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Pedagogical Virtues: An Account of the Intellectual Virtues of a Teacher

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Abstract

The overlap between virtue epistemology and the philosophy of education has been dominated by discussions of the epistemic qualities of good learners, that is, the intellectual virtues that must be nurtured in students. Not much has been said about the epistemic qualities of good teachers expressed in virtue-theoretic terms. This paper offers a preliminary account of such qualities, which are designated as pedagogical virtues. I use Battaly's pluralist conception of intellectual virtue as a starting point, then describe a pedagogical virtue as an intellectual virtue with an other-regarding success or motivational component. I end with an elucidation of the pedagogical versions of two mainstream intellectual virtues, perseverance and inquisitiveness.

Keywords: virtue epistemology; philosophy of education; intellectual virtues; perseverance; inquisitiveness

1. Introduction

The overlap between virtue epistemology and philosophy of education has been dominated by discussions on developing the intellectual virtues of students.[1] Baehr (2013: 249) claims that "fostering growth in intellectual virtues should be a central educational aim", and virtue epistemologists have written about why and how certain intellectual virtues must be taught to our students.[2] Not much has been said, however, about intellectual virtues that *teachers* must cultivate in themselves.

Kawall (2002) proposes that if the goal of intellectual virtues is the epistemic flourishing of an agent – whether through the acquisition of epistemic goods (such as knowledge and understanding) and cognitive skills, or through intellectual character development – there is no reason to limit our list of virtues to only those that achieve this goal for oneself. In other words, he suggests that an epistemic agent may also be considered intellectually virtuous if she has qualities that lead to other epistemic agents'

[1]Two anthologies of important works on this overlap are Kotzee (2014) and Baehr (2016). A more recent article (Curren 2019) also focuses on this intersection.

[2]Some intellectual virtues argued to be ideally cultivated in students are inquisitiveness (Watson 2016*b*), intellectual humility (Roberts 2016), open-mindedness, and insightfulness (Riggs 2016).

flourishing, and these qualities are what he calls "other-regarding" intellectual virtues. In particular, Kawall talks about the teacher as a virtuous epistemic agent:

> consider the case of an excellent teacher who is able to communicate a love of knowledge to her students, and whose students almost always become engaged with the subject matter she teaches. Further, her students acquire a great deal of knowledge. There is a strong intuition that she is being a good epistemic agent, even if she is not merely concentrating on acquiring knowledge for herself. She is helping to create knowledgeable, engaged agents within her community. The pursuit of truth in her community will likely be more successful for her efforts. Her teaching contributes to a surplus of true beliefs over false beliefs; but among her students and community, not just herself. Recognition of other-regarding epistemic virtues would allow us to see such a teacher as a good epistemic agent. (Kawall 2002: 271)

Note that a teacher might be considered a *good epistemic agent* if she is characteristically competent and motivated to seek epistemic goods, but unless she could also lead her students towards truth, she could not be considered a *good teacher*. In this paper, I propose an account of the *intellectual virtues of a good teacher*, which will be designated as "pedagogical virtues".

I begin with a clarification of the concept of intellectual virtue in the next section, where I express reliabilist and responsibilist virtues in terms of success and motivational components. In section 3, I explain the success and motivational components of pedagogical virtues to come up with an account of this concept. Then I discuss pedagogical versions of perseverance (section 4) and inquisitiveness (section 5) as concrete examples of pedagogical virtues, before concluding with some clarifications of my account.

2. The concept of intellectual virtue

Since pedagogical virtues are a kind of intellectual virtue, we must first clarify the concept of "intellectual virtue." Virtue epistemologists define intellectual virtues in two distinct ways: *virtue reliabilists* (Sosa 1991; Greco 1993) consider them to be reliable truth-conducive faculties that makes the subject attain more good beliefs than false ones, while *virtue responsibilists* (Code 1984; Montmarquet 1987; Zagzebski 1996; Roberts and Wood 2007; Baehr 2011) consider them to be stable character traits that dispose subjects to be motivated in seeking knowledge and other epistemic goods. Without privileging one account over another, I use Heather Battaly's (2001, 2008, 2015) insights into the concept of intellectual virtue so that we could come up with a comprehensive and inclusive account.

Battaly (2001) argues that intellectual virtue is a thin/vague concept, meaning there is no consensus on which conditions are necessary for what counts as an "intellectual virtue".[3] Every virtue epistemologist would agree that intellectual virtues are a kind of (1) cognitive excellence, manifested through a (2) stable disposition having to do with truth,[4] but they would disagree on the other features associated with the concept of intellectual virtue. Zagzebski (1996) highlights two other key elements of intellectual virtues: (3) the motivational component, which is "a disposition to have … an emotion

[3]See also Alston's (1964) discussion of "vague concepts" in Battaly's (2001) argument.
[4]See Battaly (2001: 112; 2008: 644–52; 2015: 19–20).

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that initiates and directs action to produce an end with certain desired features" (1996: 136), and (4) the success component, which is "being reliable at bringing about the end that is the aim of the motivational component" (1996: 136).[5] Virtue reliabilists such as Sosa (1991) and Greco (1993) consider only the success component to be necessary for intellectual virtues, while other virtue responsibilists such as Montmarquet (1987) and Baehr (2011) require only the motivational component. All these different notions, according to Battaly (2001: 113), "are all equally correct and equally arbitrary. Consequently, our concept of intellectual virtue is too thin to make any of these projected disagreements meaningful".

Endorsing a thin/vague concept of intellectual virtue allows us to have a more inclusive, pluralist theory of virtues. Reliabilists and responsibilists agree that (1) and (2) are necessary for intellectual virtues, but generally disagree about which between (3) and (4) are also required. Battaly (2015) proposes a disjunctive characterization of intellectual virtues, because the excellence of epistemic agents could manifest either through qualities that enable us to be successful in attaining good effects (4), *or* through qualities that give us good motives that guide our intellectual practice (3). This characterization also emphasizes how reliabilist and responsibilist intellectual virtues are complementary: the former reliably produce true beliefs without necessarily involving good motivations, while the latter require truth-oriented motivations without necessarily producing true beliefs (Battaly 2016: 164, 170).

I intend to use this concept of intellectual virtue derived from Battaly's disjunctive view: an excellent, stable disposition that either helps us attain epistemic goods, or characteristically motivates our actions towards epistemic goods. In other words, an intellectual virtue is a cognitive excellence that has either a success component or a motivational component or both, with respect to attaining epistemic goods. Since pedagogical virtues are intellectual virtues, it seems reasonable to expect that such virtues follow such a disjunctive model. In the next session, I discuss how the success and motivational components of pedagogical virtues are cashed out.

3. Other-regarding success and motivational components

Pedagogical virtues are intellectual virtues insofar as they are excellences oriented towards epistemic goods and intellectual flourishing, but they aim for students' flourishing, rather than one's own. To use Kawall's vocabulary, pedagogical virtues are other-regarding intellectual virtues. This orientation helps us describe what the success and motivational components for pedagogical virtues look like.

3.1. Success component

The success component emphasized in mainstream reliabilist virtues is a *disposition* towards reliably attaining true beliefs, rather than a matter of raw success. To use a familiar Gettier-style example, Henry, who passes by the barn façade county (Goldman 1976: 772–3; Plantinga 1993: 33), is deprived of knowledge because he is in an epistemically hostile environment where his belief that the object he was looking

[5]Battaly (2001: 112) enumerates more commonly disputed characteristics of intellectual virtues, such as whether it is a character trait, an intellectual skill, an acquired habit, among others. I emphasized only the success and motivational components, because these are the crucial contestable features, and the others will follow once either component (or both) has been established.

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at is a barn is not safe. In that instance, he was unsuccessful in attaining knowledge, but that instance alone does not immediately make him an unreliable believer. After all, he has excellent eyesight that makes him inclined to form true visual beliefs, which makes us say that Henry has virtuous vision, despite not getting it right *all the time*. On the other hand, an almost blind Ernie who often correctly distinguishes real barns from fake barns in barn facade counties but does so out of incredible luck rather than through visual competence, has a good success record but cannot be said to have a reliable disposition for forming visual beliefs.

Similarly, the success record of a teacher does not necessarily indicate pedagogical virtue. Consider Gilderoy Lockhart, the incompetent Defence Against the Dark Arts professor in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (Rowling 1999*a*). His career is decorated with achievements and awards for things he never did, and the texts he assigns for class are works about these fraudulent achievements, including an autobiography. His students barely learned anything, apart from perhaps Hermione Granger, the ever-diligent student who read Lockhart's autobiography and got a perfect score in his exam. Setting aside the question of what students must learn (which lies more in the subject matter than in the career of the professor), suppose Lockhart was lucky enough to always get Hermione Grangers for his students, diligent students who study whatever their professor asked of them and brilliant enough to absorb all the material that he gives. If excellent teaching is only a matter of successfully inducing some learning in students, then Lucky Lockhart would be a virtuous teacher. Conversely, suppose Remus Lupin, arguably the best professor the Hogwarts students ever had (Rowling 1999*b*), happened to have only terrible students throughout his career, and despite his best efforts, he is unable to induce learning in the majority of his students. If good teaching equals raw success, then Unlucky Lupin would be an unvirtuous teacher, but this result does not seem right. However, if we posit counterfactually that they be given the same set of students (which Lockhart and Lupin were in the series, albeit in two different year levels), the difference between their dispositional qualities towards teaching is expected to manifest how much more students will learn in Lupin's class than in Lockhart's class.

Additionally, the intellectual virtues that emphasize the success component are mostly reliable cognitive abilities, which could function properly only in a particular set of environments.[6] For instance, our visual belief-forming capacities can only be reliable within an epistemically friendly environment. We cannot reasonably expect Henry to reliably form true beliefs about which barn is real and which barn is fake while in the barn façade county, since that is not a conducive environment for his barn-recognition competence. Similarly, one might propose that pedagogical virtues have a corresponding "normal" environment that is conducive to their exercise, which may include the overall qualities of the students (brightness, attention span, willingness to engage, interest in subject, etc.), their access to well-maintained facilities and learning materials, the physical condition of the classroom, among other things. Adding these kinds of parameters is appealing because it does seem too strong to require success-oriented pedagogical virtues to be effective in all possible learning environments. It seems reasonable not to expect so much from teachers working in harsh learning environments, such as having 100 students from a low socioeconomic background in a cramped classroom, with barely half of whom having a textbook.

[6]The environment a subject is in is one of the parameters in Sosa's (1991: 284) definition of intellectual virtue.

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However, we must not suppose that the learning environment has the final word regarding pedagogical success. We can expect a virtuous teacher to be able to engage even her most timid students and spark their interest in the content despite not being initially interested, and even to work around the scarcity of learning materials so that her students could learn. This capacity of a teacher to induce learning even in harsh learning environments speaks to the excellence of the teacher, and so is a mark of pedagogical virtue. Identifying a comprehensive list of "normal" conditions that are conducive for teaching and learning is a complex empirical question and is beyond the scope of this paper. The upshot here is that while sub-optimal conditions can limit the exercise of success-based pedagogical virtues, a virtuous teacher is not entirely at the mercy of the learning environment; rather, she can effectively respond to the limitations of her environment in order to reliably induce her students' learning.[7]

3.2. Motivational component

Dispositional success in bringing about learning is one way of cashing out the other-regarding excellence of a pedagogical virtue. Having the proper motivation towards teaching is another. The motivational component of mainstream intellectual virtues towards truth, sometimes called "love of knowledge", is usually explained in contrast to other dispositions such as having unvirtuous reasons for knowing such as prestige (of which Lockhart is a good example) and wealth, indifference to relevant truths, and perverse concern to know what is unworthy (such as gossip) (Roberts and Wood 2007: 168–80). Similarly, one might teach without genuine concern for the learning of the students, and do it for reputational status, promotion, a better salary, and power over the students.

But how would we positively describe the other-regarding motivational component of a pedagogical virtue? Suppose Sheldon is a teacher who almost never lies to his students because he values truth and is firmly bound by a sense of duty to share the truth to others, and also thinks that he becomes a better epistemic agent by doing so. If he recites a litany of facts about string theory to a class of sixth-graders, he is sincere in telling truths about science and wanting his students to know these truths. But wanting other people to know truths based on his sense of duty may not necessarily coincide with wanting the students to learn. While Sheldon's truth-telling disposition in his class might be considered a pedagogical virtue if it reliably leads to the students' learning (though this is very unlikely in this particular example) – if it has an other-regarding success component – its motivational component does not seem to be characteristically pedagogical.[8]

In contrast, consider Stella, a devoutly Christian fourth-grade teacher who believes that creationism is true and that evolution is false.[9] However, she does recognize the scientific evidence for evolution, and admits that her belief in creationism is based on faith rather than science. Given this, she does not intend to impose her religious beliefs on anyone else, especially her fourth-grade students, and she acknowledges how important it is for her students to learn the best results of scientific research. If she asserts "Modern-day Homo sapiens evolved from Homo erectus", to her students

[7]Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for making this significant point.

[8]This shows that a virtue might have an other-regarding success component but a self-regarding motivational component.

[9]This example is due to Lackey (2008: 48).

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despite not believing the statement, it seems that she is motivated by her students' acquisition of knowledge (despite not agreeing that it is knowledge), rather than sharing what she believes in.[10] If this motivation to impart information (whether she believes it or not) is a stable *epistemic* disposition, that is, a disposition towards her students' acquisition of epistemic goods, then it could also be considered virtuous.

It is important to qualify that "learning" here must be understood in an "externalist" way. That is, what matters is learning as a matter of fact, rather than what the teacher takes to be learning.[11] Using the latter, "internalist" conception can have undesirable implications for the motivational component of our account. Suppose Stella is still *genuinely concerned for her students' learning* and that she has epistemic dispositions guided by this motivation, but what she considers "learning" is believing and following what the Christian Bible says literally. Thus, her students would be learning according to Stella's notion of learning but may not necessarily be learning as a matter of fact. Likewise, recall Lockhart above, for whom "learning" is a matter of the students recognizing his fake achievements. He could also be *genuinely concerned for his students' learning* but his problematic concept of learning keeps us from considering him to be virtuous. Establishing what "learning" as a matter of fact means is beyond the scope of this paper, but this is what the teacher must be genuinely concerned about rather than her personal conception of "learning", in order for her dispositions to count as having a motivational component.

From this, I propose the following preliminary account of pedagogical virtues:

> A **pedagogical virtue** is an excellent cognitive disposition of a teacher that either helps the teacher reliably produce successful learning in students (in normal learning environments) or characteristically motivates the teacher towards this goal.

While other-regardingness is not explicitly stated in this account, it is implied in how the success and motivational components are defined in terms of the learning of students – these are two specific ways by which pedagogical virtues are other-regarding. Note also that "learning" is used here to accommodate different epistemic and educational aims that may not be limited to acquisition of knowledge and understanding.[12]

Having a preliminary account of what pedagogical virtues are, let us consider concrete examples. In the next two sections, I consider two mainstream intellectual virtues and look at their pedagogical virtue analogues.

4. Pedagogical perseverance

One can summarize both Nathan King's (2014, 2019) and Battaly's (2017) analysis of intellectual perseverance in terms of *a disposition to appropriately respond to obstacles to one's worthwhile intellectual goals out of love of epistemic goods*.[13] Three elements are

[10]I am using this example quite differently from Lackey's (2008) point, which is that Stella is a reliable testifier despite being an unreliable believer. In other words, her concern is the success component, and this just shows that Stella's disposition to inform her students about scientific results is a reliable (i.e. success-oriented) other-regarding virtue. But my intention in using this example is to suggest that she also has an other-regarding epistemic motivation in her actions.

[11]Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for requesting clarification on this important distinction.

[12]Robertson (2009) and Watson (2016*a*) offer good surveys of different epistemic aims of education.

[13]Both accounts distinguish "intellectual perseverance" from "intellectually virtuous perseverance", where the former is a generic character trait and the latter is an intellectual virtue. In the characterization

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important here: (a) an appropriate response to obstacles, (b) the consideration of worthwhile intellectual goals, and (c) an epistemic motivation. I consider each of these briefly before discussing what I take to be the pedagogical version of this virtue.

First, an appropriate response to obstacles mostly involves sticking with intellectual projects for an appropriate amount of time, with respect to the value of the intellectual goals being sought. King and Battaly locate this virtue in between vices of giving up too early on one's intellectual projects ("irresolution" or "capitulation") and giving up too late or not at all ("intransigence" or "recalcitrance"). We normally contrast perseverance with giving up too early, like a first-year graduate student who gives up on academe once she receives critical comments on her writing. However, Chidi Anagonye of the TV series *The Good Place*, who wrote a 3000-page dissertation trying to answer every philosophical question there is, does not seem to be an exemplar of virtuous perseverance either, since he did not recognize that his project is not worthwhile and doable. Both agents here spent an inappropriate time on their respective projects, and so responded inappropriately to their respective obstacles.

It is important to note that obstacles are person-relative and that this affects what counts as perseverance. "What is difficult for one agent may not be difficult for another", writes King (2019: 261), and so what elicits perseverance for one might not elicit perseverance for another. Writing a 1000-word exposition of Aristotle's virtue theory might be tough for a student learning it for the first time but not for a professor who specialized in Aristotle, and so the student might need to persevere in writing the exposition, whereas the professor does not need to.

Second, one must consider the quality and value of the intellectual goals being pursued. Someone counting the grains of sands in Bondi beach might encounter obstacles to acquire knowledge about the number of grains there, but such serious effort is hardly virtuous because that knowledge is trivial and unimportant. Finally, one's response to obstacles must be guided by a love of epistemic goods, rather than *only* personal status, wealth, and other goods external to intellectual projects. One could exert serious effort into finding a cure for cancer, which is definitely a worthwhile intellectual goal, but do so with the *sole* intent to get rich once one succeeds, but we would hesitate to call this person virtuously persevering.

As with most analyses of intellectual virtues, King's early account (2014) focused mostly on self-regarding manifestations of perseverance. Among his examples were Helen Keller's persistence to learn language despite her blindness, and Tycho Brahe's painstaking efforts to make careful and precise observations of planetary motion in an attempt to synthesize the Copernican heliocentric system with the Aristotelian doctrine of circular orbits, which included building his own observatories and instruments capable of extreme precision as well as spending decades to gather data. King (2019) expands his account of intellectual perseverance by specifying "intellectual projects" in terms of acquiring, maintaining, or disseminating epistemic goods. While the above examples are mostly instances of *acquiring* epistemic goods, note that *disseminating* epistemic goods is particularly other-regarding. A good model of other-regarding perseverance would be Helen Keller's teacher, Anne Sullivan.

here, I have included three important things that qualify perseverance as an intellectual virtue: the response to obstacles must be *appropriate*, the intellectual goals must be *worthwhile*, and the actions must be *epistemically motivated*. With this account, I use "intellectual perseverance" to designate the intellectual virtue without having to distinguish it from the broader, non-virtuous character trait.

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Sullivan taught Keller how objects have names by spelling the letters on Keller's hand as she touches these objects. In Keller's (1940) autobiography, *Story of My Life*, she described one of the attempts of Sullivan to teach her some words:

> Earlier in the day we had had a tussle over the words "m-u-g" and "w-a-t-e-r." Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that "m-u-g" is *mug* and "w-a-t-e-r" is water, but I persisted in confounding the two. In despair she had dropped the subject for the time, only to renew it at the first opportunity. (Keller 1940: 27–8)

This episode might now be familiar to many as an inspiring story of how a blind girl learned words, and eventually how to read and write. But Sullivan also manifested intellectual perseverance, but in disseminating, rather than acquiring, epistemic goods. In other words, while Keller's perseverance was self-regarding, Sullivan's was other-regarding.

Taking King's and Battaly's accounts as a starting point, we can describe other-regarding perseverance, or more specifically, pedagogical perseverance, as a *disposition to appropriately respond to obstacles in helping one's students acquire epistemic goods out of a desire for their epistemic flourishing*. Here we specified helping students learn as the worthwhile intellectual goal (b), but the appropriate response (a) and epistemic motivation (c) are similar to the more general account. First, Sullivan had to endure Keller's struggles in comprehending the distinction between mug and water during that time, and had she absolutely given up teaching her the distinction by then, she would have been irresolute. However, she also decided to drop the matter for the meantime, recognizing that any more insistence on teaching the same thing without trying anything different would be intransigent. In other words, she persisted with teaching Keller for the appropriate amount of time vis-à-vis the obstacle of teaching. Second, we could also infer from Keller and Sullivan's often-told story that Sullivan struggled teaching Keller out of a desire for Keller to learn and not out of non-epistemic motivations.

The obstacles that elicit pedagogical perseverance are also person-relative, which includes both the teacher and her students. Teaching is already a challenging task but there are factors that could make this endeavour much more difficult. It is much tougher for, say, Raj, a stuttering and socially awkward teacher, to deliver a lecture than Leonard, who is eloquent and friendly, granting that their familiarity with the topic is equal. This would mean that Raj needs to exert a lot more effort in lecturing than Leonard, which makes Raj more admirable. Similarly, we marvel at Sullivan's perseverance in teaching a blind student how objects have names, but she might have encountered less difficulty if she were teaching someone who was not blind, and she might not even have needed to persevere at all. This does not necessarily mean that teaching language to students with sight does not elicit perseverance, only that this is less admirable than Sullivan's resistance to greater obstacles.

I end this section by discussing how pedagogical perseverance is a pedagogical virtue, according to the account proposed in section 3. It is easy to see that it has an other-regarding motivational component which is explicit in our characterization above ("*out of a desire for their epistemic flourishing*"). A teacher who genuinely cares for her students' learning is ready to struggle through various obstacles to this goal. This is sufficient to satisfy our disjunctive account of pedagogical virtue. Yet, one might wonder whether pedagogical perseverance also has an other-regarding success component, that is, does it reliably produce successful learning in students?

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Looking at King's and Battaly's accounts of mainstream perseverance, one might be tempted to think that it does not have a success component. King (2019: 261) says that "Virtuous resistance to difficulty does not require *success* in achieving one's intellectual goals". This is because success depends on factors beyond one's serious effort; e.g. nobody has succeeded in finding the cure for Alzheimer's not because nobody is persevering to, but because of the immense difficulty of the project. In such cases, one can still have intellectual perseverance by trying (but failing) to overcome extremely difficult obstacles, knowing that the potential epistemic rewards if one succeeded are significantly worthwhile (Battaly 2017: 674). However, recall that the success component of intellectual virtues is not reducible to raw success, nor does it guarantee that a virtuous epistemic agent would never fail to gain knowledge. Instead, what matters is that the agent is *reliable* in attaining epistemic goods. Insofar as intellectual perseverance involves a "disposition to make good judgments … about *which* intellectual goals are appropriate for one to pursue, and *when*" (Battaly 2017: 678, her emphasis) and a rational belief that the success of a project is a live possibility (King 2019: 263), then an agent with this virtue is less likely to spend an inordinate amount on time on worthless or hopeless intellectual projects, and more likely to overcome obstacles in worthwhile endeavours.

These remarks can be applied to the account of pedagogical perseverance. A teacher with this disposition should be capable of making good judgments about her students' capacity to overcome obstacles to learning. She does not give up easily on her slower students, but she also recognizes when to give her students more time (recall Sullivan). Pedagogical perseverance does not guarantee that all her students will excel in learning, but it makes her more reliable in inducing learning in many of her students, especially those who encounter significant difficulties. This shows that pedagogical perseverance has not only an other-regarding motivational component but also an other-regarding success component, which strengthens its status as a pedagogical virtue.

5. Pedagogical versions of inquisitiveness

Lani Watson (2015: 279) defines an inquisitive person to be "*characteristically motivated to engage sincerely in good questioning*." Inquisitiveness, in her account, has both a success component (one must ask *good* questions) and a motivational component (one must be asking *sincerely* in the interest of epistemic goods). However, Watson's (2016*b*) emphasis on the relation between inquisitiveness and learning, especially for young children, suggests that inquisitiveness is a self-regarding virtue; inquisitive people typically ask questions to gain knowledge and understanding for oneself. What, then, would an other-regarding version of inquisitiveness look like?

If students (or learners in general) ask questions to seek knowledge for themselves, then a teacher who *answers* those questions (1) such that the askers reliably learn from these answers, and/or (2) out of a desire for the students to learn exhibits an other-regarding pedagogical virtue. A teacher might also *ask* questions out of the same motivation and/or produce similarly successful results. For lack of a term in natural English, these *question-answering* and *question-asking* dispositions of a teacher, insofar as they are characteristically motivated by and reliably connected to students' learning, are pedagogical versions of inquisitiveness. However, neither of these two could be called "inquisitiveness", which means that these are different virtues altogether. This will be made clearer as I elaborate on these virtues in what follows.

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5.1. Question-answering virtue

Students usually ask questions to their teachers about something they do not know or understand.[14] Consider first what kind of answer a teacher should give to questions with straightforward, non-controversial answers. Recall Sheldon, the teacher bound by his sense of duty to almost always tell the truth. Suppose he asked his sixth-grade students to compute the circumference of a circle (up to two decimal places) and one of his students, Penny, who knows the formula but does not know what value of π to use (or probably forgot what it was), asks him this question:

> Penny: Teacher, what is the value of π?
> Sheldon: Three-point-one-four-one-five-nine-two-six-five-three-five and so on.

While Sheldon's answer is factual, it does not seem that he answered Penny's question *well*, much less *excellently*. First, he did not understand what exactly Penny was asking, or why she asked that question. She was interested in what value of π to use to solve one particular problem, so she did not need *that* many digits of π to do that. As a result, Penny might not even have followed Sheldon's answer at all, in which case Sheldon was not able to help her learn. If he tends to answer these kinds of questions in this way, then his question-answering disposition does not have a reliable other-regarding success component. Additionally, he was not answering the question out of a desire for Penny to learn, but he does so, *ex hypothesi*, out of wanting to tell the unqualified truth. A teacher who has a question-asking disposition guided by an other-regarding motivation would have considered what the student needs to know in order to learn, and would have answered "3.14", even if it is not strictly speaking a precise answer.[15]

Apart from *what* answer/s a teacher gives, it is also important to consider *how* she answers the students' questions, especially when students are asking more difficult and open-ended questions. For instance, smarter students might ask questions about advanced topics which their classmates might not understand. A good teacher would have to try satisfying the smart student's curiosity (she might not need to answer the question comprehensively) without marginalizing the majority of the class who cannot appreciate their exchange. A different case would be a student asking a culturally or gender-insensitive question during a class discussion. A good teacher would have to manifest the sensitivity that her student did not, but also have to explain to the student why her question might be misplaced without embarrassing her, especially if the student did not have malicious intent. The teacher could do any of the following: answering the question through a mini-lecture, answering it partially to tease the students' curiosity, responding with a question to the student, postponing the answer for a latter class session, and even not answering the question at all – each of which might be appropriate in some situations but not in others. A teacher with a question-answering virtue would be motivated by and sensitive to the

[14]For this discussion, let us set aside higher-level questions where students try to apply and extrapolate their understanding of the lecture (e.g. "Would Wittgenstein have considered fake news as a language-game?") or try to challenge or develop the ideas they have understood (e.g. "Doesn't this theory fail to consider X?"). We can also exclude cases in which students ask questions out of non-epistemic motivations, such as challenging their teachers or showing off to their peers. But these cases must be considered in a more comprehensive account of virtuous question-answering for teachers, which deserves treatment in a separate paper.

[15]Elgin (2007) argues that most of what teachers teach is not factually true, but close enough to the truth so that the students develop an understanding of the subject matter.

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students' learning – both the asker's and her classmates' – in figuring out the appropriate response to her students' questions.

5.2. Virtuous pedagogical questioning

A second counterpart of inquisitiveness would be a question-asking virtue specific to the type of questions that teachers ask. Watson (2015) considers good questioning to be the defining factor of inquisitiveness. However, consider teachers who ask good questions during discussions to encourage students to think critically instead of spoon-feeding them, or teachers who design what could be considered a good exam consisting of questions that students must answer. These teachers might have a disposition to "engage sincerely in good questioning" but it seems inappropriate to describe them as "inquisitive". Why so?

I argue that the issue here lies in the kind of questions being asked. Most questions are *information-seeking* (Watson 2018*b*): seeking something implies that one does not have what is being sought yet (or at least, one believes so), and we see this in most questions where the questioner seeks information that she does not know yet (call these "Common Questions"). The teacher could very well ask Common Questions to her students (e.g. "What do you mean by this sentence?" or "Do you have an example that illustrates this claim?"), but most of the questions that teachers ask have answers that they know already. This might be why, elsewhere, Watson (2018*a*: 357) proposes more broadly that the goal of questions is to *elicit* information, since one could elicit answers that she already knows (whereas "seek", "gather", and "acquire" suggests that the questioner does not have the information yet). This nuance importantly qualifies the kind of questions that inquisitive persons are asking, namely, Common Questions. We could therefore amend Watson's account: an inquisitive person is one who is characteristically motivated to engage sincerely in good questioning *in seeking epistemic goods that she lacks*. Watson (2019) suggests this herself, albeit implicitly, when she defines curiosity as having a "[characteristic motivation] to acquire worthwhile epistemic goods that she lacks, or believes that she lacks" (2019: 159), and describes inquisitiveness as "curiosity manifested as good questioning" (2019: 161). In other words, asking questions about things that she already knows or understands does not make a person inquisitive. This is why we do not usually attach inquisitiveness to teachers even if they tend to ask a lot of questions.

Let us call the teacher's question-asking virtue "virtuous pedagogical questioning". While teachers ask questions in the classrooms and examinations, not all pedagogical questioning is virtuous. Picking up from Watson's account of inquisitiveness, I suggest the following account:

> A teacher's pedagogical questioning is virtuous if the teacher has a disposition to ask good questions that contribute reliably to the student's learning and/or is characteristically motivated to ask such questions for the sake of student's learning.

There are some things we need to note in this account. First, for the teacher to have a question-asking virtue, it must be a *disposition*; having one or even a few isolated instances of competent and/or appropriately motivated questioning is not sufficient to make it an excellent cognitive disposition. Second, I am employing the disjunctive account of pedagogical virtue proposed in section 3 here; the pedagogical questioning disposition may be virtuous by a success component *or* motivational

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component.[16] Third, note that the types of questions here are left unspecified. Some of the questions that the teacher tends to ask might be Common Questions, and insofar as asking these questions leads to reliable success in or is motivated by the students' learning, then the students' question-asking disposition could be virtuous. What is left to be considered is what constitutes the success and motivational components of pedagogical questioning. I spend some time to discuss *good* pedagogical questioning, and end with a few remarks on *sincere* pedagogical questioning.

First, consider good questioning *in general*. Recall that Watson (2018*a*) defines questions as information-eliciting acts, and from this she proposes that good questioning is acting competently in order to elicit worthwhile information. This competence manifests in judgments about not only *what* question(s) to ask, but also *whom*, *where*, *when*, and *how* to ask them such that the appropriate information is elicited. Asking the wrong question, asking the wrong person, or asking at the wrong time or place are examples of incompetent questioning. Additionally, good questioning attempts to elicit *worthwhile* information, that is, information relevant to the questioner's aims. For instance, a doctor asking her new patient's favourite songs while diagnosing her condition does not exercise good questioning (assuming the patient's music tastes are irrelevant to her condition). Finally, a competent questioning skill does not always translate to successfully eliciting the target information, since the latter may depend on factors beyond the questioner's control (recall that Henry's bad luck in being in barn facade county does not take away his visual competence).

Now, let us consider what makes for a good pedagogical questioning. We have mentioned that most questions that the teacher asks are not Common Questions; in other words, teachers tend to ask questions whose answers they already know. Consider first what we could call "Discussion Questions", which are usually used during lectures and discussions as thinking prompts for students. This would include literal questions that have specific answers and trigger memorization, inferential questions that challenge the students to process the given information and develop their own reasoning, and metacognitive questions that call for the students' reflection on their own thinking (Fusco 2012: 15–18). In asking these questions, the teacher elicits information not for her own epistemic needs, but for her students' (Watson 2018*a*: 360–1). Thus, while Common Questions are good insofar as the questioner is competent in eliciting the information *she* needs, Discussion Questions are good insofar as the questioner (teacher) is competent in eliciting the information needed by the *questioned*, in this case the students. This involves a disposition to have good judgment about what information is worthwhile for the students, which questions would best elicit this information, which questions are appropriate for the current epistemic competence of the students, among others. The widely influential Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom 1956) is a helpful guide for teachers in identifying the specific cognitive skills that they want students to learn, and designing questions appropriate for developing these skills.

Next, consider what we could call "Assessment Questions", the questions asked in formal (exam questions) and informal assessment (those asked during recaps of class discussions to check whether students are following). Like Discussion Questions, the teacher likely knows the answer to these questions, especially if she was the one who

[16]I need not commit to a stronger position that the teacher's question-asking virtue, like Watson's inquisitiveness, must have both a success and motivational component, although this position might be defended in a separate paper.

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made the exam or designed the past lectures.[17] But note that the teacher also learns something from the students' capacity (or lack of capacity) in answering these questions, namely, the extent of the students' mastery (or perhaps more modestly, memory) of the content. This qualifies what counts as good Assessment Questioning. In designing which information to elicit from her students, the teacher has to make judgments about the extent to which she could adequately assess her students' level of understanding based on their answers. An exam that is too easy or too difficult might not be considered a good exam, since it does not provide the teacher with useful and precise information about her students' performance, in addition to challenging their students too little or too much. A virtuous questioner (as far as Assessment Questions are concerned) not only knows how to formulate good formal assessment questions,[18] but also to spontaneously use informal assessment questions in the classroom to competently obtain information about their students' learning progress.

Note that Assessment and Discussion Questions need not be mutually exclusive. Sometimes, questions designed for assessment, such as short essay-type questions, activate the students' cognitive skills as they discuss their answers in written format, and questions designed to tickle the students' critical thinking in class also shows the teacher which students are on which level of understanding. The purpose of distinguishing between these questions is not to come up with a taxonomy of different kinds of questions asked by the teacher, but to distinguish how a teacher elicits information using these questions from how a typical person elicits information through Common Questions. This distinction serves to highlight how the success component of pedagogical questioning might be described.

Whichever the type of question is being used, the teacher's pedagogical questioning disposition can also be virtuous by being characteristically epistemically motivated. Consider a teacher asking good questions that are too difficult for the students to answer just so she could show off her own knowledge and feel good about herself, or a teacher asking good questions to students whom she perceives not to be prepared enough for those questions since she likes embarrassing her students in front of their peers. These are just two examples of *insincerely* asking good questions. In contrast, a virtuous teacher would ask good questions with *sincerity*, where sincerity is understood in terms of a desire for the student to learn. She asks these questions for the sake of students' learning and epistemic flourishing.

6. Final clarifications

I end this paper with some clarifications. This account of pedagogical virtues is not meant to be some sort of Aristotelian definition that signifies the essence of pedagogical

[17]The teacher might not necessarily know the answers to all Discussion and Assessment Questions. Consider higher-level and open-ended questions such a "Do you agree or disagree with how this theory addresses the problem? And why?" which can have a wide range of different possible responses, some of which the teacher cannot anticipate even given her knowledge of the content. Two points remain here though: the teacher asking these good questions still does not seem to be "inquisitive", and the purpose for asking these questions – and the standard by which we evaluate whether these questions are good – is to elicit the students' thinking so that they learn well. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for requesting clarification on this point.

[18]The educational literature is rich with discussions on what makes assessment questions good. Shilo (2015) and Fuhrman (2018) are recent papers on good essay questions and good multiple choice questions, respectively.

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virtues by distinguishing it from other intellectual (but "non-pedagogical") virtues. Rather, it aims to identify the conditions under which intellectual virtues may become pedagogical, that is, how they contribute to the goal of teaching. This attention to the manifestation of virtues in teaching does not involve a claim that these virtues are only possessed by teachers.

To clarify, let us revisit Sosa's (1991) concept of virtue as something's excellence in fulfilling its function. A knife is virtuous if it can cut what it is supposed to cut (bread, meat, vegetables) well. So does the teacher have pedagogical virtues when they teach excellently. However, that the sharpness of a knife makes it a virtuous knife does not mean that sharpness is a quality that only knives have. Most fish bones are sharp, but it would be absurd to say that fish bones are virtuous because they are sharp, just because this property makes knives virtuous. Similarly, people other than teachers can possess the qualities that we call pedagogical virtues, but perhaps we cannot call them pedagogical virtues because these dispositions do not manifest in a pedagogical setting.

The upshot is that intellectual virtues may have role-specific manifestations, and what I described in this paper are the pedagogical manifestations of intellectual virtues. While I focused on the role of these intellectual virtues in teaching, it does not mean that this role is all there is to such intellectual virtues.[19]

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