Talking about values : a dialogic approach to citizenship education as an integral part of history classes

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Chapter 5

THE QUALITY OF STUDENT DIALOGUE IN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION[1]

This study investigates the effect of an instructional design for dialogic citizenship education on the quality of student dialogues and the relationship between the quality of student dialogue and students' ability to justify their viewpoints on a moral issue. A curriculum unit for dialogic citizenship education was developed and implemented in the 8th grade of secondary education. In the final lesson students discussed a moral issue and then wrote an essay on it. The results show that students who made more value-related utterances during the discussion, also referred more often in their individually written essays to values and more explicitly. This study indicates that the content of students' dialogue is important for their ability to substantiate their opinion on moral issues with value-laden argumentation. Approaches to citizenship education in which dialogue is a central element should pay specific attention to the validation as well as the *in*validation of ideas in student dialogue.

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been an increasing emphasis in the past few decades on the social dimension of education. Schools must educate students to become participating citizens of society. Participation in a democratic and plural society means that citizens must be able to form their own opinions about matters concerning justice and the public interest. They need to be able to take their own moral decisions and be accountable for those decisions. Therefore, an important aim of citizenship education is to enhance the capacity of students to develop personal viewpoints with regard to value-related matters and to justify their opinions to others (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003). The fact that democracy is about plurality implies that students need to understand that there are multiple perspectives on moral and social issues and that their own view is only one of many possible perspectives (Banks, 2004). This study focuses on two aspects we consider essential for this approach to citizenship education. Firstly, students need to be able to reflect on the moral values that are at stake and take them into account when justifying their viewpoints to others. Moral values are different from

social conventions and norms in that moral values transcend the specific context, and have a more general and abstract significance. Secondly, while developing their own point of view, students need reflect upon multiple perspectives and to take them into account.

According to the literature, stimulating dialogue in the classroom seems to be an effective teaching method to enhance students' ability to take moral values and multiple perspectives into account. In most moral education approaches, dialogue is considered to be an essential element (Schuitema, Ten Dam & Veugelers, in press; Solomon, Watson & Battistich, 2001). A great deal of research based on the work of Kohlberg (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975), for instance, focused on the effects of moral dilemma discussions on the moral development of students (e.g., Berkowitz & Gibbs, 1983). The importance of dialogue in the classroom is also emphasized from the perspective of citizenship education (Schuitema et al., in press). When students engage in dialogue they are encouraged to consider the perspectives of others and to reason and explain themselves to others. In this way, dialogue is assumed to stimulate the development of critical thinking as a crucial aspect of the competences citizens require to participate in society (Ten Dam & Volman, 2004). In addition, it is argued that citizenship in a democratic society necessitates being able to communicate with different social groups that have different points of view. Dialogue in the classroom is seen as an excellent opportunity to practise communication skills (e.g. Parker, 1997a; Preskill, 1997). Furthermore, it supposedly stimulates the development of attitudes such as tolerance, respect, 'open-mindedness' and autonomy (Grant, 1996; Saye, 1998).

There are different ways to promote dialogue in the classroom. A widespread approach is to have the students work in small groups and to stimulate dialogue between students. An advantage of this approach above, for example classroom discussion, is that more students can actively participate in the dialogue. Hence, many studies concerning teaching methods for citizenship education advocate instructional designs in which students have to work together in small groups and are stimulated to engage in dialogue with each other (see Schuitema et al., in press). However, only a few of these studies elaborate on the qualities of student dialogue that are needed to achieve the various goals that are set for citizenship education. Most studies go no further than claiming 'dialogue makes a difference'. It is questionable, however, if all kinds of interaction will create productive learning opportunities. The quality of the dialogue is assumed to determine the quality of the learning process. Student dialogue should meet specific characteristics in order to facilitate learning (Kumpulainen & Kaartinen, 2003; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003).

In our view, an instructional strategy for citizenship education in which dialogue is a central element (we refer to this as dialogic citizenship education), should also support the development of the skills and attitudes students need for a dialogue that facilitates learning. Before focusing on the instruction that is needed to elicit and support such a dialogue, we discuss dialogue characteristics that may contribute to citizenship education.

1.1 Dialogue quality

What are the characteristics of student dialogue we consider to be important for taking into account and reflecting on moral values and multiple perspectives while developing a personal point of view?

Firstly, it is argued that all participants should be involved in the interaction and actively exchange opinions and ideas (Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes, 1999). Moreover, Kumpulainen and Kaartinen (2003) suggest that contributions to the dialogue should be equally distributed among the participants, something they consider to be an important feature of collaborative processes in dialogue. This in contrast with unequal participation which indicates an imbalance in social status and power.

A second feature of dialogue that is assumed to facilitate learning is processes of co-construction of ideas and joint meaning making (Kumpulainen & Kaarttinen, 2003; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003). Students co-construct meanings and ideas when they reflect and elaborate on the contributions of others (Van Boxtel, 2004). Berkowitz and Gibbs (1983) analysed thirty dialogues of students (mean age 20.7) discussing a moral dilemma in dyads. They found that statements that 'transform or operate on' the reasoning of their partners were more frequent in dialogues of students whose moral reasoning ability improved. In the case of citizenship education, co-construction can imply that students form their own opinions by using the input of others and also contribute towards the opinions of others.

Thirdly, in order to achieve processes of co-construction, it is essential that there is some degree of mutual understanding (Baker, HansenJoiner & Traum, 1999). Participants need to 'check' new information in order to maintain common ground (Erkens, Jaspers, Prangsma & Kanselaar, 2006). Checking behaviour includes verifying questions, and all types of confirming, accepting or denying responses. Damon and Killen (1982) coded the dialogues of 69 first, second and third grade students. The ability of students with a relatively low initial level to reason about issues of justice and fairness improved most when they displayed both transformative statements and statements of direct agreement or repetition. In addition, Erkens et al. (2006) found that checking behaviour in the interaction of students had a positive effect on the overall argumentation in a collaboratively written text.

Finally, the different ideas and views students contribute to the dialogue should be supported with arguments (Chinn, O'Donnell & Jinks, 2000). The reasoning must be made explicit in the talk (Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes, 1999). Erkens et al. (2006) found that students who participated in groups that displayed more argumentative statements in their interaction wrote essays with better overall argumentation. In the context of citizenship education, it is emphasized that students should take moral values into account in argumentation (Veugelers, 2000). Ideas and views that students bring into the dialogue should be appraised and validated from the perspective of moral values. Hence, the moral values that are at stake must be made explicit in the dialogue.

In sum, the characteristics of student dialogue that we assume to be important for citizenship education are: equal participation, elaboration on the contributions of others, checking behaviour, and the explication of moral values.

1.2 Instructional strategies for dialogic citizenship education

Achieving a dialogue that meets the characteristics discussed above requires specific skills and attitudes. Several studies have shown that instructional strategies with an explicit focus on the skills and attitude students need for a productive dialogue have a positive effect on students' reasoning skills (e.g. Mercer et al., 1999). Considerable less research has investigated the effects of such instructional strategies in the field of citizenship education (Schuitema et al., in press).

A previous study (Schuitema, Veugelers, Rijlaarsdam & Ten Dam, submitted) investigated the effects of an instructional strategy for dialogic citizenship education on students' ability to take moral values and multiple perspectives into account when justifying their viewpoints. We designed a curriculum unit for history education in which we integrated dialogic citizenship education. The aim of the unit was to improve students' ability to support their points of view on moral issues related to the learning content. Students worked together in small groups. During the unit, we focused on the following skills and attitudes for dialogue which are derived from Frijters, Ten Dam and Rijlaarsdam (in press).

- *Exchanging*: being able and willing to express opinions and share them with others.
- *Co-constructing*: being able and willing to form your own opinions in a dialogue, utilizing the input of others and contributing to the opinions of others.
- *Validating*: being able and willing to validate your opinion and the opinion of others from the perspective of moral values.

We compared the learning outcomes of the students who participated in the curriculum unit with students in a control group who followed the same history course without an explicit focus on moral values and dialogue. We investigated the effect of the curriculum unit on the ability to reflect on moral values and various different perspectives in an essay, prior to which students discussed a statement about a moral issue. After this discussion they wrote a short individual essay about this statement. Analyses of these essays revealed that students who participated in the curriculum for dialogic citizenship education tended, more often, to take multiple perspectives into account (Schuitema et al., submitted). Similarly, Frijters et al. (in press) found a positive effect of a dialogic instructional design for value loaded critical thinking on students' ability to reflect on moral values.

However, our previous study and that of Frijters et al. (in press) leaves several questions unanswered. To what extent did the student dialogues display the characteristics we assume to be important for citizenship education? What was the contribution of the quality of student dialogue to the learning effects found in the studies? To answer these questions, in the present study we investigate the effects of dialogic citizenship education on the quality of the dialogues, and the relationship between the quality of the dialogues and students' ability to reflect on moral values and multiple perspectives. The questions that this study aims to answer are:

1) *Does dialogic citizenship education as an integral part of history classes enhance the quality of dialogue between students?*

2) *How does the quality of the dialogue relate to students' ability to take moral values and multiple perspectives into account when justifying their viewpoints?*

We expected that students who participated in the unit for dialogic education would be better able to conduct a dialogue characterised by 'equal participation', 'transformative statements', 'checking behaviour' and 'explicating moral values'. Furthermore, we expected students who participated in a group with a dialogue in which these characteristics scored high, would be better able to reflect on moral values and multiple perspectives when supporting their own opinion in their essay.

2. METHOD

2.1 Instructional materials for dialogic citizenship education

Together with a history teacher trainer, we designed a curriculum unit for dialogic citizenship education in the history class (see Schuitema, Van Riessen, Veugelers & Ten Dam, submitted). The lessons were tested, evaluated and adjusted during a pilot study. The unit included thirteen, 45 minute lessons for students in the 8th grade of pre-university education. The teaching materials supplemented an existing history textbook that is widely used in the Netherlands. The extra materials, which consisted of a teacher's manual and student workbooks, covered the history of the United States of America from the first settlers to the early nineteenth century. The curriculum unit discussed the founding of the USA, the position of the Native Americans, immigration to the USA, slavery and the Civil War. We used dialogue as a potentially adequate instructional strategy aimed at enhancing the ability of students to take moral values and multiple perspectives into account. In the next section we discuss how moral values, multiple perspectives and the instruction for dialogue were incorporated in the curriculum unit.

Recognizing and understanding moral values
Systematic attention was paid throughout the curriculum unit to moral values, described to the students as "opinions, wishes or ideals on how people should live together". Students learned to recognize and identify moral values covered in the learning materials. They studied, for instance, the text of the 1776 American Declaration of Independence, and parts of the 1788 Constitution, and had to indicate which values these texts incorporated. They also investigated the values they themselves and their fellow students considered to be important.

Investigating multiple perspectives
Another important focus of the instructional materials was multiple perspectives on moral issues and values. The students were provided with several sources reflecting

different perspectives on a historical event or situation. They also worked on tasks in which they were required to empathize with the perspectives of particular groups. One group of students studied, for instance, sources that reflected the perspectives of the Native Americans, while other students studied sources that reflected the settlers' perspectives. The students subsequently took part in a discussion about a number of statements. They were asked to consider the view of a Native American and of a settler.

Instructions for dialogue

The students were prompted to engage in dialogue with each other during the lessons. Students worked in small groups and discussed statements concerning moral issues. The teacher's manual prescribed the time to be spent on each type of activity. 65% of the available time was for working in small groups (3-5 students, or dyads), and 15% of the time was for whole-class dialogue. The teachers were instructed to guide the collaboration process and to give as little help as possible with the subject content.

Explicit attention was given in the curriculum unit to the skills and attitudes students need to engage in dialogue with each other (exchanging, co-constructing and validating). From the outset, students were encouraged to share their opinions with others, by, for example, writing down each other's opinions without the need for immediate agreement. Activities aiming at co-construction and validating were gradually added. Processes of co-construction were stimulated through assignments in which students had to write down a collective point of view. They had to arrive at an agreement or, where there was disagreement, they had to write down what it was they disagreed about and why. To stimulate students to validate their opinions and those of others, they had to determine the moral values that had been involved in the forming of their collective point of view.

2.2 Design and procedure

The study was set up as a quasi-experimental design, with an experimental condition and a control condition. In the experimental condition the teachers worked with the teaching material for dialogic citizenship education (13 lessons). In the control condition the teachers worked in ten to thirteen lessons on the same content using the same history textbook as the teachers in the experimental condition, but without the additional teacher and student materials for citizenship education.

One lesson was used to conduct the post test. Students worked on an assignment that included a short introduction to a moral dilemma, and a statement. The statement was: "School uniforms back in the classroom!" It was suggested that school uniforms be introduced in the classroom to avoid students being bullied for the way they dress. The students were given ten minutes to discuss the statement in self-selected groups of four. The students then all wrote an individual short essay in which they expounded their personal opinion about the statement.

We randomly selected 25 groups from the groups that participated in the study and recorded the dialogues of these selected groups. The previous study (Schuitema

et al., submitted) focused on the whole group, whereas the present study focuses on the selection of students whose dialogues where taped. We compared the essay scores of the selected students with the essay scores of the students who had not been selected to investigate whether the students that were selected for this study were a representative sample from the previous study. It appeared that in the experimental condition the selected students had significantly higher essay scores than students who were not selected. The control group showed no differences between selected and non-selected students. We conclude that the selection of students for this study was not representative of the students in the previous study which must be taken into account when interpreting the results of the present study.

The selection included 103 students in 25 groups from 8 classes at 6 different schools. 61 students in 15 groups from 4 classes participated in the experimental condition. 42 students in 10 groups from 4 classes participated in the control condition. 50% of the students were female. Eleven percent of the students considered their ethnic identity to be non-Dutch (e.g. Moroccan, Turkish or Suriname).

All students were from the 8th grade of pre-university education (age 13-14). In the highly streamed educational system in the Netherlands, the pre-university track caters for the cognitively more advanced students. Pre-university education in the Dutch educational system is usually divided into three tracks, which we refer to here as the high-track, the mid-track and the low-track.[2] Students are selected for these tracks on the basis of their previous performance in primary education.

The experimental condition included one mid-track class and three low-track classes, and the control condition included two high-track classes and two mid-track classes. There were no high-track classes in the experimental condition and no low-track classes in the control condition. We discuss the implications of this unequal distribution of school-tracks for the analyses in the analysis section.

2.3 Analysis of the essays

Individual essays were used to asses students' ability to take moral values and multiple perspectives into account when justifying their opinions. We scored the essays on the use of moral values and multiple perspectives.

The score on *moral values* was based on the number of arguments that referred to moral values and on the extent to which the students explicitly referred to a moral value: the more explicit a student refers to a general value that transcends the specific context, the higher the score. An essay on school uniforms in which a student indicates, for instance, that everyone should be able to decide for themselves what to wear, scores higher than an essay in which a student states that she wants to be able

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[2] *The high-track and the mid-track of pre-university education in the Dutch educational system are termed Gymnasium and Atheneum. These two tracks are similar except that the high-track includes Latin and Greek. The low-track of pre-university education is a transition class. At the end of the 8th grade some students in this track will continue to follow pre-university education (the mid-track), and other students will change over to general secondary education.*

to choose for herself. Even higher scores are given to an essay in which a student links choosing your own clothing with freedom of speech.

The multiple perspectives aspect concerns the extent to which students discuss varying perspectives in their essays. Attention was paid in the scoring not only to the number of perspectives, but also to the degree of elaboration on the perspectives. The number of (sub)arguments for each perspective was checked. Arguments for and against the statement often corresponded to two perspectives, but this was not always the case. When a student indicates that, for her, the drawback of a school uniform is that she would not be able to show off her new clothes, and that the advantage is that she would not have to decide what to wear in the morning, these two viewpoints are really from the same perspective.

Independently working raters scored each essay separately for each aspect as a whole, according to a method derived from the comparison method (Blok, 1986). The raters used anchors. These are model essays with which the raters compare the other essays. We chose (per aspect) three typical and representative model essays of a good, an average and a weak essay. The three anchors have fixed scores, 50, 100, and 150 respectively. We then asked the raters to assign a score of between 0 and 200 to each essay, compared with the anchors. When a rater judges an essay to be, for instance, better than the average model essay, but not as good as the good model essay, then this essay will receive a score of between 100 and 150 points. Each essay was scored by two raters. The essay scores were calculated by taking the average of the two raters who had assessed the essay in question. Rater reliabilities were estimated using LISREL (van der Bergh & Eiting, 1989). The estimated reliabilities varied between 0.76 to 0.93 (see Schuitema et al., submitted).

2.4 Coding of the dialogues

The taped dialogues were transcribed and coded in three phases. In the first phase we focused on the type of communicative act used. In phases two and three we coded the content of what is being communicated. We focused on utterances in which a moral value is expressed and on the number of themes that was discussed. We used the turn shifts of the speakers to mark off the unit of coding. An utterance was defined by the speech of a single speaker without interruption from other speakers.

Communicative acts

The communicative act coding indicates the communicative function of an utterance. Table 1 shows the codes we used and the descriptions. The main aim in this first phase was to identify utterances that indicate processes of co-construction. It is important for the process of co-construction that students contribute to the content of the task by bringing in their viewpoints and that students react to each other. We

Table 1. Codes, descriptions and examples of communicative acts

Code	Description	Examples
Informative	New contribution (opinion, argument, information) without reacting to former speakers.	- I think everyone has their own individual style of clothing, and you shouldn't always wear the same, that's very boring.
Transformative	Utterance that transforms or operates on a contribution from other speakers, such as an elaboration, an example, a counterargument, or a conclusion.	- I think that with school uniforms you can't see the differences between people and I don't like that, you want to be original. - *Yes, then you don't have a personality* - and you can't see if your parents are rich or poor. - *but we don't have that in the Netherlands, that's more in other countries like emhh..*
Checking	Responses to informative or transformative utterances without bringing in new information, including direct confirmations or denials, and verifying questions.	- No, but you can still wear your own clothes in the weekend and on holiday. - *Yes, exactly* - Why don't you want a school uniform?
Regulative content	Regulative utterances to direct the content of the dialogue.	- Ok, is this the only argument for or do we need more?
Regulative process	Regulative utterances to direct the process of the dialogue (e.g. time management).	- Ok, we have to get a move on
Regulative writing essay	Students talk about writing the essays (e.g. writing strategies).	- Do you have to write that down too?
Off task:		- This man must be from the Precambrian
No score	Unclear statements and half sentences	- Lets have a look, what.....

therefore distinguish utterances that are a contribution to the content of the task from utterances with the aim of regulating the dialogue. Contributions to the content of task can be made by bringing in a new viewpoint or argument (informative), by transforming or operating on the contributions of others (transformative), or by checking new information. We consider these three communicative acts as indicators for processes of co-construction. The remaining codes in Table 1 refer to utterances aimed at the regulation of the content or process of the dialogue or utterances related to the writing process. Interrater reliability of the coding was determined by comparing the ratings of two independent raters for two dialogues (294 utterances). Analyses showed the communicative act coding to be reliable with a Cohen's Kappa of .73 and an interrater agreement percentage of 77%.

Value-related utterances
To asses the quality of the dialogue content we made a distinction between value-related utterances and utterances in which no moral value was expressed. The coding in this second phase involved only those utterances that were coded as informative or transformative in the first phase. Students usually did not explicitly express moral values. However, we consider an utterance to be value related if we can reasonably assume that an appeal is being made to a general value which transcends the specific context. For instance, when a student states: "there are differences in religions and people should be able to express their religion by wearing a headscarves" she is appealing to a general notion that differences between people must be respected. Table 2 gives more examples of value-related utterances. Three dialogues (171 utterances) were double coded. The coding of value-related utterances appeared to be reliable (Cohen's Kappa = .75; interrater agreement = 93%).

Value-related themes
The quality of the dialogue is not only determined by the number of references to moral values but also by the variety of value-related themes. In the third and last phase we therefore coded the dialogues according to the different value-related themes. Table 2 presents an overview of the themes that students discuss in the dialogues. Reliability analyses revealed a Cohen's Kappa of .93 and an interrater agreement of 94%. Based on the theme coding we calculated, for each group, the total number of different themes that were discussed.

Asymmetry of participation
To asses the extent to which students participated equally in the dialogues we calculated the level of participation asymmetry. We first calculated the number of informative and transformative utterances made by each participant as a percentage of the total made by the whole group. Subsequently, we calculated for each member how much this percentage deviates from the ideal situation of perfect participation symmetry. For example, in a group of four, participation is perfectly symmetrical if each member makes 25 percent of the total number of informative and transformative utterances. The final score for participation asymmetry is determined by calculating the group mean of the deviance scores.

Table 2. Value- related themes: description and examples of value-related utterances per theme

Theme description	Examples
Freedom Expressing the right to choose your own clothes. This includes claiming that clothes are an expression of someone's personality which implies a link with freedom of speech.	- You can't be the person you want to be anymore - No, in this country you have the right to have your own opinion.
Diversity The appreciation of and respect for differences between people. There is a certain similarity with the theme of 'freedom'. An utterance is coded as diversity if the accent is on differences between people.	- You've also got different religions and there are people who wear headscarves and then they can't anymore - but that means that these people should conform to the school uniform and Goths for instance, they like to wear black, wide clothes. We should consider that.
Bullying Utterances that express concern (involvement) about the problem of bullying.	- But maybe it is good for kids who are bullied.
Equality Saying that school uniforms can increase equality between students, without elaborating on the problem of bullying. This is frequently about differences between rich and poor students.	- Then what you don't have is people who compete to look the best and who can spend the most money on clothes. - Yes, then everyone will be treated the same.
Racist clothing The uniform can prevent students from wearing clothes with racist prints or brands that are associated with racism, such as Lonsdale.	- People can't wear racist clothes anymore. - and then the other one's wearing Lonsdale and then they start to fight.
Inequality between schools School uniforms make it obvious to others which school a student attends. It can bring about stigmatizing.	- Then it will be like: "heh, look, someone from [name of a school]. what a losers".
Other	- Yes but then I think teachers should also wear uniforms otherwise we have to and they don't and that's...

2.5 Statistical analyses

The first research question concerns the effect of the instruction for dialogic citizen-ship education on the quality of the dialogues. There are six variables that represent the quality of the dialogues, including three types of communicative act that we con-sider to be important indications of co-construction processes: informative utter-ances, transformative utterances, and checking utterances. The other three variables are: value-related utterances, number of value-related themes and the level of par-ticipation asymmetry. We first focus on the three communicative acts.

To code the dialogues, the utterances were used as the unit of analysis. For each group there is a number of observations equal to the number of utterances made by that group. Therefore the data have a hierarchical structure with utterances nested within groups. Multivariate multilevel analyses were performed (MLwiN 2,02: Ras-bash, Browne, Cameron & Charlton, 2005) with the three communicative acts as dependent variables with two levels: utterances and group. In this model the com-municative acts are binary variables, indicating for each utterance whether or not (1 or 0) that particular utterance is informative, transformative, checking behaviour, or none of those. In addition, a logit transformation was performed (for a more detailed description of this model see: Van den Bergh & Rijlaarsdam, 1996). There were significant differences between the three pre-university education tracks. We there-fore analysed the effect of condition within the different tracks. Two dummies were included for the experimental condition (mid-track and low-track) and two for the control condition (high-track and mid-track). Note that there were no high-track groups in the experimental condition and no low-track groups in the control condi-tion. A second multilevel analysis was performed with two levels (utterances and group) to analyse the effect of the instruction for citizenship education on the pro-portion of value-related utterances. The scores for the number of themes and partici-pation asymmetry were calculated for the whole dialogue. Two single level regres-sion analyses were performed with number of themes and asymmetry of participa-tion respectively as dependent variables.

The second research question concerns the relationship between the quality of the dialogues and the individual ability to take values and multiple perspectives into account measured by the essay assignments. The essay scoring produced a score for moral values and a score for multiple perspectives for each student. A multivariate multilevel analysis was performed with the two essay scores for moral values and multiple perspectives as dependent variables. The essay scores were measured at the student level and students were nested in groups. Therefore, we performed multi-level models with two levels: student and group. Because there were significant dif-ferences between the different school tracks and the two conditions on the essay scores, we estimated the effect of the quality of dialogue within school track and condition. Two models were fitted and compared. The first model included four dummy variables for school track and condition. In the second model, the six vari-ables representing the quality for dialogue were added to the model via a stepwise procedure.

3. RESULTS

Before we discuss the results of the statistical analyses, we first take a closer look at the dialogues. The dialogues lasted an average of 12.3 minutes (sd = 1.7) and the average number of utterances per group was 122 (sd = 32.14). Table 3 presents an overview of the results of the communicative act coding.

Table 3. Communicative acts: mean, percentage of total number of utterances, and standard deviation (N= 25)

	Mean	%	SD
Informative	17.56	14.3	3.94
Transformative	32.00	26.1	12.52
Checking	25.16	20.6	11.85
Regulative content	2.92	2.4	4.44
Regulative process	8.16	6.7	5.67
Regulative writing essay	15.00	12.3	12.71
Off-task	17.24	14.0	16.40
No score	4.24	3.5	3.82
Total	122.28	99.9	32.14

About sixty percent of the utterances (informative, transformative and checking) were directly related to the topic of school uniforms. The ratio between informative utterances on the one hand and transformative and checking utterances on the other suggest that an informative utterance was followed, on average, by one or two transformative utterances and one or two checking utterances. A comparison of the standard deviations shows that the number of informative utterances varied less between groups than transformative and checking utterances. Thus, the groups differed most on the extent to which students elaborated on new contributions. Students used about 21 percent of the utterances for regulation, the greater majority of which focused on the writing of the essays.

Table 4 shows the value-related themes and the average number of value-related utterances each group made about that particular theme. The total number of value-related utterances per dialogue was an average of 7.96. The table also shows that the most frequently discussed themes were 'freedom', 'bullying', 'equality' and to a lesser extent 'diversity'.

Table 4. Value-related utterances per theme: mean, percentage of the total number of value-related utterances, and the standard deviation (N=25).

	Mean	%	SD
Freedom	2.60	32.6	2.18
Diversity	0.92	11.5	1.26
Bullying	1.84	23.1	1.77
Equality	1.72	21.6	1.95
Racism	0.24	3.0	0.72
Inequality between schools	0.28	3.5	0.74
Other	0.36	4.5	0.53
Total	7.96	99.8	4.63

Below we present two examples of dialogues to give a further insight into how a dialogue can be described in terms of the characteristics we consider important for citizenship education. We selected a group with many value-related utterances and a group with a moderate number of value-related utterances. The first example (Table 5) concerns parts of a dialogue in a group of four girls with many value-related utterances (18).

Table 5. Example of a dialogue with many value-related utterances (group 11: experimental condition mid-track students)

Line	Student	Transcriptions	Communicative acts	Theme
1	girl 1:	You have your own style of clothing, you can't change that straightaway. (giggling) No, but look, I think on the other hand it is useful, a uniform, because there's less bullying, there aren't as many differences between students	informative	bullying
2	girl 2:	It is useful against bullying (while writing)	regulative	
3	girl 3:	You can decide for yourself how you dress	informative	freedom
4	girl 1:	exactly, then it feels like you have a say in what.. in how you look	transformative	freedom
5	girl 2:	how you are..	checking	

6	girl 3:	but some people might not want to have a say in what they wear, they think it's ok	transformative	freedom
7	girl 2:	yes, yes, and on the other hand it's useful against bullying, but again it's also	transformative	
8	girl 4:	You should be able to decide for yourself what you wear	transformative	freedom
9	girl 1:	That's a value! You should be able to decide for yourself what you wear	transformative	freedom
25	girl 4:	I think it's good to have rules about having too much body on show, but I still think you should decide for yourself what you wear.	transformative	freedom
26	girl 1:	then they can also tell girls to have pony tails and boys to have a parting in their hair.	transformative	
27	girl 3	Yes, your own.. you must be able to disagree with that.	transformative	freedom
28	girl 1:	What you want to wear,…no how do you say it, you should.	no score	
29	girl 4:	Do what you want to do, wear what you want to wear and look the way you want to.	transformative	freedom
53	girl 1:	But if caps aren't allowed, then you get that whole business about wearing headscarves	informative	diversity
54	girl 4:	Yes	checking	
55	girl 3:	Yes, then you get that, those headscarves	checking	
56	girl 2:	Because in principle they're allowed to wear headscarves because they are religious	transformative	diversity
57	girl 3:	Exactly, and they are let into our country and they're allowed to do what they want, except for certain things, but those headscarves are just part of their religion and if that's so precious to them, I think they can keep wearing them.	transformative	diversity
58	girl 1:	Yes they are let into this country, but with the idea that they can have their own religion and their own…	transformative	diversity

As this dialogue shows, there are many indications for processes of co-construction. The girls elaborated on the contribution of others and finish off each others' sentences. They know when they are on the right track and they collaboratively elaborate on the important themes. Moreover, they recognize moral values in the dialogue: "that's a value! you should decide for yourself what you want to wear" (line

9). Due to this collaborative elaboration they have relatively many transformative utterances. The level of asymmetry is reasonably small, although girl 2 made fewer contributions than the others.

The second example is rather different from the first dialogue. This group of four boys made considerably fewer value-related utterances (5) in their dialogue. Table 6 presents one of the few parts of the dialogue in which value-related utterances do occur. Compared with the first dialogue, the transcript shows fewer indications of processes of co-construction. The boys ramble from one subject to another and do not elaborate on important contributions. Boy 1 tries to take the dialogue to a higher level by bringing in some interesting points: "..the Netherlands is a free country, you have the right to your own opinion and that means you can wear your own style of clothing" (line 22). This, however, is not picked up by the other students. An interesting contribution is usually followed by a joke and the dialogue continues with a different theme. This results in fewer transformative utterances than we saw in the dialogue between the four girls. The boys discuss fewer value-related themes than the girls and show less elaboration on these values. The level of asymmetry and the number of checking utterances is comparable with those of the girls.

The differences we observed in the dialogues of the two groups seemed to be related to the essay scores of the students in both groups. All of the four girls had very high essay scores on both moral values and multiple perspectives. We see a different pattern for the boys. One boy had high scores on both aspects of the essays, while the scores of the other three boys varied from moderate to very low.

Table 6. Example of a dialogue with a moderate number of value-related utterances (group 92: control condition, mid-track students)

Line	Student	Transcriptions	Communicative acts	Theme
16	boy 2:	Martin, do you have an opinion, yet?	checking	
17	boy 4:	oh yes, everyone looks the same	informative	
18	boy 2:	Yes but that's not the same, you can do your hair differently and wear sunglasses and you can be too fat or too tall	transformative	
19	boy 3:	Yes, but then you're not allowed to wear sunglasses	transformative	
20	boy 4:	Yes, but I don't get….	checking	
21	boy 2:	would, would, wouldn't there be a hair-style.. that you should have a parting in your hair..	transformative	
22	boy 1:	Yes, but let them get on with that in England, because the Netherlands is a free country, you have the right to your own opinion and that means you can wear your what you want	transformative	freedom

23	boy 3:	good argument from Neil (with a funny voice)	checking	
24	boy 2:	And now another story of Donald Duck (laughter)	off task	
25	boy 1:	No but isn't it true, if you want to live in a free country, aren't you free to express yourself in the clothes you want to?	informative	freedom
26	boy 3:	Yes, I think you are.	checking	
27	boy 4:	yes	checking	
28	boy 1:	In any case, you'll always will find out, even if you're in the classroom, who's got money and who hasn't.	informative	equality
29	boy 2:	That's exciting, it's going round and round, it's recording..	off task	
30	boy 3:	But uuh… do you think it's OK?	checking	
31	boy 1:	Yes, why do you think that, why would it be that…? no, why would it be right?	checking	
32	boy 2:	Because, those children wouldn't be bullied anymore about their clothing. {…} sure, but they don't have problems with their clothes anymore.	transformative	Bullying
33	boy 3:	or if they have red hair	transformative	
34	boy 4:	I wouldn't like it, I'd like to wear my own clothes.	informative	
35	boy 3:	Yep, you just got new clothes, and then you have to go and wear this school stuff..	transformative	
36	boy 1:	I mean, your clothes, that's your opinion, isn't it.	informative	Freedom
37	boy 2:	And then another story of Donald Duck	off task	

3.1 Effect of the curriculum unit on the quality of the dialogues

In this section we present the results of the multilevel analysis in order to answer the question whether dialogic citizenship education in the history class enhances the quality of dialogue between students. The logit transformation makes it difficult to interpret the results of the multilevel analyses on informative, transformative, checking and value-related utterances (see appendix B for the results). To facilitate the interpretation of the estimations of the multilevel analyses, the results of these variables are calculated back to proportions. Table 7 shows the mean proportions of informative, transformative, checking and value-related utterances for the conditions and school tracks as they were estimated by the multilevel analyses. In addition, Table 7 presents the estimated mean scores and standard deviations for balance of exchange and the number of themes.

Contrast analyses were used to test for significant differences between means (see Goldstein, 2003). There are substantial differences between school tracks for

informative and transformative utterances. The mid-track students in the experimental condition scored significantly higher than the low-track students on informative statements ($\chi^2 = 6.8$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$). Similarly, the high-track students in the control condition made more informative utterances ($\chi^2 = 4.49$, $df = 1$, $p = .034$). Comparison between conditions is only possible for the mid-track students. Contrast analyses revealed that the mid-track students in the experimental conditions made proportionally more informative utterances ($\chi^2 = 4.46$, $df = 1$, $p < .035$). There appeared to be no significant differences between conditions and school track in transformative utterances and checking utterances.

Table 7. Estimated means on variables indicating the quality of the dialogues (N=25)

Condition		Informative	Transformative	Checking behaviour	Value-related utterances	Number of themes		Asymmetry of participation	
		mean prop.	mean prop.	mean prop.	mean prop.	mean	SD	mean	SD
Experimental	mid-track	0.19	0.30	0.21	0.13	4.5	1.1	8.5	3.5
	low-track	0.13	0.22	0.18	0.05	3.0	1.0	6.9	2.3
Control	high-track	0.19	0.35	0.23	0.07	2.8	1.6	7.6	3.8
	mid-track	0.13	0.24	0.23	0.05	2.5	0.5	7.25	2.1

For value-related utterances and the number of value-related themes we found a significant effect of condition for mid-track students. Mid-track students in the experimental condition made more references to moral values ($\chi^2 = 8.27$, $df = 1$, $p = .004$) and discussed a wider variety of themes ($\chi^2 = 10.67$, $df= 1$, $p = .001$) than mid-track students in the control condition. Moreover, the mid-track students scored higher than the high-track students in the control condition on value-related utterances ($\chi^2 = 4.4$, $df = 1$, $p = .036$) and they reached the same level of performance as the high-track students on the number of themes ($\chi^2 = 3.83$, $df = 1$, $p = .05$). Further differences between school tracks were only observed in the experimental condition. Mid-track students made proportionally more value-related utterances than low-track students in the same condition ($\chi^2 = 12.92$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). In the control condition the school tracks did not differ significantly ($\chi^2 = 8.27$, $df = 1$, $p = .004$). Finally, we found no differences between conditions or school tracks in the level of asymmetry of participation.

3.2 Relationship between the dialogues and the essays

Our next focus concerns the relationship between the quality of the dialogues and the use of moral values and multiple perspectives in the individual essays. We per-

formed a multilevel analysis, with the essay scores on values and multiple perspectives as dependent variables (see Table 8). The dummy variables for condition and school track were added in model 1. We used a cell means model (Searle, 1987) which implies that the means for conditions and school tracks are estimated directly.

Table 8. Results of the multilevel analyses on the essay scores (N= 91)

			Model 1		Model 2	
			Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Fixed						
values in essays						
	experimental	mid-track	139.1	10.5	95.5	14.3
	condition	low-track	88.5	7.0	99.0	6.3
	control	high-track	91.9	8.7	87.7	7.1
	condition	mid-track	93.2	10.1	107.7	8.7
	dialogues	value related utterances[1]			678.2	182.7
multiple perspectives in essays						
	experimental	mid-track	147.0	8.2	149.1	14.25
	condition	low-track	104.7	5.5	104.3	6.2
	control	high-track	89.9	7.0	90.1	7.0
	condition	mid-track	90.4	7.9	89.7	8.8
	dialogues	value related utterances[1]			-32.0	181.0
Random						
level 2 group		values	225.3	135.7	62.8	89.1
		multiple perspectives	124.9	85.1	124.7	85.1
level 1 students		values	845.7	145.6	840.6	144.2
		multiple perspectives	585.7	100.8	586.6	100.8
Fit			1720.17		1705.31	
	improvement				14,86	
	difference in degrees of freedom				2	
	p-value				p < .001	

[1] This variable is centred around the mean.

To construct the second model we added the variables that represent the quality of the dialogue: informative, transformative, checking and value-related utterances, the number of themes and the asymmetry of participation. Only value-related utterances proved to be significant. Other variables were removed from the model. Value-related utterances appeared to be significant only for the essay score on values. Students in groups that made proportionally more value-related utterances also discussed more values and more explicitly in their individual essays.

4.   CONCLUSIONS

In this study we focused on the quality of student dialogue in citizenship education. Does instruction for dialogic citizenship education improve the quality of the dialogue between students? How does the quality of the dialogue relate to students' individual ability to take moral values and multiple perspectives into account?

The students who participated in the lessons for citizenship education made more informative utterances, which indicates that these students exchanged more information. In addition, the students who followed the lessons for citizenship education made more value-related utterances and discussed a wider variety of moral related themes. However, the selection of students in the experimental condition had significantly higher essay scores on values and multiple perspectives than students from the experimental condition who were not selected for this study. We did not find differences between selected and non-selected students in the control condition. This indicates that we selected the 'better' students from the experimental condition. We cannot therefore conclude that the differences we found between the two conditions on informative utterances and value-related utterances were the effect of the citizenship education lessons. It is possible that these differences were the result of the selection of students.

There were no indications that dialogic citizenship education enhances the processes of co-construction in student dialogue. Even though we selected the better students from the experimental condition, the students in the experimental condition did not make more transformative utterances or checking utterances than students in the control condition. In addition, instruction for dialogic citizenship education did not affect the asymmetry level of participation.

The results partly confirmed our expectations concerning the second research question. The quality of the content of the dialogues was related to students' ability to take moral values into account when justifying their viewpoints. Students who participated in groups that made more value-related utterances in their dialogue, also referred more often to values and in a more explicit manner in their individual essays. The results indicate that students 'used' the dialogue with others to write their essays. The quality of the content of the dialogue may therefore be important for student's ability to take into account moral values to substantiate an opinion. We have to be cautious, however, with conclusions about causality based on correlational research. An alternative explanation for the relationship between the content of the dialogues and the essays is that students who are able to express moral values can do this both verbally in a dialogue with others and in writing in an individual

essay. Other characteristics of the dialogues apart from value-related utterances did not appear to be related to the ability of students to take moral values into account. Furthermore, none of the characteristics of students' dialogues that we examined in this study were related to students' ability to take multiple perspectives into account in their individual essays.

The results concerning the processes of co-construction during the dialogues were not as we expected. The students who participated in the lessons for dialogic citizenship education did not make more transformative and checking utterances which we consider to be indicators of co-constructive processes. Moreover, there were no differences between the school tracks on these variables. There was, however, considerable variance between groups on transformative and checking utterances. These results indicate that there are other factors that determine the extent to which a group engages in processes of co-construction. These factors do not appear to be related to the academic level of the students and difficult to influence with a curriculum unit. An interesting question for further research is what factors cause these differences in processes of co-construction. The student motivation, for instance, might be an important factor. The will to collaborate might be difficult to influence and may depend more on the attitudes of the students towards, for example, the assignment, or on the composition of groups (Van der Linden, Erkens, Schmidt & Renshaw, 2000).

The topic of the assignment may also have had an influence. The students in our study usually agreed that they did not want a school uniform. Some of the students might have used the dialogue more as a brainstorming session rather than as a discussion in which they formed and changed their opinion. It is possible that a topic that evokes more debate between students would lead to different results. Furthermore, the assignment topic was new to the students and had not been discussed in the lessons. Students had practiced engaging in processes of co-construction on historical topics during the lessons. It is possible that they were unable to apply what they had learned to a new topic. Transfer of learning is difficult to achieve and educational research shows that in many cases transfer of learning does not occur. Future research should therefore focus on teaching methods for dialogic citizenship education that stimulate the transfer of learning to new subjects (see e.g. Perkins & Salomon, 1996).

Another unexpected finding was that processes of co-construction in the dialogues was not related to students' ability to take moral values and multiple perspectives into account. The extent to which students elaborated on the contributed arguments did not seem to matter, only the exchange of value-related arguments was positively related to the individual performance on the essay assignment. Apparently it was enough to repeat what had been said in the dialogue to receive a higher score for moral values on the essay. This might have encouraged some of the students to use the dialogue as a brainstorming session, since they did not think it was necessary to elaborate on the various arguments. This is consistent with the finding that most regulative communication and on average 12 percent of the dialogues focused on the writing of the essays (Table 3). This indicates that at least some of the groups were very much focused on how to write the essay and might have put the dialogue primarily in the service of this focus. Nevertheless, it is possible that processes of co-

construction in the dialogues led to a deeper understanding of the moral dilemma and the related values and perspectives without resulting in higher essay scores.

We believe that it is important to analyse student dialogues in detail, as described in this study, to gain an understanding of how student dialogue can improve students' ability to form and substantiate their opinions. This study indicates that the content of students' dialogue is important for students' ability to substantiate their opinion on moral issues with value laden argumentation. An instructional design for citizenship education in which dialogue is a central element, should therefore aim to enhance the quality of the content of students' dialogues. Attention should be paid, in particular, to the validation as well as the invalidation of ideas and views from the perspective of moral values. More research is needed in the near future into how to enhance the processes of co-construction in students' dialogues. In our study we primarily focused on stimulating processes of co-construction through assignments in which students had to write down a collective point of view. Further research is required into the extent to which stimulating disagreement between students gives a stimulus to the opinion forming of students.

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