

# Investigating the Relationship between Classroom Conversation and Argumentative Writing Using Writing Moves and Types of Talk

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**Abstract.** *In this paper, I investigate the relationships between classroom talk and dialogic literary argumentative writing. My work is situated within a larger body of recent research on argumentative writing, taking up a social practice understanding of argumentative writing as being a set of social practices that are situated within a larger process of learning over time (Newell, Bloome & Hirvela 2015). This perspective aligns with the current understandings of writing that have been taken up over the past fifteen years (Nystrand, Green & Weimelt 1993; Klein & Boscolo 2016; Newell, Beach, Smith & VanDerHeide 2011).*

*I adopt a Bakhtinian frame to investigate classroom argumentative writing and talk, which entails a negotiation between the meaning of events and utterances through interaction. Because of this, all interactions and utterances are inherently dialogic, as they are connected to histories and in anticipation of the future. This perspective frames the teaching and learning of argumentative writing as being negotiated locally over time, with unique practices and ways of knowing established through classroom interaction. This means that the teaching and learning of argumentative practices will always be unique to the contexts in which they are practiced.*

*After establishing this frame, I employ instructional chains and discourse analysis in order to analyze two separate classroom discussions that occurred in two separate classrooms. By doing so, I aim to answer the following questions: what is the relationship between classroom talk and dialogic literary argumentative writing as a social practice? How is talk used to define and develop DLA both in regard to argumentative moves and the concepts and ideas derived from literature?*

**Keywords:** *argumentative writing, dialogic literary argumentation, classroom discourse, exploratory talk.*

## Introduction

Since the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers 2010), which place a strong emphasis on argumentative writing in secondary classrooms, there is a renewed need for research on argumentative writing (Newell & Bloome 2017);

especially since two of the most prevalent approaches – reader response and new criticism – often shift meaning too far toward the privileging of decontextualized texts or toward personal experience.

These approaches do not inherently encourage the development of complex understandings based upon multiple perspectives, nor do they provide a thinking process for engaging in real-world prob-

lems. In the case of new criticism, the texts are often not situated in larger modern social contexts that allow for the investigation of what it means to be human; and in the case of reader response, the text can be unnecessary, since meaning can be separated from literature. Dialogic Literary Argumentation (DLA) combines the personal and the text, encouraging students to develop understandings that extrapolate the boundaries of the text, providing a means of problem solving by first examining evidence and deriving claims based upon that evidence, while investigating what it means to be human.

Accompanying this new approach comes a need for studies that adopt a social practice perspective not only in the theoretical frame but in methodology and analysis, and this is done to investigate the ways in which the DLA writing process is situated in, and constructed through, ongoing classroom conversations. Conceptualizing DLA writing as inextricably linked to the talk in classrooms resituates writing not as a product but as a part of the ongoing teaching and learning process that serves as a means for learning and exploration. In consideration of this, I adopt a Bakhtinian perspective to argue that the use of exploratory talk is integral to the teaching and learning of DLA writing by using instructional chains and microethnographic discourse analysis, answering the following questions: what is the relationship between classroom talk and dialogic literary argumentative (DLA) writing as a social practice? How is talk used to define and develop DLA both in regard to argumentative moves and the concepts and ideas derived from literature?

## Literature Review

Bloome & Newell (2017) note that teachers often adopt structural approaches toward argumentation, reflecting an epistemology toward argumentative writing as a means for assessment instead of exploration (p. 379). Accompanying this epistemological understanding of argumentation comes a disjointed approach in teaching argumentation, resulting in many instructors teaching argumentative writing independently from the texts used in class, or treating literary texts as having a singular interpretation. However, Bloome & Newell (2017) also found that effective educators teach argumentative writing over longer periods of time. This makes it a central aspect of the curriculum by weaving aspects of argumentation into the teaching of other components of the ELA content (Bloome & Newell 2017). These approaches inspired Newell, Bloome and Hirvela (2015) to conceptualize argumentative writing as being a set of social practices, defined as an evolving, learned way of doing something that is specific to the context in which something is enacted and to the histories tied to those contexts. Social practices are not skills but instead context-specific ways of knowing and doing based upon social and emotional interactions and content-specific knowledge, which are inherently interwoven and exist in an ever-emerging present that considers both past and future interactions and outcomes (p. 12–14). This definition of social practice lends to an understanding of argumentative writing as being embedded in the social process of teaching and learning (Mercer 1994), and developed through in-

teractions over time, evolving as students conceptualize and reconceptualize argumentative writing. This frame requires a contextualized understanding of writing, in which the human interactions occurring throughout the writing process are integral to understanding the writing that occurs. Employing a social practice understanding of argumentative writing assumes that written arguments are dialogic and situates the actual written product within a *writing process*, through which students construct meaning and explore ideas before and during writing, making it necessary to investigate the classroom conversations that occur around argumentative writing. At the intersection of classroom talk and the writing process, students explore ideas and construct meaning around literature to interpret the world-at-large. This process is dialogic literary argumentative writing.

Newell, Bloome and Hirvela (2015) conceptualize DLA as a coda to the shift from a structuralist understanding of composition and argumentative writing in the 1970s and 80s to a social practice understanding (Nystrand, Green & Wiemelt 1993; Smagorinsky 2006; Newell, Beach, Smith & VanDerHeide 2011; Klein & Boscolo 2016). While this perspective has been taken up by many (Wolfe & Britt 2008; Reznitskaya et. al 2009; Kuhn & Cromwell 2011; De La Paz et. al 2012; Cromwell & Kuhn 2014; De La Paz et al. 2014; De La Paz et Al. 2016; Kuhn, Hemberger & Khait 2016), there are few examples of the social practice perspective of writing being represented beyond literature reviews and theoretical frames and within the methodology and analysis of the studies conducted in secondary classrooms

(Newell, Bloome & Hirvela 2015; Vanderheide & Newell 2013; Vanderheide 2017). Many studies focus on either the written product or a process that more often than not does not include analysis of the ways in which the writing process is constructed through talk. One reason for this may be that creating any sort of prescriptive, translatable intervention is difficult, if not impossible, to do with this frame, since such an approach produces middle-range theories that are not intended to be extrapolated past the contexts to which they are applied as a means for explanation (Merton 1949/2007).

As DLA is a means for interpreting texts to interpret the world (Freire 2005), it is significant to note that even within the various studies conducted over the past several years, very few have explicitly focused on argumentative writing around literature. Yet there are useful examples of argumentative writing being researched through a social practice lens despite literature not being a focus of the studies, such as VanDerHeide, Juzwik and Dunn's (2016) examination of the "conversational turn" in argumentative writing. The authors conceptualize argumentative writing as a means for social action. While participants wrote letters to school administration to persuade policy changes within the school, the authors focus on the process of writing the letters, discussing how the teacher and students went about participating in that process.

This notion of argumentative writing as social action is again taken up in VanDerHeide's 2017 article, in which she argues that argumentative writing is multi-genred (Newell, Bloome & Hirvela 2015) with

genres being utilized and subsequently reconceptualized based upon their utility for the goals of the writer (Miller, 1984). By approaching argumentative writing in this manner, the author focuses only on writing moves, defined as “actions people take in writing to get work done” (p. 3), which are adopted by students through classroom talk. The researcher suggests that the teacher first leads the students in an analysis of writing in a specific genre by identifying, modeling and discussing moves as they go, before pivoting to asking questions that require the students to apply those moves themselves, using meta-talk to analyze the types of moves necessary to analyze literature.

Writing moves work as a means of enabling students to explore ideas within the literature by helping them become more adept at recognizing how others conduct their arguments, in turn providing students with ways to assess validity and make sense of content. Thus, talk influences the construction of knowledge around texts and topics and helps students in exploring ideas, informing the argumentative writing that students do in classrooms (Sperling 1995). Notions of exploratory talk (Barnes 1990; Mercer 1996; Mercer, Wegerif & Dawes 1999; Mercer & Dawes 2008) were defined as “often but not always hesitant, containing uncompleted or inexplicit utterances as the students try to formulate new understandings,” an aspect which “enables students to represent to themselves what they currently understand and then if necessary to criticize and change it” (Barnes 1971, p. 50). It aligns very closely with the social practice of the understanding of argumentative writing, in which the ex-

ploration of ideas is accomplished through dialogic interactions. This type of talk facilitates complex understanding, instead, as it is collaborative, of the dualistic ways of engaging in argumentation, and lends itself to the co-construction of knowledge through dialogic interaction. Thus, the teaching of writing moves as discussed by VanDerHeide (2017) could help students to become better equipped to participate in argumentative writing through exploratory talk and highlight a need to pursue more research around the relationships between classroom talk and argumentative writing.

### **Theoretical Frame**

Important to dialogic literary argumentative writing is Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of heteroglossia, which is the converging of multiple voices/perspectives in a singular utterance or an event. The significance of this idea is that by understanding utterances as being heteroglossic, one must recognize the contextualized nature of speech and the ways in which meanings are negotiated by interlocutors, or the reader and writer.

The meaning of an utterance is negotiated through both previous social interactions within societies and by the individual speakers in conjunction with the current circumstances, semiotics and uptake; all language use is steeped in history and in anticipation of the future. Thus, meaning is not monologic but instead social; the intentionality of the speaker does not solely determine meaning, because the way in which a speaker’s utterance is taken up determines the social significance of the utterance; or, as Bakhtin explains, “[u]nderstanding comes to fruition only in the response”

(Bakhtin 1981, Kindle Location 3979). This same negotiation of meaning occurs when interpreting events.

In *Towards the Philosophy of the Act*, Bakhtin establishes an I-other relationship between the self and those with whom the self interacts, which becomes a foundation to understanding how events and ideological meanings are negotiated. It is through the exchange of and interaction with utterances that multiple truths can be constructed and made sense of, leading to understandings that are both individual and interrelated. Heteroglossia is embedded in this process, as it is inherent to language use (Bakhtin 2010, p. 45).

These ideas are useful for conceptualizing DLA and how it should be analyzed. Newell, Bloome, & Hirvela (2015) conceptualize argumentation and argumentative writing based on Bakhtinian notions of language, examining the social nature of learning and writing, and how argumentative writing as a set of social practices is defined and taken up locally within a classroom over time. Bloome and Newell (2017) define DLA as “critical and analytic thinking about literary texts, rhetorical production, and social practice involving the identification of a thesis (also called a *claim*), supportive evidence (empirical or experiential), and assessment of the warrants” (p. 381). With that comes an understanding of writing as being situated within a social process of meaning-making, serving as a means for exploring and constructing new knowledge. Partnered with this writing are equally important classroom events in which the teacher and students engage in a recursive and reflexive process of defining and redefining

how one goes about engaging in argument. It is in these events that students engage in thinking around topics and literature, co-constructing meaning through written and spoken dialogic interactions. It is the convergence of multiple perspectives around words and events that allow students to construct complex understandings that move beyond a unitary framing of information; and it is in these events that DLA is useful as a tool for negotiating those multiple perspectives through a consideration of all the available evidence and warrants.

Thus, classroom talk around argumentative writing is paramount to understanding argumentative writing, as it situates the writing within ongoing discourses around literature and the teaching of literature and provides contexts for how writing is being taught and how ideas are being constructed and taken up. By employing a microethnographic discourse analysis methodology (Bloome, Carter, Otto & Shuart-Faris 2004), I observe how these discussions develop over time, recognizing events as being part of a larger social process. Using instructional chains (VanDerHeide & Newell 2013) and microethnographic discourse analysis in conjunction with the analysis of student writing, I investigate the complex relationship between students’ writing and talk, namely how classroom talk influences student writing. I advocate that researchers move away from analyzing writing as a standalone representation of thinking and instead recognize written products as part of a larger ongoing process of teaching and learning that requires the consideration of social interaction, argumentative/writing moves and types of talk.

## Methods and Setting

Mr. Sutherland's 10<sup>th</sup> grade accelerated English classroom was located in a mid-sized, Central Ohio high school, and it served a population of students who intended to take 11<sup>th</sup> grade honors English. The classroom was diverse and predominantly female; of the 28 students in the classroom, 20 were female and 13 identified as non-white.

The class convened in the auditorium instead of a more traditional setting because Mr. Sutherland found the extra space useful for group work, projects and facilitating creative lessons. He had taught for 32 years at the time of my observations, with 20 of those years being in the English Language Arts and the other 12 being in Special Education, and was chosen for the project based upon his peers' suggestions that he was an exceptional teacher. Doubling as the theater teacher, he had a strong proclivity for the dramatic arts, which was apparent in the way he conducted his classroom and in his classroom demeanor. A mild-mannered but confident man, he was able to hold students' attention with his personality and use of humor. His teaching persona meshed well with the overall participatory structure of the classroom, which allowed students to pose questions and contribute to discussions without raising their hands. Such an atmosphere seemed to indicate to students that conversation was encouraged and expected.

Ultimately, he decided to approach literary argumentation by first framing argumentative concepts through a jurisprudence lens. He partnered this approach

with literature centered around courtrooms and crime, such as Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1961) and Reginald Rose's *Twelve Angry Men* (1957). Beginning in January, he taught a unit based around Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), from which I analyze a conversation that occurred on February 3, which was contextualized by my observations of other classroom sessions and teacher interviews. I also examined students' writing that resulted from this discussion on the following day, and chose one on which to focus.

I collected these data as a member of the Argumentative Writing Project, which is an extensive research project that has employed 15 researchers to study 61 ELA teachers over the course of 8 years. I employed ethnographic methods, observing the classroom from September until May, which entailed collecting video and audio data, classroom artifacts, interviews and field notes. I attended the classes on a nearly daily basis for 8 weeks before scaling back to twice-weekly visits for 6 weeks; then, I began another 8 week cycle. This continued until the end of the school year. During my time with the class, I worked as a participant observer. I would sit-in and work with students in small groups; I also worked with the teacher to help with lesson ideas and lesson planning, which was informed by my work on the Argumentative Writing Project.

## Analysis

I began my analysis of the data by going back through field notes and video and audio and coding, looking for aspects of

argumentation and types of talk; my codes included exploratory talk, negotiation, making a claim, providing evidence and I-R-E sequences. I used these data to construct instructional chains, which are an analytical tool that focuses on classroom events specifically focused on a given topic, in this case the DLA, and allow for those events to be traced across units in order to see how teachers support the conceptualization and reconceptualization of social practices and knowledge across instructional events (VanDerHeide & Newell 2013, p. 305). By adopting an understanding of argumentative writing as a set of social practices, it is necessary to situate student writing within a larger social process of teaching and learning. Instructional chains provide a useful means of situating classroom events by highlighting the instructional episodes around argumentation and content that influence how students take ideas up in their writing. These chains are also useful for looking across class sessions in order to see how DLA is conceptualized and reconceptualized over time.

After creating instructional chains, I chose a classroom episode from February 3 to transcribe because the conversation is representative of the rich discussions that often occurred around literature over the course of the year. I then systematically worked through the transcript to parse it into message units based upon contextualization cues. I looked for indicators such as intonation, pacing changes, pauses, change in speaker and abrupt stops (Gumpers 1992) in order to determine what constituted a message unit. To complete this work, I reviewed the video and audio data several times. I made conceptual memos

throughout this process as I worked with the data recursively, alternating my analysis between the data and theory. After doing so, I chose to analyze a 10-minute segment of Mr. Sutherland's class because of its relevance and proximity to the student writing and because it was representative of classroom interactions that occurred throughout the unit.

In order to examine turn-taking and conversational flow, I employed discourse analysis, looking for such social-interactional functions as validating, bidding for the floor and holding the floor. I additionally studied initiation, response and evaluation, as I had recognized an I-R-E sequence pattern (Mehan 1979) within the conversations and felt it was necessary to look for this pattern in my analysis. I also included claim, evidence, warrant and counter-argument based upon Toulmin's model of argumentation. I included argumentative epistemologies (Newell, Bloome & Hirvela 2015) as well, as there were indicators in the conversations that I recognized would be important to my analysis. I used VanDerHeide's (2017) two means of conveying argumentative moves that she claimed were most important to teaching writing moves. I did this because these moves might also be important to look for when examining the relationship between talk and writing. Finally, I addressed talk, looking for whether the talk was exploratory or presentational in nature. I looked for these various, somewhat expansive categories, because, based upon studies around argumentative writing, it seems that all of these components could be important to account for in order to understand what is occurring in a

classroom episode around the instruction of argumentative writing. Throughout this process, I was recursively moving between student writing and discourse analysis, checking for the appropriateness of the categories and revising as needed.

Finally, I looked for recurring ideas and themes between student essays and the conversations. Upon reading the student essays, I noticed that many students wrote essays that made similar claims and sub-claims, and drew upon similar evidence. I selected the focal essay, because the student had discussed two ideas from the classroom discussion, while many students had only written about one or the other.

## Findings

I argue that the use of exploratory talk is an integral component of the teaching and learning of dialogic literary argumentative writing because of the following aspects: (1) it serves as a medium through which students can have open-ended, multifaceted conversations about literary texts and their relationship to the human experience, with authentic multiple perspectives being expressed; (2) it provides a space for the teacher and students to define, model and practice argumentative thinking; (3) it constructs a dialogic text (in this case, a conversational text) that can be drawn upon for both ideas and structure in later writing assignments. In the ensuing discussion, I will enumerate how this occurs by analyzing a classroom conversation and how one student takes up that conversation in writing.

Like many of his units, Mr. Sutherland adopted a social justice lens when teaching *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Throughout the year, he often used texts that centered around racial inequality, using books such as Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1961), and short stories such as Hemingway's *Indian Camp* (1925) as a way for students to construct meaning about the world through the analysis of literature. In his classroom discussions, he would often begin by posing questions, positioning himself as a facilitator and equal participant in discussions. Doing so fostered classroom conversations that took on an exploratory purpose, with argumentative practices being organically developed through Mr. Sutherland's modeling of argumentative moves, such as providing a claim, providing evidence, and DLA moves, such as drawing upon multiple perspectives and synthesizing claims, in tandem with student appropriation of argumentative practices.

Mr. Sutherland establishes the purpose of the conversation as being a means to answering his question with argumentation. He asks,

- 1 Alright
- 2 Group number 1
- 3 where is you?
- 4 Alright
- 5 so tell us about Huck Finn and To Kill A Mockingbird

He poses the question in an open-ended manner, indicating that there are many possible answers, as is typical of DLA, while also prompting students to think intertextually. This frames the conversation and DLA as a means of co-constructing knowledge across texts instead of demonstrating a "right" answer.

The teacher uses classroom talk as a means of verbally modeling argumentat-



ive moves and providing a space to practice engaging in an argumentative thinking process, beginning with evidence and the ensuing claims derived from that evidence through the negotiation of multiple perspectives and warranting, resulting in consensus. The teacher and the students explore the motif “loss of innocence” across the two texts, which they had already had an opportunity to examine. These texts served as evidence throughout the interaction. In the conversation, students posit different ways of understanding what loss of innocence means for Huck Finn and Scout, the protagonists of the two novels. At the beginning of this conversation, Mr. Sutherland asks whether “Huck lost any of his innocence?” (line 45), to which many students claim he did, but instead of accepting this answer based upon most of the students claiming “yeah,” the teacher singles out a student who dissented, modeling and facilitating the exploration, and first step toward an integration of opposing perspectives:

- 47 T Brittany says no?  
 48 B (inaudible) (Alyssa is talking over her)  
 49 Like  
 50 not in a way that  
 51 ummm  
 52 Scout does  
 53 because he was  
 54 he wasn't really raised to be innocent like Scout was  
 55 and he was umm  
 56 A So he lost his innocence  
 57 early Brittany  
 58 (inaudible)  
 59 B he was raised in uh  
 60 a not so innocent like atmosphere  
 61 with his dad being like that and  
 62 I don't think  
 63 he could lose his innocence like that

This exchange results in the two students addressing each other's claims and evidence. Brittany argues that unlike Scout, Huck was not raised to be innocent. Alyssa's challenge of Brittany's claim functions as an alternate perspective that begins a negotiation of how the students define the both characters and the concept of innocence in the context of this classroom.

Similar to VanDerHeide's (2017) study, Mr. Sutherland helps students in appropriating argumentative practices by revoicing the students' claims and then posing questions, which develops the conversation by making use of argumentative moves, such as making a claim and providing evidence, a necessity; this leads to a third claim being introduced and eventually adopted in line 69.

- 64 T So if  
 65 so if you were raised  
 66 like when he was a small child  
 67 he saw lots of bad things  
 68 B Yeah  
 69 ? He didn't have any innocence  
 70 T Is that possible?  
 71 ? Yeah  
 72 (Multiple people vying for the floor)

Brittany synthesizes the claim that Huck had no innocence with her own claim eight lines later. She argues that

- 78 B but obviously you're innocent  
 as a baby  
 79 but like  
 80 he was taught all these things  
 81 so he didn't have innocence to lose because he was taught the bad things

Brittany, recognizing the nuanced difference between her claim and the stu-

dent's claim in line 69, argues that Huck, while being innocent as a baby, was raised from infancy to lack innocence, which to her is like never having innocence at all (lines 78–81). In this statement, we see the student providing a qualified claim that incorporates other arguments into her own understanding of Huck's innocence, synthesizing the claims of her classmates. This indicates that the classroom conversation is functioning as a negotiation between interlocutors, because we see students revising claims in order to move closer toward one another's positions. This conversation is further developed four lines later, when another student, Ellen, provides a new claim that Huck might have had "a different kind of innocence" (line 87). Through line 87, students provide multiple claims derived from their initial readings of the text; exploratory talk allows for students to posit and negotiate their claims to explicitly establish their understanding of the characters and implicitly the concept of innocence.

It is at this point that Mr. Sutherland intervenes to again revoice the students' contributions into a synthesized claim that can bring the texts together in a manner that speaks to the world beyond the text, modeling consensus (Habermas 1985) – a DLA move. He says, "[s]o now we're taking a look at gradients of innocence. Like, ok, so when he was a child he saw some really rough things but there's some things he hasn't seen" (lines 88–94). When combined with Ellen's claim, his statement in lines 88–90 serves as a warrant for his claim; if there are gradients of innocence, then Huck can have a different kinds of innocence. Mr. Sutherland both co-con-

structs an argument with his students and models a DLA move of synthesizing multiple perspectives to provide a larger claim with an accompanying warrant that would be appropriate for DLA, because it moves the conversation outside of the texts in order to speak to the nature of being human.

The students and teacher engage in the argumentative move of providing evidence from the text (lines 97–132) that supports the synthesized claim before Mr. Sutherland asks his students to compare Huck's traumatic experience to Scout's:

- 97 T So what about the dead body?  
 98 G Shoot dead body  
 99 Xxxx  
 100 T Is it?  
 101 He saw that guy laying  
 102 what is it,  
 103 face down—  
 104 A --Yeah  
 105 cuz it  
 106 really freaked him out.  
 107 He talks about how it freaked  
 him out.  
 108 T So maybe that's something.  
 109 Can we connect that with Scout?  
 110 What would Scout have seen  
 111 that was equally  
 112 as loss of innocencing.  
 113 C uhh the people treating ummm—  
 114 T Tom  
 115 C Yeah Tom—  
 116 A Getting attacked  
 117 C So bad,  
 118 like  
 119 ? Or black people  
 120 T I think that's an interesting thing  
 121 because now what you're saying is  
 122 her seeing how badly people  
 were treated  
 123 was to her  
 124 the same significance as Huck  
 seeing a dead body.  
 125 C Yeah

- 126 T Yes?  
 127 S Cuz it like effected her the same way--xxxxxxx  
 128 A SHE WAS MORE—  
 129 ? She was sheltered  
 130 A Yeah  
 131 that's what I was about to say that.

After Mr. Sutherland and the students revisit evidence (lines 97–131), they amend the claim to better suit the evidence. The teacher revoices the evolving understanding of what constitutes innocence, as it is negotiated in the classroom discussion:

- 151 I want you to think about  
 the motif of this book  
 152 and it is about  
 153 or what I think part of it is  
 154 is  
 155 this idea of how you're raised  
 156 And I think what you're saying  
 is that if you're raised  
 157 that if you have a hard life  
 158 and I think Brinatty said it too  
 159 if you have a hard life then  
 things are  
 160 your lev  
 161 your threshold of  
 162 is it pain?  
 163 Your threshold of  
 164 innocence is different  
 165 ? yeah  
 166 T right?  
 167 It's different  
 168 And so if I'm,  
 169 if I'm brought up  
 170 without having seen any bad  
 things  
 171 that first bad thing I see is way  
 different  
 172 than  
 173 if I'm brought up seeing bad  
 things.

Here, Mr. Sutherland speaks to the human experience and the relative nature of existence, which is the aim of DLA, while demonstrating another argumentative move: stating meaning (VanDerHeide 2017). The conversation leads to a complex and intersubjective understanding that Mr. Sutherland reaches with his students through his questioning and revoicing. It also leads to the students appropriating the DLA moves, like deriving claims from evidence, considering multiple perspectives and synthesizing those perspectives into a claim that constructs meaning beyond the texts, as well as argumentative moves, like providing a claim and providing evidence. This, in turn, encourages students to engage in exploratory talk, thus facilitating argumentative thinking. It is through the teacher revoicing, questioning and modeling, and the students appropriating argumentative and DLA moves and argumentative thinking, that students are able to engage in this discussion in which the tensions between perspectives are utilized to construct the practices by which they can reach complex understandings. After this exchange, Mr. Sutherland uses a personal anecdote about his experiences in other schools as a way of demonstrating how the conclusion they reached is true in the real world, which provides more evidence (lines 194–249). For the last ten minutes of class, he asks students comprehension questions about the text (lines 250–399).

The conversation from February 3 permeated into the students' writing the next day. Nearly all of the student essays appropriated either the first half of the discussion, which I analyzed above (lines 1–174), or the second half of the discussion, in which

Mr. Sutherland and the students cover factual information about why Huck and Jim run away and the experiences the characters had leading up to their escapes (lines 194–399), which I have not included due to space limitations. In both cases, many of the points made during the discussion are integral to the arguments the students are attempting to make. The students who

spoke frequently – Brittany and Alyssa – wrote essays that adopted and elaborated upon the claims and evidence in class. But what I found to be particularly interesting was an essay written by a student named Isabell, who did not speak at all.

In Isabell’s essay, she drew upon both parts of the conversation. I have included her essay in Figure 1 below.

<b>Lines from Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> Classroom discussion</b>	<b>Isabell’s essay on Feb 4th</b>
Lines 16-34	1 In the novels To Kill a Mockingbird and The Adventures of Huckelberry 2 finn, Both huck and scout go through experiences that change them as a 3 youngchild.
Lines 43-44	4 These changes, meaning loss of innocence.
Lines 97-108	5 For example when huck saw a dead body, that isn’t something young 6 children are used to seeing.
Lines 109-124	7 This is a a comparison to scout seeing how badly tom robinson was being 8 treated.  9 She got a taste of how adulthood is and many thoughts sarterd running 10 through her head.
Line 257, lines 268-269	11 Also huck being friends with jim who is a slave, this has changed how he 12 looks/ goes about things  13 because everyone around him see’s slaves as someon lower quality than 14 them. Where as Huck just sees him as a normal person.
Lines 319-340	15 his compares to scoute and jem wanting to be friends with boo radly. 16 Because everyone else didn’t go near his house or try to communicate with 17 him, but scout and jem continued to be nice and be his friend.
Line 95-131	18 Huck and scout both go through experiences that change them.

**Figure 1.**

She begins by claiming that “[i]n the novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both huck and scout go through experiences that change them as a young child. These changes, meaning loss of innocence” (lines 1–5). This reflects the motif discussed early in the discussion (lines 43–44) and in lines 64–81. She also draws upon the examples and evidence from discussion, such as Huck seeing a dead body (lines 97–108). The student is using the conversational text constructed on February 3 as a resource, refracting that conversation in her own essay. She uses the evidence and claims from the discussion to argue that both characters lost their innocence, but in different ways, and makes an effort to draw comparisons between the texts that were not mentioned in the conversation as further evidence that there are parallels between the characters.

The student also adopted many aspects of the structure and organization of the discussion. She moves between *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* making a claim and alternating between evidence from the two books. She does so by moving through texts and topics in the same order as the conversation from the day before, beginning with lines 16–34 of the conversation and sequentially moving through line 340 before reiterating her claim that refracts lines 95–131 from earlier. She first discusses the motif of the “loss of innocence” before moving to the friendship between the characters Huck and Jim.

However, Isabell also elaborates on and extends the discussion from the day before, using the friendships between characters

in the two novels as evidence. She claims that it is through the characters’ experiences with ostracized and oppressed people that they learn about the world and grow (lines 7–14). It is in this portion of the essay that the influence of the exploratory components of the conversation are seen. Isabell expands on what was said, providing evidence and proposing ideas that were not previously discussed while keeping her writing situated within the larger conversation. She uses evidence and talking points from the discussion but also discusses the ways in which the protagonists were affected by the strife of those around them.

These findings extend upon what Sperling (1995) found, indicating a continuation of the conversation that was started in class on the prior day by showing the influence the conversation had on the development of ideas and arguments beyond how one engages in an argument. Isabell attempts this through appropriating argumentative moves, such as providing a claim and providing evidence (VanDerHeide 2017), as well as DLA moves, like making intertextual connections and providing an intersubjective claim, though not necessarily intentionally.

## Discussion

I have argued through this case study the ways in which we must conceptualize talk as being part of a larger teaching and learning process for dialogic literary argumentative writing. Exploratory talk provided a medium for the teacher and students to co-construct ideas through open-ended conversations. It is through the use of exploratory talk that the teacher models and

students appropriate writing moves like providing evidence, making a claim and providing commentary, along with DLA practices like seeking out multiple perspectives, synthesizing multiple claims and aiming to construct complex, multifaceted claims that speak to the nature of being human. Moreover, this study takes steps toward showing how a student can use exploratory conversations, which suit DLA well given the intent of co-constructing knowledge through a negotiation of ideas and serve as conversational texts that can inform student writing and thinking around both literature and the world beyond the texts.

VanDerHeide (2017) argues that learning to argue is not about learning a particular structure but instead learning how to utilize genres to accomplish social action both in and outside of classrooms through argumentation. To do so, it is necessary to learn writing moves that allow one to argue across genres. She establishes the social nature of how these moves are developed through the teacher revoicing and questioning, and, at times, explicitly stating disciplinary knowledge. This provides a way of understanding how these moves are taught and adopted into student argumentative speaking and writing. My study builds upon her findings, showing that even without explicit attention to these writing moves, students adopt and develop several through classroom discussion.

It is necessary for students to have spaces to engage in DLA and practice argumentative moves outside of writing so that they can co-construct not only textual meaning but the argumentative practices that can be used to reach this meaning.

For example, being exposed to multiple perspectives helps students to develop their ideas around content through DLA, which can then be appropriated in other mediums. It is useful to consider the ways in which argumentative writing is situated in proximity to conversations, and the ways in which those conversations occur around content. Moreover, classroom conversations establish epistemologies toward argumentation. Teachers must use those conversations to establish argumentation and argumentative writing as a means for attempting intersubjectivity (Habermas 1985) as a form of problem solving. Mr. Sutherland does this especially well, as he and his students move from a dualistic understanding of Huck's innocence toward a complex conceptualization of innocence and pain as both relative and tied to personal experiences. This nuanced and complex understanding is an example of how students and teachers can use literature to read the world.

Moreover, my study demonstrates the ways in which students implicitly adopt argumentative moves. The conversation observed did a great deal of work in establishing how argumentative writing is defined and how one engages in such a discourse, even though the moves students adopted were not labeled and explicitly addressed throughout. The talk that occurred around the texts in Mr. Sutherland's classroom was often exploratory in nature but also had IRE patterns later on that coincided with presentational talk. Based upon the interviews that I had conducted, this structure seems to have suited the intention of the teacher, in which he moved between being a facilitator and an author-

ity while engaging in argumentation. Thus, the very nature of the types of talk that occur in classroom discussions can be an assistive tool in the overarching process of teaching and learning argumentative ideas around both *how* to argue and *what* to argue, but this can only be done with awareness of how one uses talk to help students construct and appropriate DLA practices.

## Conclusions

This research addresses the complexity of discourses around literary argumentation by providing evidence that it is not enough to consider the development of argumentative moves or talk independently of one another. It is only through the combination of these elements that we can identify how different types of talk and their accompanying conversational structures can be purposefully used to shape how one engages in argumentation and constructs understandings through argumentation during the teaching and learning of DLA. By considering these aspects and making them apparent to educators, teachers can reflect on their practices, allowing them to adjust their questioning strategies, conversational structures and dynamics, and how they model argumentative moves. Such adjustments can create spaces in which learners are not only engaging in argumentative discourses around literature, but aware of how and

why these conversations occur and how to implement what they learn in these conversations in their writing. Moreover, researchers need to make considerations about the ways in which discussions around ideas are negotiated through talk, the types of talk being used to do so and how those types of talk can be useful to different argumentative writing tasks (Barnes 1990; Mercer & Dawes 2008).

This study indicates a need to consider the social roles that students take on in these DLA conversations and how those roles influence the uptake and the co-construction of ideas both in classroom conversations and the ensuing writing. Previous studies have made efforts to examine the single aspects of this process, such as Sperling's (1995) study examining the ways in which writing is linked to social relationships. These roles were broadly described as belonging to three social realities: "the reality of the classroom community, the world outside the classroom, and their impending texts," which the researcher asserts are "critically, yet not always positively, interconnected" (p. 118); the study also contributed to how students participated and took up what was discussed in the classroom conversations and what was written. In my analysis, I found some evidence of this, but it needs to be investigated further to determine if this is a third component of the relationship between classroom talk and writing.

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## SAŠAJŲ TARP POKALBIŲ KLASĖJE IR ARGUMENTACINIO RAŠYMO TYRIMAS

**John Brady**

S a n t r a u k a

Šiame straipsnyje tiriamas kalbėjimo klasėje ir dialoginio literatūrinio argumentacinio (DLA) rašymo santykis. Šis darbas yra dalis platesnio tyrimo, kuriame analizuojamas argumentacinis rašymas kaip socialinių praktikų, kurios sudaro ilgalaikį mokymosi procesą, rinkinys (Newell, Bloome, & Hirvela, 2015). Ši perspektyva yra glaudžiai susijusi su dabartiniu rašymo supratimu, kuris atsirado per pastaruosius penkiolika metų (Nystrand, Green, & Weimelt, 1993; Klein & Boscolo, 2016; Newell, Beach, Smith & VanDerHeide, 2011). Autorė naudoja Bakhtino teorija argumentacinio rašymo ir kalbėjimo tyrimui klasėje. Tai apima reiškinių prasmės ir išraiškos bendraujant sąveiką. Dėl to visos interakcijos ir reikšmės yra iš esmės dialoginės, nes jas vienija istorija ir numatoma ateitis. Ši perspektyva apibrėžia argumentacinio rašymo mokymą ir

mokymąsi kaip susiformavusį per tam tikrą laiką su unikaliomis praktikomis ir pažinimo būdais, atsirandančiais bendraujant klasėje. Tai reiškia, kad argumentacinių praktikų mokymas ir mokymasis visada bus unikalūs ir priklausomas nuo konteksto, kuriame yra praktikuojamas. Pritaikiusi šią teoriją, autorė naudojo analitinį mokomosios grandinės metodą ir diskurso analizę dviejų skirtingų klasių diskusijų tyrimui. Siekta atsakyti į šiuos klausimus: Koks yra kalbėjimo klasėje ir dialoginio literatūrinio argumentacinio rašymo kaip socialinės praktikos santykis? Kaip kalbėjimas yra taikomas apibrėžiant ir plėtojant DLA argumentacinių veiksmų, konceptų ir idėjų, iškeltų literatūroje, atžvilgiu?

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** argumentacinis rašymas, dialoginis literatūrinis argumentavimas, klasės diskursas, aiškinamoji kalba.

*Įteikta 2018 05 04*

*Priimta 2018 06 04*