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Michael Sherry
University of South Florida, mbsherry@usf.edu

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Indirect Challenges and Provocative Paraphrases: Using Cultural Conflict-Talk Practices to Promote Students' Dialogic Participation in Whole-Class Discussions

Michael B. Sherry

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania

English education researchers have established that whole-class discussions can support language and literacy learning. However, few studies have provided examples of whole-class discussions in which students explicitly reference their classmates' ideas in order to elaborate different, but related, perspectives. Research that has described students' uptake of their classmates' ideas has typically portrayed disagreement either as an obstacle to student participation or as a step toward eventual consensus. In this article, I offer a sociolinguistic discourse analysis of two conversations in which a preservice teacher encouraged her urban, 10th-grade students to disagree. My analysis demonstrates the positive effects of the teacher's use of indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases—features of the African American sociable conflict-talk practice known as The Dozens—to promote collaborative disagreement during whole-class discussion. I argue that teachers can promote collaborative disagreement in whole-class discussions by appealing to students' home-cultural disagreement practices, which may already overlap with argumentation practices valued in school settings. I call for further research into the influence of teachers' and students' out-of-school discourses on discussions characterized by collaborative disagreement—a practice that is essential to ELA curricula and to participation in a democratic, literate society.

English-education researchers have demonstrated the importance of whole-class discussions for literacy learning. Several national studies (e.g., Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003) have correlated discussion-based approaches with literacy achievement for students of various backgrounds and ability levels. In such studies, whole-class discussions are described as a “dialogic collision” of voices (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 209), or exchanges in which students voice interpretations that differ from those of their classmates. Opportunities for students to engage diverse perspectives during whole-class discussions can prepare them for participation in civic life, where different opinions abound (e.g., Parker, 2010). However, while much research has been devoted to identifying, describing, and explaining linguistic features of classroom talk, fewer studies to date have examined instructional discourse moves that may encourage secondary English language arts (ELA) students to explicitly relate their perspectives to those of others, including their classmates. Such dialogic engagement with others' texts—oral, written, visual, or gestural—is

an important feature of literate participation in society and a chief emphasis of ELA curriculum in US public schools. Those studies that have addressed students' uptake of their classmates' ideas have tended to emphasize how such discursive moves, often modeled by teachers, bring students toward shared purposes and common perspectives (e.g., Boyd & Rubin, 2006). In this research, disagreement has been regarded as an inevitable by-product of social interaction and/or an obstacle to overcome in pursuit of elaborating one or more shared interpretations. A less examined dimension of such dialogic discussions is disagreement as a productive mode of collaboration in which different perspectives are developed and revised in sociable tension with others.

In this article, I present evidence that collaborative disagreement among students in whole-class discussions can be prompted by teachers through appeals to cultural conflict-talk practices from students' home communities. My analysis highlights two such discursive moves—what I call *indirect challenges* and *provocative paraphrases*—both of which are associated with the African American language (AAL) practices of *Signifyin(g)*. Indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases entail playfully ironic repetition of another's words in order to teach or critique (e.g., Gates, 1988; Smitherman, 1977, 2000). These discursive practices destabilize authority and encourage speakers to experiment with adopting and reversing different perspectives. Below, I present two whole-class conversations characterized by disagreement, which emerged during 10th-grade ELA classes in an urban, Midwestern high school. In the first conversation, students' disagreement with their classmates was generative of different perspectives but not collaborative. In the second discussion, disagreement was collaborative. Both conversations were facilitated by Ms. Jefferson, an African American preservice teacher. However, in the second discussion, she deployed culturally relevant conflict-talk practices—indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases—which students then used to rework their classmates' offerings in formulating their own contributions to discussion. While not all students in Ms. Jefferson's 10th-grade ELA classes were African American, they demonstrated their familiarity with such discursive moves, responding to their teacher's invitations to participate in ways that cited, extended, and challenged their classmates' ideas.

Background

Regarding dialogue as a fundamental value of ELA curriculum, English-education researchers have focused on what enables and constrains student participation in classroom interactions. For example, much research (e.g., Cazden, 1986; Mehan, 1979; Wells, 1993) has documented how the question-and-answer routine (abbreviated as IRE/F), in which the teacher Initiates a question to which he or she already knows the answer, a student Responds, and the teacher Evaluates/Follows up, can discourage student participation and limit possibilities for multiple interpretations, even as it can establish a shared knowledge base.

English-education researchers have also identified instructional practices that can invite student participation and a variety of perspectives (Applebee et

al., 2003). They have named these practices “dialogically organized instruction” (Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur, & Prendergast, 1997, pp. 15–17), drawing inspiration from Bakhtin’s (1981, 1984a) theory of dialogism, which emphasizes the interplay of multiple voices in all discourse. Bakhtin contended that all language use, even employing individual words, is participation in a dynamic contest of sociohistorical uses of language. In his terms, language use is a “reaccenting,” or reinterpretation, of the “multiple voices” that have used/reinterpreted those words before and may still be heard in them. By extension, Bakhtin argued that every opinion performs a sociocultural struggle among diverse perspectives on which that opinion draws. Moreover, he claimed that people can use language in ways that highlight the interplay of different cultural voices for an audience.

English-education research on dialogically organized instruction has focused on the pedagogical genre of whole-class discussion. Researchers have argued that, in contrast to IRE/F, whole-class discussions can invite a diversity of student perspectives, “including the voices of different classes, races, ages, and genders” (Nystrand et al., 1997, p. 18), when teachers pose authentic, open-ended questions (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2003) and when they give feedback that shifts responsibility for evaluating interpretations from teacher to students (Aukerman, Belfatti, & Santori, 2008). Some research in elementary classrooms has also examined patterns of talk which prompt students not only to *share* their perspectives but also to *relate* them to those voiced by their classmates during whole-class discussions (Boyd & Galda, 2011; Boyd & Rubin, 2006). However, these contingent roles/practices were oriented toward developing shared interpretations. Opportunities remain to investigate how students’ explicitly relational talk during whole-class discussions may emerge from and elaborate their *disagreements* with classroom texts, including their classmates’ and teachers’ interpretations.

Citing Bakhtin, English-education researchers have argued that it is dialogic conflict—sociohistorical struggle with, against, and through language—that fuels the emergence of diverse student perspectives during whole-class discussions (Nystrand et al., 1997). However, these researchers have tended to regard student disagreement as a by-product of language use that can mark and magnify breakdowns in communication. Aukerman (2007) and colleagues (2008) have observed that students may seek to preserve classroom harmony for fear of negative feedback. Similarly, Nystrand et al. (1997) have noted that students may cede the floor to “the most confident, verbally articulate, and competitive” among their classmates (pp. 49–50). Fecho (2001) and Seitz (2004) have emphasized that minority students, in particular, may avoid being singled out during whole-class discussions in which their perspectives or ways of speaking differ from others. In studies of dialogically organized instruction, student disagreement has largely been portrayed as deterring rather than inspiring whole-class discussion.

Education researchers have argued that *teachers*, as well as students, may avoid whole-class discussions in which students’ perspectives might conflict, especially if conflict stems from controversial issues or from differences in students’ socio-cultural backgrounds (Basmadjian, 2005; Hess, 2009). Across subject areas, educa-

tion researchers have tended to portray classroom disagreement as an obstacle to learning and teaching for students, teachers, and preservice teachers.

In contrast, some researchers have described pedagogical benefits of disagreement in whole-class and small-group discussions, like improving students' academic argumentation skills (e.g., Resnick, O'Connor, & Michaels, 2007; Reznitskaya, Anderson, & Kuo, 2007). In particular, Mercer (1995) and colleagues (Wegerif & Mercer, 1997) have differentiated among three kinds of student talk in small-group conversations: "disputational" talk, in which students disagree with their classmates' perspectives and, consequently, do not collaborate; "exploratory" talk, in which students debate with each other but eventually assent to the winning argument; and "cumulative" talk, in which students concur from the outset and elaborate a shared perspective during their conversation. While this classification of three kinds of student talk is useful, it does not include the possibility of disagreement-driven talk in which students not only engage with each other's differences, citing their classmates' interpretations as they challenge and refine their own, but also end their conversation having formulated distinct, though related, perspectives, rather than a single position more-or-less persuasive to all.

Prior studies of dialogic discussions have focused primarily on disagreement practices associated with school culture, like "teacher revoicing: repeating what the student said and offering the student a chance to agree or disagree with the teacher's rendition" (Resnick et al., 2007). However, recent research has also examined how such revoicing can be a contested site where teachers and students deploy cultural resources from their experiences outside the classroom to negotiate their in-school linguistic identities (Hirst & Renshaw, 2004). Opportunities remain to examine teachers' and students' uses, in classroom conversations, of culturally specific disagreement practices more commonly associated with students' out-of-school lives. In this article, I begin to do this work.

Theoretical Framework

In my analysis, I draw on a distinction from sociolinguistic research on everyday conversations: *collaborative* and *non-collaborative* "conflict talk" (Grimshaw, 1990; Tannen, 1998). Collaborative disagreement practices generate conversation, while non-collaborative disagreement practices discourage it. According to this literature, only non-collaborative disputes are "true" quarrels, in which speakers disagree by "talking past each other" without reference to others' positions. In this way, non-collaborative disagreement resembles what Mercer (1995; Wegerif & Mercer, 1997) has called "disputational talk"; however, non-collaborative disagreement is a more expansive category that includes differences of opinion that range from dispassionate to hostile. In contrast, most everyday disagreements are collaborative in that they require speakers to explicitly relate what they have said to previous speakers' contributions (Tannen, 1998). Some discourse-analytic studies have found that collaborative disagreement, in which speakers clearly reference what others have said, can in fact be a means of expressing sociability through engagement in a shared cultural practice (e.g., Schiffrin, 1984). For example, the AAL practices

of Signifyin(g)¹ (Gates, 1988; Smitherman, 1977, 2000) include a form of conflict talk called The Dozens, in which speakers playfully one-up each other through displays of verbal prowess (Abrahams, 1962). The Dozens is both collaborative and dialogic (Gates, 1988, pp. 50–51) because it entails repeating and revising what has already been said. In other words, this culturally specific disagreement practice connects to another perspective (collaboration) while also contesting that perspective (dialogism).

In the following excerpt from Zora Neale Hurston's (1935) collection, *Mules and Men*, Al and Jake engage in The Dozens while their friends, Slim and Bob, listen appreciatively:

1. "Aw, nigger, quit signifyin! Go buy *you* a shirt!"
2. "I don't need no shirts. I got aplenty!"
3. "This nigger setting here wearing his purple rag around his throat talking
4. about he's got aplenty shirts. Somebody wake 'im up!"
5. Slim and Bob laughed.
6. "I can change five shirts to your one," boasted Jake.
7. "The onliest way you can do that is to pull off the one you has on now and
8. put it on five times."²

This exchange, which begins a longer bout of The Dozens, exhibits several features of that congenial yet competitive disagreement practice. For example, when Al refers to Jake in the third person (Lines 3–4), his indirect challenge not only provokes further participation from Jake but also invites participation from Slim and Bob. Moreover, each subsequent speaker reinterprets and disagrees with parts of the previous speaker's contribution. For example, in Lines 7–8, Al does not simply reject Jake's assertion (as Jake did in Line 2), but instead reinterprets it in an ironic way that makes it true only in the case of a ridiculous premise. This provocative paraphrase encourages Jake to respond in order to defend his assertion from Line 6. In this example of The Dozens, indirect challenges (ironic criticism of another's contribution, directed to other listeners) and provocative paraphrases (repeating another's contribution ironically and juxtaposing it with a counterexample that tops it) are collaborative disagreement practices that invite further participation and build dialogically on what others have already said. In my analysis below, I track the use of indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases by Ms. Jefferson and her students in the second whole-class conversation, which was characterized by collaborative disagreement.

Some readers may wonder about the seemingly aggressive, gendered nature of such wordplay, given the exchange above, which involves young men trading insults. However, previous research on Signifyin(g), in general, and The Dozens, in particular, (e.g., Gates, 1988; Lee, 2006; Morgan, 1996; Smitherman, 1977) has indicated that participants recognize these discursive practices as playful, and that they are engaged in "by all age groups and by both males and females in the black community" (van Dijk, 1997, pp. 151–152). Trading mock insults to display verbal

proWess, participants in The Dozens play a role for aesthetic, rather than violent, purposes. Indeed, such ritualized, expressive contests—or “battles”—appear in various aspects of African American culture, like DJing, breakdancing, and jazz. Across these domains, ironic repetitions (of musical, gestural, or verbal “riffs”) create dialogue, rather than disharmony, among participants.

In drawing on the sociolinguistic distinction between collaborative and non-collaborative disagreement, and on studies of cultural conflict-talk, my approach differs from other education research on how students relate their ideas to those of their peers during whole-class discussions. For example, though Boyd and colleagues (Boyd & Markarian, 2011; Boyd & Rubin, 2006) have investigated the “contingent” roles and responses teachers and students adopt during discussions, these researchers have not addressed the positive potential of ironic, playful disagreement to promote dialogue. Similarly, while Mercer (1995) and colleagues have distinguished between disputational, exploratory, and cumulative talk in which students do or do not engage in collaborative inquiry, these researchers, like Boyd and colleagues, have narrowly understood collaboration as cooperation in achieving shared goals, “with the argument that is the best winning out over other arguments” (Wegerif & Mercer, 1997, p. 56). In contrast to previous studies, I address disputational talk as non-collaborative disagreement and, beyond consensus-driven cumulative and exploratory talk, I assert the possibility of collaborative disagreement that generates heightened attention to others’ contributions but also intensifies difference. Based on this approach, I ask, What techniques of teacher talk encouraged students in one teacher’s classes to engage in collaborative (vs. non-collaborative) disagreement during whole-class discussion?

Methodology

Site Selection

The data below come from a study of preservice teachers’ discursive practices while facilitating whole-class discussions. During the study, I gathered data with Tamara Jefferson as she taught ELA classes in an urban Midwestern high school during a fifth-year internship through a teacher-preparation program at Midwestern University.³ I chose to focus my analysis on the discourse of Ms. Jefferson’s 10th-grade English classes at Slate High School (SHS). First, the 10th-grade curriculum addressed texts like Sophocles’s Greek tragedy *Antigone* and John Hersey’s journalistic account *Hiroshima* (which figure in my analyses below)—texts that might seem at first glance to offer little opportunity for urban teens to identify with characters, settings, and struggles. Given its location, curriculum, and student body, SHS was a site of high interest for studying how a teacher might encourage participation from potentially disengaged students. Additionally, I focused on Ms. Jefferson’s classes at SHS because whole-class discussions often appeared in her lessons: four of eight lessons I observed included whole-class discussions that lasted more than five minutes (especially striking for a preservice teacher, given that even in veteran English teachers’ classrooms discussions often last little more than a minute [Applebee et al., 2003]).

Participant Selection

Students at SHS, in general, and in Ms. Jefferson's two 10th-grade classes, specifically, were children of urban, working-class families employed as industrial laborers, whose median income was about two-thirds the average for the county and the country. At the time of the study, SHS was composed of approximately 55% European American and 35% African American students. This ratio was reflected in Ms. Jefferson's fourth-hour class, in which six (two boys, four girls) of the 21 10th graders were African American. However, among the 16 10th-grade students in Ms. Jefferson's sixth-hour class, nine were African American, five were European American, and two were children of Middle Eastern immigrants. Ms. Jefferson's sixth-hour class was also particular in that many of her students had been shunted to sixth period to remove them from other, higher-performing English classes. Three of Ms. Jefferson's sixth-hour students, including Brian and Ebony (featured below), had transferred to SHS mid-school year. The combination of ethnicities, genders, and extracurricular issues represented by these two 10th-grade ELA classes made them particularly interesting for exploring how a teacher—especially a preservice teacher—might promote student participation in whole-class discussions.

Having grown up in a neighborhood near SHS, Ms. Jefferson understood the challenge of connecting ELA curriculum to students' experiences and was strongly committed to engaging them personally with literature: "I think [these students] . . . automatically think that because you come from Slate schools, you behind. And [the students] is just bright as you want to be . . . And it's just when you set the classroom dynamics up like you do here, just imagine that you have a class full of those [students], what can a teacher, what can she do?" In part because of her own background, Ms. Jefferson recognized that teacher appeals to students' prior experiences could both enable and constrain their participation and learning.

Like many of her students, Ms. Jefferson was both African American and a speaker of AAL. During one lesson, I observed Ms. Jefferson using AAL to engage students during whole-class discussion. After the lesson, when I asked Ms. Jefferson about this moment, she revealed that she had intentionally switched to what she called "sociable language," and explained that she often did so to regain students' attention. However, as a preservice teacher, Ms. Jefferson felt ambivalent about using "sociable language" with students. Initially, she tried to maintain more formal discourse, which she associated with the role of an English teacher: "Everyone has this idea of what the 'good teacher' role is. And so did I, you know, I really did, I wanted to present myself in a way, everything I've learned, I've graduated from Midwestern, I should know." For Ms. Jefferson, speaking like a "good teacher" was part of presenting herself as educated and knowledgeable. It also distinguished her from her students (some of whom were not much younger) and the context in which she had grown up.

But because students saw through her attempts to play the "good teacher," Ms. Jefferson later changed her mind about using AAL practices:

They thought that I was playing a role, and I was . . . And I just went home one night, I was like "that's not who I am." . . . I know that that's probably not a lot of people's

technique, to come down on their level, but I find that they're more responsive to me when I'm that way.

Ms. Jefferson's complex experience as a preservice teacher with coming to use AAL as a resource for encouraging student participation is another reason I chose to focus on her 10th-grade ELA classes.

Data Sources

I selected from data generated on a biweekly basis during one school year. Data sources included lesson plans, classroom-observation field notes, classroom discourse transcribed from video-recordings of each lesson, transcripts of semi-structured interviews with Ms. Jefferson conducted immediately after each lesson, and her post-lesson written reflections. These data allowed me to see when Ms. Jefferson had anticipated a whole-class discussion, to track in the lesson transcript whether and how students participated, and to discover from the interview and reflection what Ms. Jefferson had to say about encouraging student participation through the use of resources like "sociable language."

Data Analysis

For this article, I focused my analysis on discourse data from lessons in which both whole-class discussions and disagreement occurred, and overlapped; I began with the following activity-defining categories, or "event codes" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 175).

Initially, I noted all moments of disagreement (both collaborative and non-collaborative). In the process, I began to focus on examples of collaborative disagreement, in which a participant repeated what another speaker said in order to challenge that perspective. My focus on collaborative disagreement included attention to "reported speech" (Tannen, 2007), signaled by phrases like "So Franklin said . . ." which often appeared when speakers disagreed.

I then began to attend to cultural conflict-talk practices prominent in those exchanges. I noticed and tracked repeated words, phrases, and sentence structures associated with AAL. From these patterns, I identified two recurring discursive moves, which I later called *indirect challenges* and *provocative paraphrases*—practices characteristic of The Dozens. Examining classroom discourse that preceded and followed Ms. Jefferson's and the students' use of these two moves, I also investigated circumstances prompting their deployment.

I have chosen to present the excerpts below to distinguish between non-collaborative and collaborative disagreement, and to demonstrate how teachers' use of cultural conflict-talk practices from students' out-of-school lives can promote students' collaborative disagreement in whole-class discussions. As a qualitative researcher, I am chiefly interested in what is possible, not probable. I argue below that teachers' and students' use of indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases *can* initiate and sustain dialogic discussion, not that they *always will*. Rather than *generalizability*, I aim to show the *generativity* of inquiry into these moves. Additionally, like other Bakhtin-inspired discourse analysts, I focus on

meaning-making made public through discursive interaction (Shotter & Billig, 1998). I do not assume that all conversational moves are necessarily intended or understood in particular ways by participants (Grimshaw, 1987). Instead, I attend to how emergent discursive moves promote or impede further conversational turns (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992).

Researcher Positionality

During the study, I was both researcher and university “field instructor,” charged with observing and discussing a lesson with Ms. Jefferson biweekly as part of her yearlong internship. However, my pedagogical focus on Ms. Jefferson’s teaching practices (including planning, classroom management, and assessment) differed from my research interest in how classroom discourse conditioned student participation. Therefore, I tried to separate the evaluative aspect of my teacher role from the more descriptive, exploratory purposes of my researcher role. For example, in my field notes I adopted a two-column system to distinguish between questions/comments regarding field instruction and those highlighting discursive interactions during the lesson. (Of course, overlap occurred.) Before and after each lesson, and again at the end of the study, I asked permission to use each recording for my research, and Ms. Jefferson was free to opt out without fear of reprisal. Additionally, I tried to phrase my questions/comments during post-lesson interviews in nonjudgmental ways (e.g., “How did you decide to do ____?”).

As a European-American man, I had little experience with AAL practices like *The Dozens* before this study. I was therefore cautious about interpreting moves made by Ms. Jefferson and her students which seemed to draw on those practices. In conducting my analysis, I confirmed with Ms. Jefferson and with an African American studies colleague that practices I had identified were associated with Signifyin(g). In my post-lesson interviews, I sought to ask Ms. Jefferson how she was using AAL without making her uncomfortable. For example, the first time we spoke about her use of AAL during a lesson, she seemed apologetic, but by the end of our conversation she said, “I’m so glad that you are my field instructor because you understand this whole idea of the sociable language. I was thinking to myself, someone else might—wouldn’t see it as something which you should teach it. So I’m glad that you do see it that way. Because I do.” Ms. Jefferson found my interest in AAL encouraging, despite (or perhaps because of) my initial lack of experience with it. That trust allowed me to generate data with her in ways that might not have been possible otherwise. Thus, my positionality as a researcher, and my relationship with Ms. Jefferson, both constrained and enabled my research.

Non-collaborative and Collaborative Disagreement in Whole-Class Discussion

Below, I present transcripts of two whole-class conversations that occurred in Ms. Jefferson’s 10th-grade fourth-hour and sixth-hour ELA classes. I analyze the first conversation as an example of non-collaborative disagreement, which is similar to disputational talk (Mercer, 1995; Wegerif & Mercer, 1997) and other kinds of

disagreement described in previous research. In contrast, I analyze the second whole-class discussion as an example of collaborative disagreement: a conversation in which Ms. Jefferson and her students increasingly came to connect their perspectives to those of others, all while intensifying their differences. Moreover, I show how this second discussion emerged through Ms. Jefferson's and her students' use of the culturally specific conflict-talk moves, indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases.

Non-collaborative Disagreement

The first whole-class conversation occurred in January, early in the fourth-hour class's unit of study on Sophocles's *Antigone*. A Greek tragedy, *Antigone* describes consequences of the title character's decision to bury her brother, despite the fact that Theban law, decreed by the king (and her uncle) Creon, forbids the interment of traitors. To prepare her fourth-hour class to address the play's central conflict between individual conscience and communal law, Ms. Jefferson planned to have students write a journal entry relating events of the story to a present-day dilemma: a doctor's decision to remove life support from a suffering, terminally ill patient, despite legal consequences. They would then share their perspectives on this issue before beginning to read *Antigone*.

Ms. Jefferson devised this activity to encourage disagreement and promote whole-class discussion about an issue central to the play because the dilemma was personally relevant for many in her fourth-hour class: "I know a lot of students—I hear that all the time they have loved ones in the hospital, loved ones who, you know, have been sick and possibly on life support. It's a real topic to them. So I wanted to bring them something that they could possibly relate to in the twenty-first century, but also I could connect it back to *Antigone*." Once students had had time to write, Ms. Jefferson invited them to share their responses: Should a doctor or nurse remove life support from a suffering, terminally ill patient, despite possible legal consequences?

1. KAYLA: I don't think . . . I don't think he should because then he go'n lose his
2. job, and it's all over, and he probably never go'n get a doctoring job again.
3. MS. JEFFERSON: Right. OK. OK. Go ahead.
4. GARRETT: Um, it's not like I would follow the law, but in my mind, like,
5. following the law, it's like, kind of like my own personal belief that if I push
6. my ways on other people that, like, change their beliefs, maybe in their religion
7. or something, that they can't do that or something. So it would be kind of like
8. me pushing my ways on other people.
9. MS. JEFFERSON: OK. Good point. Montana?
10. MONTANA: Basically I would say that I would follow my conscience, but it
11. would be toward, like, rather than just up and pulling the plug, I would try to
12. go through whatever, try to find whatever loopholes I could, try to find
13. existent family members, or whatever. I would basically work around the

14. system before I made anything decisive, and if that didn't work, yes, I would
15. pull the plug just to stop the suffering.
16. Ms. JEFFERSON: OK. Derek?

As the conversation continued, it was evident that the activity had produced disagreement. Opinions about what should be done and why clearly differed: Kayla pointed to the professional consequences of breaking the law (Lines 1–2), and Garrett and Montana to the role of religion and moral conscience (Lines 6, 10). While several more students subsequently shared responses, none explicitly addressed classmates' viewpoints. Thus, while Ms. Jefferson succeeded in getting multiple speakers to share a variety of opinions, none engaged directly with perspectives voiced by other participants, or took up opportunities to challenge thinking or change minds. The tone of this activity remained positive and harmonious; however, the conversation exemplified what conflict-talk researchers might characterize as non-collaborative disagreement.

In a post-lesson interview, Ms. Jefferson herself noted her fourth-hour students' difficulty with disagreeing in ways that cited other conversational turns:

There's a blanket statement over here, and then we go over there, and it does not connect to anything that was said over here. But in sixth hour . . . they know how to, uh, like, bring that person's thoughts and ideas in before they make the next comment . . . Here, I haven't yet had a chance to, like, get them to build on one another's conversation.

For Ms. Jefferson, it was not enough that her students expressed different opinions on the subject. She wanted them to explicitly relate their perspectives to others, as her sixth-hour class had learned to do. In this evaluation of her 10th-grade classes, Ms. Jefferson made the same distinction between non-collaborative and collaborative disagreement identified by conflict-talk researchers.

Closer analysis of fourth-hour conversation reveals that discursive moves made by Ms. Jefferson contributed to the non-collaborative disagreement. First, Ms. Jefferson had asked students simply to share their journal entries, an open invitation that perhaps prompted students to report rather than discuss their perspectives. Second, while the fourth-hour students had journaled on ethical dilemmas and shared their entries with the class in previous lessons, Ms. Jefferson had not yet, in the fourth hour, explicitly modeled classroom disagreement about passionately felt positions, in which students explored differences of opinion by referencing others' views. Third, during the conversation, Ms. Jefferson inadvertently impeded discussion by employing IRE/F. For example, after each turn, she responded with "Right," "Good point," and "OK" (Lines 3, 9, and 16). These "follow-ups" did little to take up students' ideas, and their appearance after each turn suggested that Ms. Jefferson would evaluate all students' answers. Like the initial instructions for the journaling activity, such evaluative follow-ups did not produce the lively debate Ms. Jefferson had envisioned in her lesson plan, a collaborative discussion in which students would reference others' contributions while disagreeing with those positions.

Collaborative Disagreement

The second whole-class discussion occurred in March, midway through the sixth-hour class's unit of study on John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (two months after the 10th graders' *Antigone* unit). In a previous lesson, the class had discussed the maxim "All's fair in love and war" in preparation for writing a position paper about "fairness" and the US's atomic bombing of Japan. Unsatisfied with what she had found to be simplistic reactions from students in the previous activity, Ms. Jefferson planned in this lesson to compare the bombing of Hiroshima to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. She hoped to draw on a relevant, contemporary experience to help students better understand an unfamiliar historical one, and by provoking debate over this controversial comparison, to encourage students to define and defend their positions on the Hiroshima bombing before writing position papers.

To begin, Ms. Jefferson asked a student to recall what the class had previously discussed:

1. **MS. JEFFERSON:** So . . . what did we say this idea of "All is fair in love and
2. war" actually means? What does that quote mean, Franklin? What did we say
3. that was?
4. **FRANKLIN:** Like if you're in a war, you can go to any extent.
5. **MS. JEFFERSON:** So Franklin said if you're in a war you can go to any
6. extent. If it gets to the point where you need to drop an atomic bomb, then
7. that's fair. If it gets to the point, similar to 9/11 here, where you take a
8. plane and you crash into the Trade Center . . . then that's also fair.

Ms. Jefferson's question proposed a reopening of whole-class discussion of the maxim, "All's fair in love and war." Her response to Franklin introduced the controversial comparison with which she had planned to spark disagreement and complicate students' thinking about the bombing of Hiroshima. And instead of following up with "Right" or "OK," she responded explicitly to Franklin's words, demonstrating to students not only that what Franklin had said was important, but also how to take up others' words in order to disagree collaboratively. Both moves implied that disagreeing by referencing a previous speaker was possible and appropriate, defining the activity as one that involved collaborative disagreement.

Promoting Collaborative Disagreement: Indirect Challenges and Provocative Paraphrases

Two additional aspects of this exchange, and their effects on what followed, bear closer examination. First, by referring to Franklin in the third person (Line 5), she addressed other listeners and invited them to respond. This indirect challenge resembled a move from *The Dozens*: a participant in that form of verbal contest can invite response from the audience by referring ironically to another's words in the third person. Ms. Jefferson's third-person address also avoided directly challenging Franklin in a way that might quickly have shut down any further debate by creat-

ing a pattern in which the teacher evaluated each student's opinion (as her use of "Right" and "OK" established in the fourth-hour excerpt). This playful, indirect challenge, a familiar feature of *The Dozens*, signaled to students that debate was possible and promoted collaborative disagreement as the discussion unfolded.

Second, Ms. Jefferson did not simply revoice Franklin's answer. Instead, she provocatively paraphrased Franklin's response in a way that evoked the verbal sparring of *The Dozens*, in which speakers turn others' words back on them through wordplay. Her paraphrase subtly challenged Franklin's assertion by repeating his "if . . . then . . ." phrasing but also provocatively juxtaposing part of what he had said with another example: If it was fair for American forces to go "to any extent" in bombing Hiroshima, then was it fair for terrorists to do the same in attacking an American landmark? This provocative paraphrase implicitly modeled for students how to disagree with another's position by ironically pairing it with a counterexample, a technique that also resembled one from *The Dozens*, in which speakers "top" the previous insult by adding a new twist that makes it ridiculous. This use of a provocative paraphrase to reinterpret and to playfully challenge another's opinion also demonstrated that it was possible to disagree collaboratively during this activity.

Another aspect of Ms. Jefferson's response to Franklin's assertion is noteworthy. Part of Ms. Jefferson's indirect challenge to Franklin was to feign misapprehension of his position, which she teasingly exaggerated—in her terms, "playing devil's advocate." In fact, in her provocative paraphrase she ironically attributed to Franklin an idea that she knew from the previous discussion he disagreed with: that the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center equaled in fairness the Hiroshima bombing during World War II. Students' responses below suggest that they recognized Ms. Jefferson's response to Franklin as ironic—that she was pretending to mistake his opinion in order to promote further disagreement and discussion. Speakers in *The Dozens* often use ironic, provocative paraphrases of others' words as a means of promoting disagreement that is playful, sociable, and collaborative.

Students Take Up Collaborative Disagreement Strategies

Indeed, Ms. Jefferson's initial response to Franklin seemed to inspire similar contributions to the discussion from students:

7. **Ms. JEFFERSON:** If it gets to the point where you need to drop an atomic
8. bomb, then that's fair. If it gets to the point, similar to 9/11 here, where you
9. take a plane and you crash into the Trade Center . . . then that's also fair.
10. **FRANKLIN:** Well no . . . but . . . if they bomb us then—
11. **RICHARD:** —If they bomb us, and then we bomb them back, then they can't
12. say nothin' 'cause it's fair.
13. **Ms. JEFFERSON:** So you're saying this is more of a retaliation. If someone
14. does something to me, then I should have the right to do the same thing to
15. them. Or even if I do something bigger and better than what they did to me,

16. then that makes it right. OK.
17. **BRIAN (TO MS. JEFFERSON):** What's interesting is that, they bombed Pearl
18. Harbor, which was a naval base, but we bombed a city.

Like their teacher, first Franklin and Richard, then Brian, disagreed with a previous speaker. This disagreement was collaborative because it first addressed what that person had said and then coupled his or her point with a counterexample. Both Franklin and Richard provocatively paraphrased Ms. Jefferson's "If . . . then . . ." statement by pairing it with a new twist: Unlike the 9/11 attacks, Franklin and Richard suggested, the Hiroshima bombing had been provoked by the bombing of Pearl Harbor ("If they bomb us . . . then we bomb them back"). Brian indirectly challenged this "eye-for-an-eye" comment and provocatively paraphrased its "they/we" structure by pointing out that, like the 9/11 attacks (and unlike Pearl Harbor), the Hiroshima bombing involved a civilian city. Ms. Jefferson responded much as she had the first time, pretending to misunderstand Franklin's and Richard's comments as extending to revenge on a larger scale: Was it fair to retaliate if the retaliation was bigger than the initial attack? Students not only disagreed, but did so collaboratively, using others' words to oppose their positions. Having seen what was possible in Ms. Jefferson's indirect challenge to and provocative paraphrase of Franklin's statement, students disagreed using similar counterexamples. These moves resembled features of The Dozens described above: none of the speakers explicitly challenged the others, but each ironically criticized another's position implicitly by taking up part of it and connecting it with a contradictory example.

Notice that, in provocatively paraphrasing Franklin's response above, Ms. Jefferson also drew him back into the discussion, encouraging him to defend his position. This tactic reappeared as conversation continued.

19. **MS. JEFFERSON:** No reason to kill innocent people. Wait, but Kevin said
20. they deserved it!
21. **KEVIN:** They did.
22. **RICHARD:** I just want to say something.
23. **MS. JEFFERSON:** OK. Wait a minute. Let's let Kevin make his point and
24. then you can make yours. OK, Kevin. So they bombed us, they deserved it.
25. **KEVIN:** They shouldn't have killed Americans. For no reason.

In response to Brian's comment about bombing civilians, Ms. Jefferson provocatively paraphrased it in a way that connected with a previous, contradictory comment by another speaker, Kevin. As she had done in responding to Franklin, Ms. Jefferson not only paired this previous speaker's point with Brian's but explicitly named Kevin as that speaker; although the comment was not addressed directly to Kevin, it drew him back into conversation, producing a response. Ms. Jefferson used The Dozens-like technique of indirectly challenging another speaker in order to elicit a response as a means of inviting that speaker back into the whole-class discussion

to defend his position. Given the intolerant nature of Kevin's position, calling him out by name (albeit indirectly) in order to revisit this position may have been especially important.

Once Ms. Jefferson had modeled it, students also took up the practice of indirectly challenging another speaker to draw him back into conversation. Immediately afterward, Richard made a similar indirect challenge to a previous speaker by making a third-person reference to what he had already said:

26. **RICHARD:** You see how Brian was saying that we bombed a city? But when
 27. we bombed them, their military was underground. So who else was there to
 28. bomb?

Like Ms. Jefferson, Richard paired Brian's assertion with another example in order to disagree with Brian's counterargument about bombing civilians. And like Ms. Jefferson, Richard also explicitly challenged Brian (though indirectly, in the third person) as the source of that argument, drawing him back into conversation to defend his perspective. Not only did Richard make use of what Brian had said, an example of collaborative disagreement, but he also used the same kind of indirect challenge that Ms. Jefferson had to call Brian out by name.

In response to being named, Brian squared off with Richard in several successive exchanges:

29. **Brian:** There was no point to build the bomb.
 30. **RICHARD:** But we did build it, so what's the point in making it sit there and
 31. not use it?
 32. **BRIAN:** What's the point in using it?
 33. **RICHARD:** To kill. So they know who's boss.
 34. **BRIAN:** But if we bomb them, we just had to rebuild them and pay them back
 35. for it.

Although they clearly disagreed strongly with each other, both Richard and Brian repeated parts of the other's points. Their responses included increasing repetition, not only of words, but also of sentence structures ("What's the point in . . . ?" in Lines 29–32, and "But we . . ." in Lines 30, 34). That is, their disagreement was increasingly collaborative, spurring each of them to attend more closely to what the previous speaker had said. Moreover, their use of provocative paraphrasing to turn the other's words back on him increasingly resembled the staccato exchanges of *The Dozens*. While Ms. Jefferson had been instrumental in initiating and modeling *Dozens*-like practices for collaborative disagreement earlier in the discussion, she became less present as student participation increased.

Ms. Jefferson noted the importance of this discussion for students like Richard in a later interview, after students had written their position papers on the phrase "All's fair in love and war":

Richard definitely said “Oh yeah,” you know, “that makes sense because at first I was thinking, you know, *they bombed us, oh well*, but now I don’t think it is fair for those civilians to lose their lives, you know, like in the Pentagon and the World Trade Center because—uh, I can kind of see that.” And by the responses, I could definitely tell that they were thinking about the issue beyond surface level At first, all we got at first was “Oh well! They shouldn’t have bombed us.” But now it’s like “Well, was it really necessary? Why did we build the bomb at all?” . . . Usually, I’m always playing devil’s advocate; now I have someone to help me!

According to Ms. Jefferson, the perspective of Richard (and perhaps that of other students) on the bombing of Hiroshima and the phrase “All’s fair in love and war” changed after this whole-class discussion from an “eye-for-an-eye” position to more complex responses that questioned various aspects of the event. Ms. Jefferson’s comment suggests that using The Dozens-like indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases to promote collaborative disagreement may have been effective in destabilizing the initial positions taken by students like Richard. The nature of these positions, which sometimes included intolerant, ill-informed, and potentially offensive ideas, might seem to call for more direct intervention on the part of the teacher. But such an intervention might have produced a different result, quashing discussion and perhaps eliciting resistance from students. As Ms. Jefferson wrote in a post-lesson reflection:

I planned to do this by modeling and . . . probing them to connect their ideas. In order to do this, I used student responses by connecting them to probing questions. I also believe that “sociable language” during this time was another great way for students to understand, and this “relaxed” language allowed me to push them further and draw the entire class the [sic] chime in on the intriguing comment.

For Ms. Jefferson, using strategies which evoked the playful, collaborative disagreement of an African American cultural form of conflict talk allowed her to “push them further” in a “relaxed” way, implicitly encouraging students to consider multiple counterarguments as they took up and responded to others’ perspectives, rather than evaluating each student’s comment with “Right” or “OK,” as she had done in the fourth-hour discussion presented above.

Indeed, other students now joined the conversation to criticize the position expressed in Brian’s last statement and to juxtapose it again with 9/11-related American policy:

36. **GLORIA:** Why? It doesn’t seem to me like, and I don’t understand why in
37. Iraq, they kinda did mess it up, too, ’cause they were fighting with us. So why
38. shouldn’t they help rebuild it if we got to rebuild it?
39. **EBONY:** Like when they crashed into the Trade Center, they didn’t come and

40. clean up our [unintelligible]? Why are we cleaning up their stuff?
41. **GLORIA:** Like, what she said, it's not like they asked for our help. . . .
42. **Ms. JEFFERSON:** I think this debate—I think this debate is very is very
43. much needed. . . . When you write this essay, I want you to keep in mind this
44. idea of “All is fair in love and war.”

In response to Brian's point that the Hiroshima bombing would only require American efforts to rebuild the city after the war, Gloria and Ebony entered the discussion, juxtaposing Brian's point with events from the Iraq war and the 9/11 attacks: Why should the United States pay to rebuild after Hiroshima when no such gesture was made after 9/11?⁴ Like previous speakers, Gloria and Ebony took up part of Brian's assertion about rebuilding to disagree collaboratively. By offering a counterexample that called Brian's point into question, they used The Dozens-like practice of provocative paraphrasing. In addition, Ebony imitated the form of Gloria's comment (Lines 36–38), following an example with an ironic rhetorical question. The use of ironic rhetorical questions was a device that had already appeared in conversation (Lines 27, 30, 32). Further, the use of irony in these rhetorical questions resembled Ms. Jefferson's ironic responses in which she pretended to misunderstand previous comments in order to indirectly challenge them (Lines 6, 13, 19). Figure 1 illustrates this and other regularities in language use that increasingly appeared over the course of this whole-class discussion.

As Figure 1 demonstrates, although speakers disagreed, they did so collaboratively, by referencing and reworking what others had said. This collaborative disagreement included practices that resembled those from The Dozens. Such practices included indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases. As the discussion progressed, speakers used indirect challenges to call out others by name, bringing them back into the conversation to defend their positions. They also used parallel phrases/sentence structures, including ironic rhetorical questions. As Figure 1 shows, the discourse of the whole-class discussion can be divided into sections that suggest a progression of increasing regularities in language use, from general similarities in formulation at the beginning to strong parallels in phrases/sentence structures toward the end. These increasing regularities suggest that, during the discussion, participants attended more and more closely to what others had said, even as they elaborated different perspectives. In short, as the discussion progressed, not only did participants disagree, and disagree collaboratively, but also the dialogic reworking of others' words intensified as the differences in their interpretations were amplified. What is also significant is that the devices they began to use more regularly (“if . . . then . . .” propositions; citation of other speakers; juxtaposition of counterexamples; and ironic, rhetorical questions) were not only techniques that resembled The Dozens, but also argumentative practices valued by academic communities, which are central to ELA curriculum.

<p>(0:26) If...then... (0:28) Indirect challenges/Provocative paraphrases</p>	<p>MS. JEFFERSON: OK, so we finished up the <i>Hiroshima</i>, and we introduced this idea of "All is fair in love and war." And what did we say this idea of "All is fair in love and war" actually means? What does that quote mean, Franklin? What does "All is fair in love and war" mean? What did we say that was?</p>
<p>(1:19) Naming the speaker</p>	<p>FRANKLIN: Like if you're in a war, you can go to any extent.</p> <p>MS. JEFFERSON: So Franklin said if you're in a war you can go to any extent. If it comes...gets to the point where you need to drop an atomic bomb, then that's fair. If it gets to the point, similar to 9/11 here, where you take a plane and you crash into the Trade Center and the Pentagon, then that's also fair....</p> <p>FRANKLIN: Well no...if they aren't involved then they shouldn't, but if they bomb us then—</p> <p>RICHARD: --If they bomb us, and then we bomb them back, then they can't say nothin' 'cause it's fair.</p> <p>MS. JEFFERSON: So you're saying this is more of a retaliation. If someone does something to me, then I should have the right to do the same thing to them. Or even if I do something bigger and better than what they did to me, then that makes it right. OK.</p> <p>BRIAN: What's interesting is that, they bombed Pearl Harbor, which was a naval base, but we bombed a city.</p> <p>MS. JEFFERSON: No reason to kill innocent people. Wait, but Kevin said they deserved it!</p> <p>KEVIN: They did.... They shouldn't have killed Americans. For no reason.</p>
<p>(2:36) Rhetorical questions/Increasing parallel formulation</p>	<p>RICHARD: You see how Brian was saying that we bombed a city? But when we bombed them, their military was underground. So who else was there to bomb?</p> <p>BRIAN: There was no point to build the bomb.</p> <p>RICHARD: But we did build it, so what's the point in making it sit there and not use it?</p> <p>BRIAN: What's the point in them building it?</p> <p>RICHARD: To kill. So they know who's boss.</p> <p>BRIAN: But if we bomb them, we just had to rebuild them and pay them back for it.</p> <p>GLORIA: Why? It doesn't seem to me like, and I don't understand why in Iraq they kinda did mess it up too, cause they were fighting with us, so why shouldn't they help rebuild it if we gotta rebuild it?</p> <p>EBONY: Like when they crashed into the Trade Center how come they didn't come and clean up our (unintelligible). Why are we cleaning up their stuff?</p> <p>GLORIA: Like, what she said, it's not like they asked for our help. It's kind of like we forced our way into everybody's situation, it's not like they say come over here and help us.</p>
<p>(6:15)</p>	<p>MS. JEFFERSON: ...I think this debate is very is very much needed. We could argue on and on about should we have dropped the atomic bomb or should we haven't dropped the atomic bomb. But when you write this essay, I want you to keep in mind this idea of "All is fair in love and war."</p>

FIGURE 1. Collaborative disagreement during “All’s fair in love and war” activity; darker shading/nested sections indicate increasing regularities within continuing patterns of discourse.

Discussion

In the previous section, my analysis addressed techniques of teacher talk that encouraged students to disagree non-collaboratively or collaboratively and that

capitalized on these students' prior experiences with a cultural form of conflict talk to promote collaborative disagreement in whole-class discussion. Below, I relate my findings to prior research.

Student Disagreement Can Be Collaborative

In Ms. Jefferson's two 10th-grade classes, students disagreed about how a doctor should respond to a suffering, terminally ill patient, and about whether the Hiroshima bombing was fair. Disagreement in both classes was followed by more student participation; however, the quality of this participation differed. In Ms. Jefferson's fourth-hour class, although multiple speakers participated, their disagreement was non-collaborative. Students did not explicitly reference previous turns in the conversation and did not challenge or refine their positions. In contrast, Ms. Jefferson's sixth-hour students cited their classmates' views on the Hiroshima bombing, collaboratively disagreeing about several complex issues of wartime fairness: whether it was ethical to bomb civilians, to retaliate, to respond on a larger scale than the previous attack, to make a show of force in order to preempt further violence, and to act as both destroyer and rebuilders of one's opponent. My findings illustrate the sociolinguistic distinction between non-collaborative and collaborative disagreement and, in so doing, further dimensionalize what *dialogic discussion* can mean. Expanding upon Mercer's distinction among disputational, exploratory, and cumulative student talk, my research acknowledges the possibility of disagreement-driven classroom conversations in which students *collaborate through engagement with each other's differences*, citing their classmates' interpretations as they formulate and revise their own. Moreover, I have shown that students can end such collaborative disagreements having intensified and multiplied their differences, rather than having developed a shared perspective. While previous studies have pointed to the importance of dialogic tension among multiple voices in whole-class discussions (Applebee et al., 2003; Nystrand et al., 1997; Wegerif & Mercer, 1997), my findings provide a concrete example of a whole-class discussion in which students (1) disagree in ways that promote, rather than discourage, discussion; (2) cite and rework their classmates' interpretations; and (3) challenge each other in ways that produce more complex and yet still distinct interpretations.

Teachers Can Promote Collaborative Disagreement

In the two conversations presented, Ms. Jefferson's responses to student comments also differed. In her fourth-hour class, her use of "Right" and "OK" after each answer seemed to discourage students from referring to what others had already said, whereas Ms. Jefferson's use of other kinds of evaluative follow-ups in her sixth-hour class, like "So Franklin said . . ." modeled and promoted collaborative disagreement. Some research on dialogic whole-class discussions has already addressed the idea that evaluative follow-ups can discourage student participation (Cazden, 1986; Mehan, 1979) or can encourage students to theorize (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993) and to debate a common definition/principle (Mercer, 1995). In particular, Aukerman (2007) has shown that teachers who share responsibility

for evaluation with students can encourage student participation in whole-class discussions. My research affirms that evaluative follow-ups can enable student participation in whole-class discussions and extends that prior research by suggesting that evaluative follow-ups that promote collaborative disagreement may invite students not only to voice their interpretations but also to relate them to those of their classmates.

How Ms. Jefferson's responses to students like Franklin and Richard promoted collaborative disagreement bears further consideration. When Ms. Jefferson used indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases like "So Franklin said . . . that's also fair" (Lines 5–8) or "Wait, but Kevin said they deserved it!" (Lines 19–20), her evaluative follow-ups might have appeared to an outsider to be misunderstandings or implicit criticisms of students' points, and yet students responded to them as invitations to further collaborative disagreement. That is, students responded to Ms. Jefferson's evaluative follow-ups, within the particular context of the activity, as being playfully ironic. While Nystrand et al. (1997) have shown how the forms of questions that teachers pose to students can encourage participation in dialogic, whole-class discussions, and have emphasized that teacher questions should be "authentic," or sincere, my findings establish that playful teacher irony can also provoke lively class dialogue. Indeed, examples of this subversive humor, or what Bakhtin has called "the carnivalesque" (1984a, 1984b), are largely missing from prior research on dialogic discussions, though destabilization of authority through the struggle of multiple voices in discourse is a central assumption of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism.

Moreover, while other studies of whole-class, dialogic discussions have documented how a teacher's evaluative revoicing of a student's contribution (which might otherwise discourage discussion, e.g., a closed question like "So there's an orphanage in the story?") can sometimes invite further student responses because of "how [they] are predisposed to receive it" (Boyd & Markarian, 2011, p. 516), my research adds indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases as other "third turn" (Lee, 2007) practices of teacher evaluation/follow-up that can promote dialogic discussion. Above, I have shown how even critical teacher feedback on student responses can encourage further whole-class discussion when students respond to evaluative teacher follow-ups as invitations to clarify and defend their different positions by citing what others have said.

Teachers' Use of Cultural Conflict-Talk Practices Can Promote Students' Collaborative Disagreement

In Ms. Jefferson's sixth-hour class, students' positive responses to her ironic follow-ups and to the playful nature of the disagreement were particularly important. These students did not respond to Ms. Jefferson's ironic criticisms, and the repeated use of indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases by other students, as personal attacks, but rather as practices that invited further disagreement and discussion, including disagreement with the teacher. This reaction may be explained by the

resemblance of these pedagogical techniques to The Dozens. I argue that Ms. Jefferson's use of playful irony not only defused the tension that might have been associated with disagreement and criticism of others' positions, but also welcomed discursive practices more commonly associated with students' out-of-school lives. Hirst and Renshaw (2004) have addressed teachers' and students' deployment of home-cultural/linguistic resources during dialogic discussions. However, their study described students using ironic revoicing as a means of resistance to school culture, which resulted in communication breakdown. My findings suggest that teachers' use of students' home-cultural conflict-talk practices during whole-class discussions can also promote students' collaborative disagreement in ways that support curricular goals.

While Ms. Jefferson's Dozens-like evaluative follow-ups challenged students to defend their positions, she did not explicitly confront students who made intolerant and/or misinformed comments during the discussion that might have shocked some listeners (for example, that the people of Hiroshima "deserved it," that the United States paid reparations to Japan, or that US opponents in the Iraq war were responsible for the 9/11 attacks). Why did Ms. Jefferson choose to countenance these assertions? I propose that if Ms. Jefferson had challenged a student's position directly, she might have discouraged that student from participating further and thus bringing his or her opinion into dialogue with others in ways that might have challenged and complicated that opinion. Research on dialogic discussions (e.g., Aukerman, 2007) has suggested that not intervening directly to "correct" students when their assertions are factually flawed, or even intolerant, may allow teachers not only to encourage further discussion but also to challenge students more deeply. Moreover, in African American culture, the use of ironic, implicit criticism to change others' minds without direct confrontation has a long history (Smitherman, 2000). Ms. Jefferson's own reflections about using "sociable language" as a more "relaxed" way to invite "the entire class to chime in on the intriguing comment," and about Richard's subsequent change of position in his paper, further support the idea that indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases which playfully destabilize authority and thus open possibilities for participation can promote the refinement of different positions through collaborative disagreement.

Collaborative Disagreement Can Promote Academic Argumentation Practices

In Ms. Jefferson's sixth-hour class, not only did students disagree collaboratively by citing their classmates' contributions, but collaboration also increased during discussion as more discursive regularities appeared (as illustrated in Figure 1). These regularities included "if . . . then . . ." propositions, citation of other speakers, juxtaposition of counterexamples, and ironic, rhetorical questions—all discourse patterns characteristic of both African American Signifyin(g) and academic, persuasive writing tasks like the position-paper assignment. I argue that Ms. Jefferson's use of Dozens-like practices not only promoted collaborative disagreement, but

also fostered uses of language that are often valued in official school discourses. Other researchers have explored how to help students participate in disciplinary discourses, especially those students for whom academic discourses may be less familiar, or less welcoming (Lee, 2006; Morrell, 2008). More specifically, prior studies have shown that students' participation in whole-class discussions can have a significant impact on their argumentative writing (e.g., Reznitskaya et al., 2007). Previous research has also addressed how students' experience, via Signifyin(g), with literary tropes like irony can enable them to interpret, and to articulate interpretations about, literary texts (Lee, 2006). My findings add to this research by demonstrating that inviting students' home-cultural disagreement practices into whole-class discussions can encourage participation in academic discourses associated with literary interpretation and argumentative writing, while still allowing students to elaborate different, yet related, interpretations.

In highlighting how Ms. Jefferson used techniques that resembled *The Dozens* to promote student participation in whole-class discussion, I do not suggest that these cultural practices were merely a "stepping-stone" to students' participation in academic discourse practices. Rather, I join others in suggesting that students can mingle in- and out-of-school discourses to produce "hybrid" or "blending" genres of talk (Dyson, 2003; Orellana & Gutiérrez, 2006) that allow out-of-school cultural voices to be heard within pedagogical genres of school culture. Indeed, inviting students' home-cultural discourse practices into classroom talk during whole-class discussions can intensify the dialogism of discussions, not only by encouraging more students to participate, but also by welcoming and amplifying the diverse sociohistorical accents heard in the conversation.

Neither do I mean to imply that students must be members of a particular sociocultural discourse community in order to recognize and implement practices that draw on cultural conflict-talk to promote whole-class discussions. Although some of the students who utilized these strategies (like Ebony, Franklin, and Gloria) were African American, others (like Brian, Kevin, and Richard) were not, and were nevertheless active participants in the Hiroshima discussion. While research has demonstrated the importance of students' sociocultural affiliations to their participation in classroom discourse practices (e.g., Alvermann, 2006; Street, 2000), some research has also suggested that the sharing of cultural practices (particularly AAL) across ethnic lines can be a resource to encourage classroom participation (Paris, 2009). I add that students who are not members of a particular out-of-school discourse community can nevertheless participate in/benefit from discursive practices associated with that community during whole-class discussions.

Implications

Based on examples from Ms. Jefferson's classes, I have argued that disagreement can be collaborative, encouraging students to explicitly reference others' interpretations as they refine or revise their own. While conflict can be an obstacle to teaching and learning, as much prior research has demonstrated, my findings open

new possibilities for research into classroom disagreement that collaboratively intensifies differences, rather than collapsing into consensus. Ms. Jefferson risked challenging her students and provoking disagreement in order to avoid the kind of non-collaborative expression of different but unrelated opinions which her fourth-hour students exhibited. Teachers—and especially preservice teachers—may find collaborative disagreement, and the practices it entails, to be an antidote to fear of controversial discussions.

Moreover, I have claimed that teacher responses, like Ms. Jefferson's playful, ironic follow-ups, can promote students' collaborative disagreement. Future studies might investigate what other factors can frame disagreement during whole-class discussions as collaborative. In particular, the use of humor and playful irony by teachers and students during dialogic discussions may be a rich site for further research on dialogic discussions, especially since the "carnavalesque" and the "word with a sideways glance" are ideas that appear throughout Bakhtin's work. Teachers might consider what kinds of activities and classroom discourse, or what kinds of framing instructions for debates and position papers, can destabilize the authority of any one speaker/perspective and thus encourage students to "try on" a potentially controversial position. Not that ceding authority is easy; for Ms. Jefferson, it was difficult to renounce her "good teacher" role, but she did so in order to use "sociable language" to engage her students.

I have also contended that Ms. Jefferson's use of indirect challenges and provocative paraphrases, practices reminiscent of *The Dozens*, promoted students' collaborative disagreement. More research is necessary into how teachers and students collaboratively deploy home-cultural/linguistic resources during whole-class discussions. For researchers, teacher revoicing, or repeating what a student has just said, may be of particular interest because of its potential to appear as a model, an affirmation, or a correction of students' use of out-of-school language practices during whole-class discussions. Teachers might likewise consider how their own and their students' out-of-school experiences with discussion or disagreement might model, affirm, or constrain participation in whole-class discussions. Teacher educators might further encourage preservice teachers to examine their own cultural disagreement practices in teaching-methods courses, or in conversations with mentor teachers and field supervisors. Additionally, since my analysis did not include student interviews, researchers conducting future studies might interview students about their reactions to disagreement in discussions, as well as about their prior experiences with conflict talk.

Finally, I have argued that students' use of home-cultural disagreement practices in whole-class discussions may intersect with discourses of academic argumentation valued in school settings. Ms. Jefferson's comments about Richard's change in perspective from his initial opinion to his subsequent position paper suggest that future research might explore the relationship between collaborative disagreement in whole-class discussion and students' argumentative writing. Teachers might also explore with students how collaborative/cultural disagreement practices in conversation compare to citation of sources in writing.

In this article, I have begun to address the need for more research on whole-class discussions in which students disagree collaboratively, referencing their classmates' contributions as they elaborate different, but related, interpretations. Ms. Jefferson successfully promoted collaborative disagreement among her students by using practices that resembled an African American cultural form of conflict talk. While prior research (e.g., Nystrand et al., 1997) has described whole-class discussions as "including the voices of different classes, races, ages, and genders" (p. 18) and as "structured by tension, even conflict" (p. 8), more examples are needed of teacher-talk techniques that appeal to the cultural backgrounds of marginalized students and encourage collaborative disagreement—a practice that is essential to ELA curricula and to participation in a democratic, literate society.

NOTES

1. Both Smitherman's (1977) "Signifyin'" and Gates's (1988) "Signifyin(g)" changed the ending of this word to distinguish it from the more general practice of signifying, or using signs to make meaning; like Gates (1988), I have chosen to bracket the final "g" to emphasize the implicit double meanings and reinterpretations of others' words on which this form of wordplay depends.
2. Hurston's collection of folklore and hoodoo has been used by other scholars (e.g., Gates, 1988; Smitherman, 1977) as a source for examples of Signifyin(g). Though I have rendered this excerpt of dialogue as a transcript, my only addition to the original prose was to add line numbers.
3. All names are pseudonyms.
4. Again, it is worth considering why Ms. Jefferson did not respond to comments from Brian, Gloria, and Ebony that included misleading information. For instance, the United States did not pay reparations to Japan after Hiroshima, as Brian suggested, and there is no evidence to support conflating the "they" of the 9/11 attacks with the "they" of the war in Iraq, as Gloria and Ebony did. A more direct teacher intervention might seem warranted to dispel potential misinformation. I address this issue further in the Discussion section.

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Michael B. Sherry is assistant professor of English at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania. His research addresses how classroom discourse genres enable and constrain the learning of students and of teacher candidates. His work has appeared in journals like *American Educational Research Journal*, *English Education*, and *Teachers College Record*.

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