Abstract

**Dialogues for teaching and learning**

Dialogues are the base of teaching and learning. Although neither Bakhtin nor Voloshinov were concerned with pedagogy, their contributions on dialogue can offer new insights into the problems of teaching and learning. Focus-group conversations over time might be a good illustration of the phenomenon.

From the theoretical perspectives of Bakhtin and Voloshinov, and their followers (cf Rommetveit, 1979; Holquist, 1990; Wertsch, 1998), the present paper has considered some important notions of dialogism, such as, I, you, self, other, intersubjectivity, alterity, dialogicality, and genre. In addition to these variables the notions of mastery, appropriation and identity have been considered when analyzing focus-group conversations over time.

Focus group studies on dyslexia involving different professionals have shown that teaching and learning go hand in hand. Initially the conversations about dyslexia showed upon alterity between the participants. The medical professionals, initially, spoke about the pathological apart of dyslexia, using a medical genre, while the teachers, using a pedagogical genre, spoke about the classroom situation of dyslectic children. But over time, intersubjectivity between them became obvious. This also manifested by an increased use of dialogicality, which was shown by responses such as:

- **Ph:** Ah I see understanding each child’s dyslexia in a pedagogical context (…) interesting (…) we just end up diagnosing a lack of ability, let’s hear more (…)
- **Teach:** (…) but I am more aware of the child on the playing and learning premisses(…)

On the way of creating an intersubjectivity situation definition of the topic of dyslexia, the material showed that the different professional groups started to master the others’ apprehension of the topic. Not until the end of the focus group conversations had they appropriated the different professionals’ views on dyslexia.

During this process the I became filled with the voices of the other, creating a self, which also changed the identity of the different professionals. They became professionals of dyslexia, not only from one discipline but from a merging of several disciplines.

A Bakhtinian dialogical approach to focus group conversations opens up for a new methodology of investigation teaching and learning.