe that a form of joint supervision—in which a small group discusses the issues and the educational interventions in advance and then does a debriefing session afterwards—might be a more reliable approach. This paper originates from discussions on teaching interventions in which we felt 'on the edge of our own understanding' and that have been crucial in defining the foundations of our approach. However, we must recognize that our small group, while incorporating some diversity in language and background, shares a WEIRD morality (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic; see Haidt, 2012, pp. 111–130) and prevalently liberal progressive political views. If we wish to campaign for making dialogue on controversial issue into shared learning goal across political divisions, we have to find interlocutors from different political and cultural backgrounds that subscribe or are willing to adhere to the same dialogic values.

Technology to support discussion and deliberation

Computer-mediated communication plays a peripheral role in the Deliberative Classroom, as online discussion in preparation to debate, and has no explicit role in the research cases about Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy reviewed above. Eberly's protopublic spaces rely almost by definition on some media support for 'going public', be it the radio, newspapers or the social media, but these media are presented as mere communication channels without reference to their dialogic affordances, as theorised by Wegerif (2015). Finally, none of our research cases makes use of digital tools for scaffolding dialogue like Bereiter and Scardamalia's *Knowledge Forum*. However, the lack of interest for the technological aspects in the research cases presented so far reflects first of all the disciplinary background of the researcher involved, and then the still limited diffusion of digital tools that afford scaffolding of communication and collaboration.

A thorough discussion of emerging technologies for supporting discussion and deliberation would require a whole article and would deviate from the main focus of this paper. In this paragraph we choose therefore to briefly mention a major challenge in bringing dialogue to the web, the main reason for facing this challenge and some technologies that are already playing or will play a role in scaffolding dialogue.

One major challenge in online discussion is widespread aggression. Physical and temporal distance, lack of restraint due to invisibility and anonymity and 'minimization of authority' are all factor that make it easier to be aggressive on the web than in face-to-face interactions (e.g., Suler, 2004, Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012).
While we believe it is important to minimize this risk, for example by creating gated communities with no place for anonymity and strict enforcement of civil online behaviour, we are also aware that it is precisely the students' unrestricted access to the Internet that enables the 'contact seeking classroom' as "a learning community in which students learn to seek information, relate critically to it and enter in

dialogue with relevant 'educators'" (Tække & Paulsen, 2016a, p. 21, our translation, and 2016b). From the point of view of a contact seeking classroom, special attention is required in defining and negotiating the boundaries of protopublic spaces and the rules of engagement with the external world.

To make communication in these spaces more purposeful, we believe that new developments in computer-based collaboration would enrich practices of collaborative deliberation and joint fact finding. For example, new discussion platforms (e.g., *Loomio.org*, see Jackson & Kuehn, 2016) are designed to support consensus-based decisions-making and allow/require participants to take position in order to move forward, while The Digital Polarisation Initiative (2017) organizes and supports joint fact-finding with the help of collaborative annotation of Web sources (Udell, 2017). These tools are relevant and promising, and we are currently exploring them for inclusion in future projects aimed at fostering DL. However, a didactics of computer-supported decision-making or shared fact-finding is still in its infancy.

At the same time, participation in public discourse, debate and deliberation ought to be seen as the top of the iceberg in classroom practices of online collaboration and build on habits and dispositions that have been nurtured in a range of less controversial contexts and well-established technologies and practices like wikis (Delfino, 2013), collaborative writing (Delfino, 2011), or peer-review (see e.g., Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Sanchez, Atkinson, Koenka, Moshontz, & Cooper, 2017).

9. CONCLUSION, A REVISED DEFINITION OF DIALOGIC LITERACY AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

Throughout this paper, we have proposed Dialogic Literacy as a competence that summarizes the learning goals of an ideal Deliberative Classroom inspired by principles of Collaborative Rationality and by an awareness of obstacles to understanding and collaboration that are intrinsic to our human 'groupish' disposition.

The contexts and cases that we used as resources for reflection and as a basis for the design of our educational practices, combined with a reappraisal of our previous teaching experience, suggest that a classroom can be turned into a productive dialogic space when both students and teachers are aware of belonging to a protopublic space. In addition, such a classroom should ideally be organized around topics and artefacts that are relevant for the public sphere with a strong focus on 'deliberation' as part of the assignment.

If we go back to the temporary definition of DL proposed in section 3, we suggest that two elements would strengthen both the epistemological and the relational components of DL:

- first, understanding of the principles and organisational processes of Collaborative Rationality, and disposition to engage in such processes;
- secondly, knowledge about value systems and identities, and use of that knowledge to understand why good people may disagree on value-laden issues.

These two principles are seldom part of the formal education of L1/first language teachers, but they would not feel alien to anyone with experiences within organisations committed to inclusion and collaboration. In the experience of the authors—both within and outside of school—these principles can be met as part of the culture of organisations who value 'unity in diversity' (Putnam, 2007; Haidt, 2012, p. 193), such as multi-ethnic schools, Scout groups, voluntary organisations or even political groups. In these organisations, however, such principles are seldom explicit or formulated with enough clarity to become applicable in other contexts. Moreover, while the principles in our first definition of DL were relatively neutral, these last two entail a view of society and politics that is at odds with views that value top-down government and 'right-or-wrong-my-party' attitudes. So far, these two principles qualify for contributing to an understanding of dialogue that goes "beyond the obvious" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2005, p. 757).

Most of the examples that we have mentioned throughout this paper can be easily imagined in a L1/first language classroom in Italy or in Denmark, but our framework for DL can be of inspiration for discussion-based classroom activities in other disciplines or in interdisciplinary learning units. While the promotion of DL cannot rest on the shoulders of language educators alone, language educators can play a key role in shaping a school culture in which dialogue and dialogic literacy are a shared and prominent learning goal.

As directions for future work we are primarily engaged with designing and implementing learning interventions for fostering (elements of) DL and identifying existing practices that work towards this goal, often under different denominations and theoretical backgrounds. A pedagogy for dialogic literacy is indeed largely uncharted terrain, that we look forward to exploring. In the process, we need also to explore especially one open question that has not been mentioned in this article because our research in these areas is just at a preliminary stage: How can DL be observed and assessed?

With regard to assessment, we have conceptualized 'dialogicity' within this article more as a property of a dialogic space than as individual competence, and we have suggested 'choice based assessment' with focus on both products and processes of deliberation as a possible approach. However, we are aware that this approach takes workgroups and deliberations as units of analysis and does not address the problem of assessing individual competences or single contributions to debate and deliberation. While pioneering studies do exist, e.g. on assessing classroom questions using a scale between 'monologic' and 'dialogic' (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2003), these tools are not yet available as formats or procedures that teachers would be able to incorporate in their classroom (see Reznitskaya, 2012, for a more manageable Dialogic Index Tool to help teachers assess their own classroom practice).

If DL were to become recognized as a learning goal, appropriate assessment tools would need to be developed. Our definition of DL was also formulated with the goal of being usable for assessment, but we are not sure that it will ever be

possible and useful to conceptualize DL in such terms to design assessment tools similar to the ones for assessing reading or scientific literacy (e.g., OECD, 2013). Indeed, when we did manage to foster DL, it was mainly as desired by-product of more traditional learning goals, e.g. reading, information problem solving, history or intercultural communication. In order to define better tools for assessing DL we are currently collecting occurrences of 'emerging DL' in classrooms and media discussions, in written assignments and also 'in the wild', for example on social media and other forms of unsupervised public discourse.

In conclusion, the notion of Dialogic Literacy captures competences that are central to active citizenship in a complex and multicultural world. We suggest that Dialogic Literacy is relevant to education in general and to language educators in particular.

This article has proposed some foundations for its epistemology and some initial ideas for designing its pedagogy.

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