

Lecturers' and students' conceptions of authenticity in teaching and actual teacher actions and attributes students perceive as helpful

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Abstract This study investigated an under-explored area in the field of academic practice: the *meaning* of the complex notion of authenticity in teaching. Combining conceptual with empirical investigation, data included philosophical texts, repertory grid interviews with fifty-five lecturers and students from Law, Physics and English Literature, and fourteen focus groups with forty-six students. Philosophical conceptions were compared to those held by students and lecturers. Qualitative and quantitative analyses of repertory grids revealed differences in experts'/philosophers' and lay-people's conceptions of authenticity and additionally showed how lecturers' and students' conceptions of authenticity in teaching differed from their conceptions of teaching effectiveness. Focus groups identified linkages between authenticity in teaching and actual teacher actions and attributes that students perceive as being conducive to their learning. The findings enhance the meaning of authenticity, show how it matters in university teaching and offer a hitherto lacking theoretical foundation for further research.

Keywords Authenticity · Authenticity in teaching · Repertory grids · Mixed-method research

Introduction

Authenticity has been described as a widespread ethical ideal (e.g., Taylor 1991; Vannini and Williams 2009; Varga 2011) and recent years have witnessed an outpouring of publications on the theme. Much of this literature is concerned with how we should approach

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our personal lives (e.g., Legere 2007; Russ 2007) but increasingly authenticity is considered also within the context of work (e.g., Fleming 2009; Mazutis and Slawinski 2008) including academic practice (e.g., Barnett 2011; Dillard 2006; Nixon 2008; Vannini 2007) and, specifically, teaching (e.g., Barnett 2004; Brook 2009; Chickering et al. 2006; Cranton 2001; Laursen 2005; Nixon 2007; Palmer 1998).

While exploring the reasons for this heightened interest in authenticity is beyond the scope of this paper (for a discussion see, for example, Kreber 2010), this article is concerned with a major shortcoming of some of this work. A serious limitation, we argue, is that few authors make explicit what precisely it is they mean by ‘authenticity’ and thus the concept, despite its intuitive appeal within popular culture and work contexts, has remained little understood. Those who do make their conceptions explicit often construe authenticity rather narrowly as that which corresponds to the “real world” (we return to this particular view later). But even more philosophically-inspired accounts of authenticity tend to be informed by only one or two theorists of similar philosophical orientations. At times philosophically inspired accounts of authenticity are also presented in somewhat simplistic ways, as in “it means that what you see is what you get” (Chickering et al. 2006, p. 8). In all cases the authors refrain from venturing into a discussion of the inherent complexity of the notion of authenticity. Most certainly authenticity refers to something much more than “being true to oneself”, but taking this as a starter, what does this phrase actually mean? Indeed, Vannini (2007) once observed in the context of studying the authenticity of American academics that an “important and widely recurrent criticism of the concept of authenticity is that it is difficult to define and that it suffers from inextricable ties to various ideologies and philosophies” (p. 65).

Moreover, very few studies explore the actual meaning of authenticity empirically (Vannini and Williams 2009). Those that do tend to take a phenomenological approach trying to understand authenticity through the lived experience of individuals. While exploring academics’ actual lived experience of moving towards greater authenticity (e.g., Cranton and Carusetta 2004a, b) allows for deeper insight into the emotions, challenges and rational processes that the struggle for authenticity might entail, the findings from such phenomenological investigations are often not interpreted in reference to how philosophers have made sense of this notion. This, we suggest, is to neglect a vast source of already available ‘data’ on the meaning of authenticity.

Our study addressed these shortcomings by exploring the meaning of authenticity through an approach that combined philosophical analysis with empirical investigation. Sternberg (1990) argued that in order to gain deeper insight into complex phenomena that are assumed to have profound meaning in our lives but remain insufficiently understood it is helpful to pay attention to *both* the personal conceptions that exist in the minds of lay-people and the formal conceptions developed by experts or specialists. He further advised that it is instructive, when studying such intricate phenomena, to explore whether and, if so, how they are seen to be similar or different from related constructs. This led to his well-known investigations exploring how lay-people, compared to specialists, understood the similarities and differences between wisdom, intelligence and creativity. Note that he did not explore how these people understood their own experience of becoming wiser, more intelligent or more creative (although some of his respondents may have drawn on such personal experiences) but how they understood the *meaning* of these concepts given their exposure to wise, intelligent and creative people (for example through the popular media, biographies, personal contacts, etc.). Following Sternberg’s (1990) lead, we explored, firstly, how lecturers and students from Law, Physics and English literature (who for the purposes of our study qualified as lay-people), compared to philosophers and educationists who had shared their conceptions of authenticity in publications, understood the notion of

authenticity in relation to teaching. We explored secondly, how, in the minds of lecturers and students, authenticity in teaching is construed similarly and differently from teaching effectiveness. Six questions guided our study:

- (1) What formal conceptions of authenticity in university teaching emerge from an analysis of relevant philosophical texts/experts' views?
- (2) What are students' and lecturers' personal conceptions of authenticity in the context of teaching?
- (3) How do lecturers and students see the relationship between authenticity in teaching and teaching effectiveness, and can differences be observed between lecturers and students?
- (4) How do the conceptions of lecturers and students compare to the formal conceptions of authenticity identified in the first phase of the study (see #1) and can differences be observed between lecturers and students?
- (5) What teacher actions and attributes do students perceive as being conducive to their learning, and are these linked to authenticity in university teaching?
- (6) How can this study of *conceptions* of authenticity in university teaching inform future research and how does authenticity matter in the practical context of teaching?

By investigating the 'meaning' of authenticity in the context of teaching, rather than lived experience of authenticity, the study addressed a *theoretical* problem. However, the findings lead to a deeper understanding of the *practice* of teaching. Supported by a research grant from the Higher Education Academy in the UK,¹ the study is unique in its rich data set, thorough in its combined philosophical and empirical approach, and significant in its provision of a conceptual framework that serves to enhance clarity about the *multifaceted* meaning of authenticity and its value in the context of university teaching. It also offers guidance for further research in this area which, as was demonstrated in the introduction, has been recognised as important in our times.

Exploring the meaning of authenticity through conceptual analysis

The method for the conceptual investigation was a comprehensive comparative review and interpretation of relevant literature on 'authenticity', leading to an initial framework. We read widely moving from the educational literature directly concerned with "authenticity in teaching" (e.g., Barnett 2004; Brook 2009; Chickering et al. 2006; Cranton 2001; Grimmet and Neufeld 1994; Laursen 2005; Palmer 1998), to literature discussing the process of human development towards self-authorship through dialogue, relations and critical self-reflection (e.g., Baxter-Magolda 1999; Freire 1971; Kegan 1994), to the wider philosophical literature including scholars such as Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Buber, Sartre, and eventually, the work of Noddings, Nussbaum, Heidegger, Adorno, Williams and Taylor. In this process we also encountered the literature on analytic philosophy of education specifically that explored notions of human being and authenticity in relation to education, teaching and learning (e.g., Bonnett 1978; Bonnett and Cuypers 2003; Cooper 1983; Hirst and White 1998).

Although the literature on authenticity is variegated, the reviewed texts could be assigned to one or more of the following three broad perspectives: the existential, the critical and the communitarian, associated most closely with the work of Heidegger (1962),

¹ 'Achieving successful graduate outcomes', 2006.

Adorno (2003) and Taylor (1991), respectively. We then considered what the more specialised notion of ‘authenticity in teaching’ might mean when interpreted in relation to these three philosophical perspectives.

The *existential perspective* helps us to understand authenticity as a process of becoming aware of our own unique purposes and possibilities in life, and emphasises that we are authors of our own life, ‘beings-for-themselves’, who take responsibility for our actions and stand by our inner commitments (Malpas 2003). Academics who engage in teaching authentically have a genuine interest in their own development and regularly question the assumptions underlying their personal teaching practice as well as the larger context in which teaching takes place. They avoid complacency in their professional lives and are willing to challenge themselves. They also avoid compliance by openly contesting institutional practices or larger policy initiatives they do not agree with.

The *critical perspective* suggests that this can happen only through reflective critique, whereby we realise how our ways of thinking and acting are influenced by assumptions, values and beliefs that we uncritically assimilated at an earlier time and now take for granted (Sherman 2003). These same normative ways of thinking about and enacting our teaching may not be conducive to our own well-being as academics, let alone the well-being, learning and development of students. Authenticity, understood from this perspective, involves recognising power relations that systematically distort our perceptions (Adorno 2003/1964; Varga 2011) through critical reflection and critical self-reflection.

Finally, the *communitarian perspective* reminds us that authenticity is not something to be achieved in isolation of the wider social context one is part of. In contrast to a widespread understanding of authenticity as the expression of that which is creative and original in each of us, and hence, it has been argued, is potentially about our narcissistic pursuit of private ends without any regard of the consequences of these pursuits for others (e.g., Potter 2010; Varga 2011), Taylor (1989, 1991) helpfully points out that only by also acknowledging our social interrelatedness can authenticity become significant to the human condition. Authenticity thus demands recognition of the fact that we are part of a professional community of teachers by whose socially constructed and historically evolved norms, values and ideals we are already bound and shaped (e.g., Taylor 1991). Authenticity in teaching therefore involves placing teachers’ individual reflective pursuits within a wider horizon of shared ideals in higher education teaching. Specifically, we suggest that authentic engagement in teaching is linked to the shared ideal of recognizing the importance of doing what is in the important interests of students, and thus of supporting the students’ authenticity or flourishing (Kreber 2013).

Highlighting authenticity as important to student learning is no longer a new idea. However, two broad strands to previous work on authenticity in relation to higher education pedagogy should be distinguished at this stage. On the one hand, and as noted in the introduction, there is the by now very popular perspective that associates authenticity in teaching with pedagogies that are situated within, or correspond to, the ‘real world’ or appropriate social and disciplinary contexts (e.g., Barab et al. 2000; Neumann et al. 1996; Sutherland and Markauskaite 2012; Wang et al. 2012). The idea is that in such “real world” contexts, particularly if the learning tasks are *perceived* by students as ‘authentic’ (Petraglia 1998), students become more engaged in their learning. This is one plausible interpretation but one that while informed by constructivist theories of learning is not principally inspired by existential philosophy. Work associated with the ‘correspondence view’ of authenticity (Splitter 2009) is concerned principally with the technical aspects of the teaching process and the cognitive or intellectual aspects of student learning in contexts they perceive as corresponding to the real world.

In recent years a second strand of work on authenticity in relation to higher education pedagogy has been emerging, one that emphasises the ‘ontological turn’ (Barnett 2004; Dall’Alba and Barnacle 2007), which brings with it a broader set of purposes for university teaching. Concern lies no longer merely with whether higher education affects what and how students *know*, and what they can *do* with this acquired knowledge, but also, and importantly, with whom they are *becoming*. The existential but also critical and communitarian perspectives on authenticity are all consistent with this second strand, whereby the focus is on the *being* of the person engaged in the teaching (and likewise the *being* and becoming of the student). The present study is associated with this second strand of work. However, within this second strand, or *being* perspective of authenticity, what has been notably lacking is an explicit account of the link between authenticity in teaching and the fostering of authentic *being* in students. The reciprocal nature of authenticity has been noted by several scholars (e.g., Brookfield 2005; Buber 1958; Eagleton 2007; Nixon 2008; Nussbaum 2004; Taylor 1991) but has not been explicitly acknowledged for the relationship between teaching and learning. Jarvis hints at it when he comments that “Authentic action is to be found when individuals freely act in such a way that they try to foster the growth and development of each other’s being. ...” (Jarvis cited in Cranton 2001, p. 84), but he does not say quite enough. It is particularly the communitarian perspective on authenticity outlined above that helps us gain a first glimpse of this relationship.

Summary findings from conceptual analysis

Thirteen features of authenticity emerged from the literature, which were interpreted for the context of teaching (see Table 1). Different groupings of these features allow for the identification of six broad dimensions (Kreber and Klampfleitner 2011). Some of these Dimensions are distinguished only by subtle degrees of emphasis and are not distinct, therefore. These dimensions (A to F) are conceptually linked to the three broad perspectives discussed: the existential, the critical and the communitarian. Table 1 summarises the findings in relation to the first research question and represents the theoretical framework that guided the empirical investigation. It is the empirical part we turn to next, addressing research questions two to five.

Method of empirical inquiry

Our sample consisted of forty-six undergraduate students (23 females, 23 males) and nine lecturers (4 females, 5 males) in Physics, Law and English literature recruited from the same research intensive university in the UK. Students were drawn from nine different courses the lecturers were teaching.

In order to answer the second research question (“What are students’ and lecturers’ personal conceptions of authenticity in teaching?”) both students and teachers participated in repertory grid interviews. The repertory grid technique was developed by psychologist George Alexander Kelly in the context of psychotherapeutic practice in the mid 1950s and is based on a set of assumptions now known as Personal Construct Theory (Kelly 1955), the latter informed by a philosophical position called Constructive Alternativism. Kelly, and many contemporary constructivist psychologists employing repertory grids in the context of either counselling or for research purposes, assumed that individuals make sense of their world by classifying events according to their perceived similarity and difference.

Table 1 Dimensions, features and perspectives of authenticity

Dimensions of authenticity	Formal features of authenticity	Perspectives
A Being sincere, candid or honest	<i>Feature 3</i> Making educational decisions and acting in ways that are in the important interest of students <i>Feature 4</i> Presentation of a genuine Self as teacher (being candid, genuine) <i>Feature 9</i> Consistency between values and actions	Existential and communitarian
B Being 'true to oneself' (e.g., in a Heideggerian sense)	<i>Feature 7</i> Care for what one's life as a teacher is to be <i>Feature 8</i> Reflecting on purposes (and on one's own unique possibilities; those that <i>matter most</i>) in education and teaching <i>Feature 9</i> Consistency between values and actions <i>Feature 12</i> Self-knowledge and confronting the truth about oneself	Existential
C Being 'true to oneself' (e.g., in a critical social theory or Adorno sense)	<i>Feature 11</i> Self-knowledge and being defined by oneself (rather than by others' expectations) <i>Feature 12</i> Self-knowledge and confronting the truth about oneself <i>Feature 13</i> Critically reflecting on how certain norms and practices have come about	Critical
D Constructing an identity around 'horizons of significance'	<i>Feature 3</i> Making educational decisions and acting in ways that are in the important interest of students <i>Feature 10</i> Self-definition in dialogue around horizons of significance	Communitarian
E Care for the subject, students, and interest in engaging students with the subject around ideas that matter	<i>Feature 1</i> Care for students <i>Feature 2</i> Care for the subject and interest in engaging students with the subject around ideas that matter <i>Feature 5</i> Conceptually linked to constructive developmental pedagogy <i>Feature 6</i> Promoting the "authenticity" of others (at least their learning and possibly their development in a larger sense)	Existential and Communitarian (and to an extent 'correspondence view')

Table 1 continued

Dimensions of authenticity	Formal features of authenticity	Perspectives
F A ‘ <i>process of becoming</i> ’ sustained through critical reflection on core beliefs and premises	<p><i>Feature 8</i> Reflecting on purposes (and on one’s own unique possibilities; those that <i>matter most</i>) in education and teaching</p> <p><i>Feature 11</i> Self-knowledge and being defined by oneself (rather than by others’ expectations)</p> <p><i>Feature 12</i> Self-knowledge and confronting the truth about oneself</p> <p><i>Feature 13</i> Critically reflecting on how certain norms and practices have come about</p>	Existential and Critical

The same feature relate to more than one dimension (see features 3, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13). The bold font in the right hand column indicates that this perspective corresponds strongly to the features listed

The technique involves eliciting from respondents verbal bipolar statements about how they perceive the similarities and differences between certain key ‘elements’ of a particular domain of experience (Kelly 1955). In this study the domain of experience was university teaching and the key ‘elements’ were different teacher roles. Each role constitutes an ‘element’ that is then recorded into the grid. The repertory grids we worked with featured nine different teacher roles (see Fig. 1): ‘a really good teacher’ (was featured twice), ‘a really bad teacher’ (was featured twice), ‘a typical teacher’ (was featured twice), ‘an authentic teacher’, ‘an inauthentic teacher’ and ‘my teacher in this course’. For each role the student was asked to think of an actual teacher he or she knew who, in his or her mind, fit this role particularly well. On the basis of comparisons of three different teacher roles (which roles to compare was determined in advance by the researchers and held constant across all fifty-five participants—in Fig. 1 these roles are marked by an X), the student then created personal bipolar constructs as in: “these two teachers are ‘Confident in relation to what they teach’ (1) *versus* the third teacher is ‘Confused and not confident’”. A Likert Scale was applied to each construct whereby the first pole represented a rating of 1 (or 2) and the second or opposite pole a rating of 5 or (4). This same process of personal construct generation was repeated six times, each time with a different triad of teacher roles. An example of a repertory grid in process (with the first two constructs completed) is offered in Fig. 1.

In addition to the six constructs generated by each respondent, we included five constructs that we directly derived from Baxter-Magolda’s (1999) principles of a Constructive Developmental Pedagogy. We called these our “supplied” constructs, and these were shared by all research participants. The student then rated all the nine elements in relation to each of the eleven constructs (the six generated and the five supplied ones) on the Likert Scale. An identical procedure was used with the nine lecturers except that the grids of lecturers obviously did not include the element “my teacher in this course”. This was replaced by the two elements “my present self as a teacher” and “my ideal self” (Kreber and Klampfleitner 2011).

Repertory grids were first analysed quantitatively. In order to find out whether teachers and students attached to the ‘authentic teacher’ a positive or negative value, we explored

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9
	A really good university teacher (Pete)	A really good teacher (Ann)	A typical teacher (Chris)	A typical teacher (George)	An authentic Teacher (Phil)	An inauthentic Teacher (Tony)	My university teacher in this module	A really bad teacher (Sam)	A really bad teacher (Diane)
In what important way are two of these three teachers (<i>marked by an X</i>) similar in how they engage with teaching that makes them thereby different from the third? (Please apply a scale from 1 to 5 to the two poles of your bipolar construct, and then assign ratings to each teacher role)									
C1: <i>They share at what they teach and how, what they teach, is what is further study (1)</i> <i>versus</i> <i>how often what they teach (5)</i>	X 1	X 1	X 5	3	1	5	3	5	5
C2: <i>Confident in what to teach (1)</i> <i>versus</i> <i>Confident not to explain (5)</i>	X 1	2	2	X 2	1	5	2	4	X 5
C3:		X	X				X		
C4:		X		X	X				
C5:				X	X			X	
C6:				X		X	X		
C7: Is aware of and shows respect for where students are at in their thinking (1) <i>versus</i> does not (5)									
C8: Connects with students' experience (1) <i>versus</i> does not (5)									
C9: Models and practices the process of knowledge construction with students(1) <i>versus</i> does not (5)									
C10: Invites students to construct knowledge with hi or her (1) <i>versus</i> does not (5)									
C11: Cares about students (1) <i>versus</i> does not (5)									

Fig. 1 Example of a repertory grid with the first two personal constructs generated and rated

how close a match existed between the ratings they assigned to the ‘authentic teacher’ and the two ‘really good teachers’, between the ‘inauthentic teacher’ and the two ‘really bad teachers’, and between the ‘authentic teacher’ and the two ‘very bad teachers’. To this effect we calculated the ‘element distance or difference score’ (Jankowicz 2004), which, when converted into percentages and subtracted from 100 %, provides the degree of match or similarity between two particular grid elements (e.g., ‘authentic teacher’ and ‘really good teacher’). Since there was not just one but two “really good teachers” their respective percentage similarity scores were averaged, and this was done also for the two “really bad teachers”. These calculations were first carried out for each of the 46 student grids individually. Following this the average similarity scores for the three pairs of teacher roles were calculated for each of the three disciplinary groups and eventually for the entire student sample. The same analysis was carried out for the nine grids from lecturers. Lecturers’ and students’ percentage similarity scores for the three pairs of teacher roles were then compared descriptively.

We also considered the five constructs that were shared across all fifty-five participants in this study (see Fig. 1, C7–C11), focusing on how the ‘authentic teacher’ was rated on each. Here we explored possible differences between students and teachers as well as across disciplines.

To answer the third research question (“How do lecturers and students see the relationship between the notion of authenticity in teaching and the notion of teaching effectiveness, and can differences be observed between lecturers and students”?) we carried out a *qualitative* differential content analysis (Jankowicz 2004) of all the constructs that the forty-six students had generated (N = 276). Given that the grid elements that were compared in this grid task included good and poor teachers, the thematic categories that emerged from the content analysis were conceived of as representing different aspects of teaching effectiveness. We then explored (1) which aspects of teaching effectiveness were most important in the mind of students, (2) whether there were disciplinary differences in how important different aspects were perceived to be and (3) whether there was a connection between the aspects of teaching effectiveness that emerged from the analysis and the way students had rated the authentic teacher role. A separate content analysis was carried out for the 54 constructs generated by lecturers. Eventually the results of the two content analyses were compared in order to identify: (1) the aspects of teaching effectiveness that were most important in the minds of each group (i.e., lecturers and students) and (2) how each group saw the relationship between teaching effectiveness and authenticity in teaching. The latter also involved determining which and how many of the 276 individual constructs that were elicited from students were closely associated with authenticity (i.e., showed a rating of 1 or 2 for the authentic teacher), and this association was also established for the 54 constructs of teachers.

With the aim of answering the fourth question (“How do the conceptions of lecturers and students compare to the formal conceptions of authenticity identified in the conceptual phase of the study and do lecturers and students differ in the formal conceptions they consider most important”) each of the constructs that was shown to be closely associated with authenticity in teaching (218 for students and 41 for lecturers) was coded for whether or not it represented one or more of the formal dimensions of authenticity we had identified through the earlier analysis of the literature (see Table 1). The total number of constructs that related to any of the six dimensions of authenticity (A to F) was then determined. This allowed us to ascertain the relationship, as perceived by students and lecturers, between the dimensions of authenticity identified through an analysis of relevant philosophical literature and the aspects of teaching effectiveness that had emerged through the differential

content analysis. By converting total numbers into percentage scores, the data from students and lecturers could be compared.

In order to address the fifth question (“What teacher actions and attributes do students perceive as being conducive to their learning and are these linked to authenticity in teaching?”) focus group interviews were performed with all students who completed repertory grids. There were fourteen focus groups in total, each with two to six participants. Interviews lasting between 35 and 45 min were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The present analysis concentrates on the data relating to actual teacher actions and attributes that the students perceived to be helpful to their learning.

Empirical findings

Question Two: What are students’ and lecturers’ personal conceptions of authenticity in teaching?

Table 2 reports the average percentage similarity scores (that is the degree of match) for both lecturers and students for the three sets of teacher roles that were compared.

The table reveals a general tendency among respondents to associate authenticity in teaching with the ‘really good teacher’ and inauthenticity with the ‘really bad teachers’. A notably lower association was found between authenticity and the ‘really bad teacher’. However these are general tendencies revealed by the group data and not a conception that was consistently found across all participants. Indeed, of the total of 276 constructs that the students had generated, surprising ratings for the ‘authentic teacher’ were identified with thirty-two constructs (12 %). These constructs are featured in Table 3.

It should be emphasised, however, that not one of the forty-six students viewed the ‘authentic teacher’ exclusively in negative terms and 50 % of the students (twenty-three) viewed the authentic teacher exclusively in positive terms (that is on all eleven constructs in their grid). Of the other twenty-three students, seventeen viewed the authentic teacher in negative terms only on a single construct, and only three students (student 54, 28M from law; student 77, 26F from law and student 103, 20M from physics) generated as many as three constructs each that described the authentic teacher (they knew) in negative terms. These negative ratings of the ‘authentic teacher’ appear like ‘glitches’, counter-intuitive oddities that do not fit easily into an overall profile of how the students in this study construed ‘the authentic teacher’. Nonetheless, ignoring these oddities would leave under-explored the question of whether there might be something in these ‘oddities’ that could add to our understanding of the complex notion of authenticity in teaching.

Table 2 Average percentage similarity score (‘degree of match’) of three sets of teacher roles (N = 3 for lecturers per disciplinary group, N = 15 for students in physics, N = 8 for students in English, N = 23 for students in law)

	‘Really good teacher’ and ‘authentic teacher’		‘Really bad teacher’ and ‘inauthentic teacher’		‘Really bad teacher’ and ‘authentic teacher’	
	Lecturers %	Students %	Lecturers %	Students %	Lecturers %	Students %
Physics	78	76	81	79	32	36
English	68	70	63	68	48	45
Law	68	76	83	72	45	36
Across disciplines	71	74	78	73	42	39

Table 3 Thirty-two constructs (12 %) on which the authentic teacher was described in negative terms*Law (15 Constructs)*

- (79, 47F, C2) “Followed the script (literally)—could be doing it for a video”
 (59, 30M, C4) “tended to be unwilling to accept opinions different from own”
 (54, 28M, C1, C3, C6) “presented information in a matter of fact way”, “was not a leading authority in the field”, “condescending”
 (140, 18F, C5) “did not use any visual stimulation to help you understand the structure of the lecture”
 (135, 30F, C6) “read notes from the text while teaching”
 (121, 21F, C3) “paid uneven attention to different parts of the syllabus”
 (85, 20F, C2, C4) “did not put things into context, which makes it harder to relate to and remain interested”, “receives less respect for teaching methods”
 (70, 19F, C1) “talked about things a bit more historic which goes over the heads of much of the class”
 (192, 35M, C2, C3) “stuck to the course syllabus”; “remained distant from students”
 (146, 34F, C4) “was more academic”; “referred to knowledge from books”
 (77, 26F, C6) “put across his or her political beliefs and ideas”

English (6 constructs)

- (107, 22F, C1) “a bit rambling and less organised as more led by the group and open to discussion”
 (116, 22F, C4) “classes, teaching and arguments that were unstructured”
 (108, 23F, C4) “was not confident”
 (104, 24F, C1, C5) “unclear and was losing track when teaching”; “abstract thinker and theory-based”
 (14, 21F, C2) “gave only his own opinion”

Physics (11 constructs)

- (103, 20M, C1, C3, C4) “does not use fun examples”, “does not care/does not notice how well students are learning”, “teaching style that is really boring and detached”
 (37, 21F, C4) “did not speak clearly at times (and sometimes too fast)”
 (39, 21M, C5) “cannot understand what someone who doesn’t know the material yet would find difficult”
 (124, 24M, C4) “less personable outside class one-to-one and upheld a teacher pretence”
 (10, 22F, C4) “does not break the course up—all concepts are given equal emphasis”
 (122, 22M, C1, C3) “explained the subject well for passing the exam”; “required a lot of work”
 (111, 20M, C6) “not checking if material is understood”
 (110, 19F, C2) “less explanation and hypothetical examples”

Table 4 shows how students and teachers rated the ‘authentic teacher’ on the five supplied constructs. Overall, we can infer from Table 4 that, in the minds of lecturers and students, the ‘authentic teacher’ practices Baxter-Magolda’s (1999) principles of a ‘constructive pedagogical pedagogy’. A comparison of means revealed a statistical difference ($p < .05$) in how the authentic teacher was rated on the construct “Connects with students’ experience”, with the student group associating the ‘authentic teacher’ more strongly with this construct than the teacher group. A comparison of means for the three disciplinary student groups yielded no significant difference in how they rated the authentic teacher on any of the five supplied constructs.

Question Three: “How do lecturers and students see the relationship between authenticity in teaching and teaching effectiveness, and can differences be observed between lecturers and students?”

Table 5 presents the results of the qualitative differential construct analysis of the 276 constructs the students had generated (altogether there were actually 279 constructs as

Table 4 Means and standard deviation for how “the authentic teacher” was rated on each of the five supplied constructs

	Teachers (N = 9)		Students (N = 46)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
C7: “Aware of and shows respect for where students are at in their thinking (1) <i>versus</i> does not” (5).”	2.33	1.00	1.89	0.97
C8: “Connects with students’ experience (1) <i>versus</i> does not” (5).”	2.77*	0.83	1.93*	1.01
C9: “Models and practices the process of knowledge construction with students (1) <i>versus</i> does not” (5).”	2.55	1.13	2.00	1.17
C10: “Invites students to construct knowledge with him or her (1) <i>versus</i> does not” (5).	2.44	1.42	2.43	1.16
C11: “Cares about students (1) <i>versus</i> does not” (5).	2.11	0.92	1.67	0.84

* $p < .05$ ($t = -2.32$)

three constructs offered two statements in one and hence were separated into two). The table lists (1) examples of the 276 constructs for each aspect of teaching effectiveness that emerged from the analysis, (2) the total number of constructs relating to each aspect of teaching effectiveness and also (3) how many of these were associated with authenticity. The number in square brackets next to each construct refers to the rating that was assigned to the ‘authentic teacher’.

Table 5 indicates some differences across disciplinary groups. A significantly higher proportion of constructs generated by law students, compared to constructs generated by physics and English students, addressed “Aspect V. Flexibility, responsiveness, confidence and personality”, while a significantly smaller proportion of constructs generated by law students addressed “Aspect I. Caring for teaching, caring for students and availability”.

More importantly, perhaps, a similar content analysis carried out for the 54 constructs generated by the nine lecturers (altogether there were actually 57 constructs as again three constructs offered two statements in one and thus were separated into two) revealed identical categories (Kreber and Klampfleitner 2011). On one level this clearly suggests that the six aspects of teaching effectiveness have some significance in the minds of these students and lecturers. On another level, it needs to be acknowledged as a possibility that the particular grid task delimited the range of meaning in the constructs that could be generated, thereby making it more likely for the constructs to belong to a limited number of categories. Although the aspects of teaching effectiveness themselves were identical for the two groups, Table 6 shows variation in the extent to which particular aspects played a role in the minds of students and teachers.

Question Four: “How do the conceptions of lecturers and students compare to the formal conceptions of authenticity identified in the first phase of the study and do lecturers and students differ in the formal conceptions they consider most important?”

Table 7 shows that the two aspects of teaching effectiveness that the lecturers most closely associated with authenticity in teaching (across all six formal dimensions A to F) were *Aspect I*. “Caring for teaching, caring for students and availability” and *Aspect II*. “Interest in, commitment to and enthusiasm for subject and desired effect on students”. The students also saw linkages between authenticity in teaching and *Aspects I and II* but they saw an even greater association with *Aspect III*. “Preparation for teaching and style of delivery”. Interestingly, students also associated *Aspect V*. “Flexibility, responsiveness and

Table 5 Differential content analysis of constructs generated by 46 student respondents (constructs elicited on the basis of 9 grid elements^a) by gender and discipline; six aspects of teaching effectiveness identified; total number of constructs = 279

	Male	Female	Physics	Law	English
<i>I. Caring for teaching and students</i>					
Sum of constructs: 54 (19.4 %)	31	23	23	21	10
Strongly associated with authenticity = 47	23.7 %	15.5 %	25.6 %	14.9 %	20.8 %
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C4: (2, Physics, Ellen ^b , 22, M) enjoys teaching (1) <i>versus</i> sees teaching as an obligation (5) [1] ^c					
C4: (79, Law, Joyce, 47, f) appears to value teaching an enterprise (1) <i>versus</i> appear to be teaching because they have to (5) [1]					
C5: (97, Physics, Ellen, 23, F) ability to teach (1) <i>versus</i> inability to teach (5) [1]					
C1: (2, Physics, Ellen, 22, M) have an interest in student learning (1) <i>versus</i> interest exclusively in delivering the material (5) [2]					
C1: (19, Physics, Ellen, 23, M) engaging with students, care about students' learning) (1) <i>versus</i> well presented, but don't really care about students' learning (5) [2]					
C2: (147, Law, Pat, 20, M) interested in students' success and gets personal satisfaction from it (1) <i>versus</i> far less interested in students' success, less personal investment in students' success (5) [1]					
Subcategory ^d : availability and approachability					
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C5: (37, Physics, Tom, 21, F) make you feel you can approach them with questions or queries (1) <i>versus</i> do not make you feel you can easily approach them for help (5) [1]					
C6: (75, Law, Joyce, 19, f) more prepared to give time to students (1) <i>versus</i> less prepared to give time to students (5) [2]					
C6: (148, Physics, Tom, 23, M) Happy to discuss subject matter and other topics in their own time (1) <i>versus</i> difficult to communicate with outside of class (5) [1]					
<i>II. Interest in, enthusiasm for and commitment to subject and desired effects on students</i>					
Sum of constructs: 44 (15.8 %)	17	27	15	20	9
Strongly associated with authenticity = 41	13.0 %	18.2 %	16.7 %	14.2 %	18.8 %
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C2: (2, Physics, Ellen, 22, M) very engaged with material (1) <i>versus</i> not enthusiastic about material (5) [1]					
C6: (37, Physics, Tom, 21, F) shows interest and enthusiasm in own subject (1) <i>versus</i> does not show interest and enthusiasm in own subject (5) [1]					
C4: (64, Law, John, 18, F) passionate about subject (1) <i>versus</i> well informed, but not excited by the topic matter (5) [1]					
C6: (10, Physics, Ellen, 22, F) inspiring to students (you want to learn) (1) <i>versus</i> uninspiring (5) [3]					

Table 5 continued

	Male	Female	Physics	Law	English
C5: (108, English, Sam, 23, F) able to pass their enthusiasm/interest on to students (1) <i>versus</i> unable to pass their interest enthusiasm on to students (5) [1]					
C3: (115, English, Nancy, 22, F) successful in conveying passion for subject (1) <i>versus</i> don't really convey enthusiasm for subject (5) [1]					
Subcategory: subject knowledge					
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C2: (54, Law, John, 28, M) depth of knowledge (1) <i>versus</i> superficial knowledge (5) [2]					
C4: (111, Physics, Jim, 20, M) impressive expertise in their subject (1) <i>versus</i> lack of demonstration of 'brilliance' (5) [1]					
C5: (146, Law, Joyce, 34, F) broad knowledge in all areas of law (1) <i>versus</i> a lack of broad knowledge (5) [1]					
<hr/>					
<i>III. Preparation for teaching and style of delivery</i>					
Sum of constructs: 123 (44.1 %)	60	63	41	62	20
Strongly associated with authenticity = 86	45.8 %	42.6 %	45.6 %	44.0 %	41.7 %
<hr/>					
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C6: (38, Physics, Tom, 22, M) well prepared and thought out explanations, seems to have put a lot of effort into how to best explain the points (1) <i>versus</i> less thoughtful explanations, may be O.K. for some but not for all students (5) [1]					
C2: (12, English, Bob, 21, F) presents material in an accessible way (1) <i>versus</i> presents material in an inaccessible way (5) [2]					
C6: (120, Law, Pat, 20, M) comes prepared with a plan of action (1) <i>versus</i> improvises and seems relatively unprepared (5) [2]					
C2: (37, Physics, Tom, 21, F) grabs students' attention by talking to the class, changing speed and rhythm of speech (1) <i>versus</i> does not grab students' attention, speaks in monotone manner (5) [1]					
C5: (58, Law, John, 18, M) communicate clearly and effectively—even complex concepts (1) <i>versus</i> does not communicate clearly and effectively (5) [1]					
C1 (79, Law, Joyce, 47, f) good use of humour in teaching (1) <i>versus</i> poor use of humour in teaching—cynicism (5) [2]					
Subcategory: Interaction with students in class					
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C1: (37, Physics, Tom, 21, F) does strongly encourage student participation (1) <i>versus</i> do not strongly encourage student participation (5) [2]					
C5: (61, Law, John, 18, M) introduced interactive activities into lectures (questioning of students etc.) (1) <i>versus</i> did not encourage interaction and student involvement during lectures (5) [1]					
C5: (77, Law, Joyce, 26, f) ability to engage with the class, i.e., jokes, walk around class, get questions (1) <i>versus</i> just standing there lecturing (5) [1]					

Table 5 continued

	Male	Female	Physics	Law	English
Subcategory: structure and content of classes/course and use of example					
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C4: (38, Physics, Tom, 22, M) made an effort to include interesting and current examples that could be easily related to (1) <i>versus</i> bare minimum of examples, boring examples (5) [1]					
C2: (59, Law, John, 30, M) provides a clear and understandable structure in lectures (1) <i>versus</i> lectures are often unclear due to a lack of discernable structure (5) [2]					
C5: (70, Law, Joyce, 19, f) relevancy—tell students what they need to know to pass course—every lecture useful (1) <i>versus</i> irrelevant: goes off on tangent and spends distorted amount of time on different areas, spends most time covering subjects he likes (5) [1]					
	Male	Female	Physics	Law	English
<i>IV. Fostering independence in learning and knowledge of learning</i>	7	8	2	8	5
Sum of constructs: 15 (5.4 %)	5.3 %	5.4 %	2.2 %	5.7 %	10.4 %
Strongly associated with authenticity = 9					
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C2: (14, English, Bob, 21, F) encourage individual opinions (1) <i>versus</i> give you solely their opinions (5) [2]					
C4: (59, Law, John, 30, M) tend to be open to opinions different from their own (1) <i>versus</i> tend to be unwilling to accept opinions different from their own (5) [1]					
C4: (120, Law, Pat, 20, M) highlights controversy and encourages you to bring forth your opinions (1) <i>versus</i> would rather concentrate on what's certain (5) [1]					
C2: (104, English, Sam, 24, F) allowing for complexity/ambiguity (1) <i>versus</i> black-and-white thinking (5) [1]					
C5: (2, Physics, Ellen, 22M) is aware of how students understand the subject (1) <i>versus</i> can't pitch to the level of understanding of students (5) [1]					
C3: (147, Law, Pat, 20, M) interested in encouraging students to consider wider implications (1) <i>versus</i> interested only in covering the subject matter and not diverging (5) [1]					
	Male	Female	Physics	Law	English
<i>V. Flexibility, responsiveness, confidence and personality</i>	14	26	8	28	4
Sum of constructs: 40 (14.3 %)	10.7 %	17.6 %	8.9 %	19.9 %	8.3 %
Strongly associated with authenticity = 33					
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C3: (64, Law, John, 18, F) willing to change and react to parts that arise (1) <i>versus</i> stick to the exact lecture plan—no communication (5) [1]					
C3: (64, Law, John, 18, f) willing to change and react to parts that arise (1) <i>versus</i> stick to exact lecture plan—no communication (5) [1]					

Table 5 continued

	Male	Female	Physics	Law	English
C2: (107, English, Sam, 22, F) confidence (1) <i>versus</i> non-confidence (5) [1]					
C2: (141, Physics, Ellen, 23, M) confident at what they teach and how they teach the subject (confidence of lecturer) (1) <i>versus</i> confused/disoriented at what they teach and how (unconfident) (5) [1]					
C4: (61, Law, John, 18, M) display their personality in their lecturing style (1) <i>versus</i> presents a more reserved approach to lecturing which does not give an insight into the personality of the lecturer (5) [1]					
C4: (142, Law, Joyce, 28, f) give personal values and opinions (1) <i>versus</i> stick to hard facts (5) [1]					
Sum	Male	Female	Physics	Law	English
<i>VI. Integration of research and teaching</i>					
Sum of constructs: 3 (1.1 %)	2	1	1	2	0
Strongly associated with authenticity = 2	1.5 %	0.7 %	1.1 %	1.4 %	0.0 %
<i>Examples of specific constructs</i>					
C4: (36, Physics, Tom, 22, M) eager to tell you about their own research outside the lectures, related perhaps distantly to course (1) <i>versus</i> concentrated solely on the course material (5) [1]					
C3: (54, Law, John, 28, M) leading authority in their field, can bring their own position into lectures (1) <i>versus</i> not a leading authority (5) [4]					
C5: (64, Law, John, 18, F) excite students with ways in which they themselves are currently developing/working in their area (1) <i>versus</i> does not make students believe they are at forefront/cutting edge (5) [1]					
Sum	Male	Female	Physics	Law	English
Totals	279	148	90	141	48
	100.1 %	100.0 %	100.1 %	100.1 %	100.0 %

^a The nine elements in this grid analysis were: 2 *really good* university teachers, 2 *really bad* university teachers, 2 *typical* university teachers, *my university teacher in this course module*, an *authentic* university teacher, and an *inauthentic* university teacher

^b All names are pseudonyms. Indicates which teacher the student had

^c The number in square brackets refers to how the student rated the authentic teacher on this particular construct

^d The six general categories that emerged include 4 sub-categories. These represent particular aspects of the general categories that were mentioned frequently

Table 6 Comparison of importance attributed to themes emerging from differential content analysis of constructs generated by lecturers and students

	Constructs generated by lecturers (N = 57) (%)	Constructs generated by students (N = 279) (%)
<i>Aspect I.</i> Caring for teaching, caring for students and availability	26.3	19.4
<i>Aspect II.</i> Interest in, enthusiasm for and commitment to the subject and desired effects on students	19.3	15.8
<i>Aspect III.</i> Preparation for teaching and style of delivery	17.5	44.1
<i>Aspect IV.</i> Fostering independence in learning and knowledge of learning	15.7	5.4
<i>Aspect V.</i> Flexibility, responsiveness, confidence and personality	12.3	14.3
<i>Aspect VI.</i> Integration of research and teaching	8.8	1.1
Total	99	101

confidence” with authenticity in teaching while the teachers did not, and the lecturers associated *Aspect IV.* “Fostering independence in learning” with authenticity in teaching while the students did not.

Importantly, the formal dimensions of authenticity that both lecturers and students saw as most closely linked to teaching effectiveness (across *Aspect I to VI*) were Dimension A “Being sincere, candid or honest” and Dimension E “Care for the subject, students, and interest in engaging students with the subject around ideas that matter” (Table 7). We can infer from these results that the nine lecturers and forty-six students participating in this study perceived some similarities between authenticity in teaching and teaching effectiveness but did not construe the two concepts as being identical, suggesting that they carry distinct meanings in their minds.

Question Five: What teacher actions and attributes do students perceive as being conducive to their learning and are these linked to authenticity in teaching?

The content analysis of the focus group data resulted in thirty-six concrete actions and thirty attributes that students found to be particularly helpful to their learning (repetitions were avoided but subtle differences in statements were honoured) (Table 8). These were then thematically grouped by Dimensions of authenticity.

What is most striking about the identified actions and attributes is their strong compatibility with Baxter-Magolda’s three principles of a constructive developmental pedagogy (and hence Dimension E and also Dimension D). Baxter-Magolda (1999) argues that (1) ‘validating students as knowers’, (2) ‘connecting with the students’ experience’ and (3) ‘conceiving of learning as mutually constructing knowledge’ are key ways of supporting students’ development towards self-authorship. In addition, many attributes and actions were associated with Dimension A. Earlier we reported on a perceived close relationship between Dimensions A and E and aspects of teaching effectiveness identified through the repertory grid task (Table 7). However, Table 8 now suggests that teacher actions and attributes such as ‘wants you to learn and understand for yourself’, ‘makes you aware of what you are doing in life’, ‘believes in what she’s teaching’, ‘trusts students’, ‘is confident’, ‘admits mistakes’, ‘has no hierarchy’, or ‘wants to improve’, addressing Dimensions B, D and even C, are also clearly important to students.

Table 7 Relationship between teaching effectiveness (TE) and authenticity (Auth) based on those constructs that had demonstrated a high association with Auth (Lect = 41; Stud 218)

Dimensions of authenticity in teaching: → Aspects of teaching effectiveness (TE) ↓	A: Being sincere, candid or honest		B: Being 'true to oneself' (e.g., in a Heideggerian sense)		C: Being 'true to oneself' (e.g., in a critical social theory or Adorno sense)		D: Constructing an identity around 'horizons of significance'		E: Care for the subject, students, and interest in engaging students with the subject around ideas that matter		F: A 'process of becoming' sustained through critical reflection on core beliefs and premises		Total (extent to which a particular aspect of TE is associated with Auth, overall) Lect = 72, Stud = 260	
	Lect	Stud	Lect	Stud	Lect	Stud	Lect	Stud	Lect	Stud	Lect	Stud	Lect	Stud
Aspect I. Caring for teaching, caring for students and availability Lect, N = 13; Stud, N = 47	10	11	3	8	0	0	4	8	10	45	0	0	27	72
Aspect II. Interest in, enthusiasm for and commitment to the subject and desired effects on students Lect, N = 10; Stud, N = 41	4	11	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	74	0	0	8	86
Aspect III. Preparation for teaching and style of delivery Lect, N = 4; Stud, N = 86	1	3	2	1	0	0	1	0	6	8	2	0	12	12
Aspect IV. Fostering independence in learning and knowledge of learning Lect, N = 7; Stud, N = 9	1	23	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	16	1	0	16.7 %	4.6 %
Aspect V. Flexibility, responsiveness, confidence and personality Lect, N = 2; Stud, N = 33	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	3	44
Aspect VI. Integration of research and teaching Lect, N = 5; Stud, N = 2	18	52	8	15	1	0	10	8	31	185	4	0	5	3
Total (extent to which a particular dimension of Auth is associated with TE, overall) Lect = 72; Stud = 260	25.0 %	20.0 %	11.1 %	5.7.0 %	1.4 %	0 %	13.4 %	3.1 %	43.1 %	71.1 %	5.5 %	0 %	6.9 %	1.1 %
Percentages for TE and Auth are based on total reference counts for TE and Auth respectively														

Table 8 Summary of teacher actions and attributes students found to be most conducive to their learning (across nine courses, fourteen focus groups), linked to Dimensions of authenticity identified in this research

Actions	<i>Exist and Comm Dim A</i>	Exist <i>Dim B</i>	Critical <i>Dim C</i>	Comm <i>Dim D</i>	<i>Exist and Critical and Comm Dim E</i>	Exist and critical <i>Dim F</i>
Admits it when he does not know the answer	X	X				
The way she talks about the subject suggests that it's real to her	X	X				
Enhances the students' confidence					X	
Ensures you know that she is there for you					X	
Lets everyone have a say	X				X	
Expresses own perspective (opinion) on issues but acknowledges different perspectives (opinions)	X				X	
If she doesn't agree with you she prefers to discuss it rather than dismiss it'	X				X	
Encourages you to think of things in your life that will be affected by what you are learning		X			X	
Tries to get students to become aware of what they are doing in real life		X		X	X	
Encourages self-directed learning-work independently				X	X	
Encourages students taking responsibility for their learning				X	X	
Encourages you to do your <i>own</i> work				X	X	
Encourages us to learn things the right way—the way that is best for us individually				X	X	
Make sure you understand things <i>for yourself</i>				X	X	
Encourages us to learn from one another				X	X	
Encourages interaction, discussion and group work					X	
Opens your minds to different kinds of learning					X	
Recognises students' particular strengths and draw them out				X	X	
Challenges you, stretches you, opens your minds					X	
Makes an effort to explain things so that we can actually understand it					X	
Shows us how we can approach difficult questions					X	
Guides us through problems, builds on students' input to develop more complex ideas					X	
Draws on the students' experience, connecting with this experience					X	

Table 8 continued

Actions	<i>Exist and Comm Dim A</i>	Exist <i>Dim B</i>	Critical <i>Dim C</i>	Comm <i>Dim D</i>	<i>Exist and Critical and Comm Dim E</i>	Exist and critical <i>Dim F</i>
Shows how experts in the area think					X	
Tries to make you look at things in a new way					X	
Gives constructive formative feedback					X	
Offers prompt feedback					X	
Asks questions that requires real answers					X	
Checks on our learning constantly, want everybody to understand					X	
Collects feedback on her teaching as she wants to improve the course		X			X	
Engages with you individually					X	
Does not dictate from notes					X	
Encourages practical application					X	
Combines theory with real examples					X	
Is trying to keep learning lively and fun					(X)	
“Tells jokes the students actually find funny”					(X)	
<i>Attributes</i>						
Believes in what she is telling you	X	X				
Lets you see her as a person	X					
Has a conscience		X				
Is warm, open, honest and genuine	X				X	
Is not arrogant-not pretentious					X	
Has no hierarchy in class					X	
Is egalitarian					X	
Is very accepting of students' questions					X	
Has confidence in his ability		X	X			
Is interested in improving himself		X				
Deeply knowledgeable					X	
Respects students	X				X	
Trusts her students	X	X			X	
Conveys that she can learn as much from students as students can learn from her	X				X	
Lets you go your own way				X	X	
Is interested in the different perspectives that students bring					X	
Cares about students				X	X	
Is quite in touch with students; close to the students' experience					X	
Understands where students would experience difficulty					X	
Is able to communicate ideas to different individuals					X	

Table 8 continued

Actions	<i>Exist and Comm</i> <i>Dim A</i>	Exist <i>Dim B</i>	Critical <i>Dim C</i>	Comm <i>Dim D</i>	<i>Exist and Critical and Comm</i> <i>Dim E</i>	Exist and critical <i>Dim F</i>
Can adapt to what different students need					X	
Knows you by name					X	
Makes you feel relaxed and encouraged to talk in class and give your opinion					X	
Makes you feel comfortable about approaching him					X	
Loves what she does—really enthusiastic about the subject	X				X	
Really interested in <i>whatever</i> he is teaching-enthusiastic about life	X			X	X	
Deeply interested in what she’s teaching and wants to get these ideas across to students					X	
‘So keen in your learning that you actually want to learn!’					X	
Expects you to be involved, to stay focused					X	
It is important to her that you are learning and that you are enjoying what you are learning					X	

Summary and discussion of conceptual and empirical findings

We briefly revisit the findings addressing also the final question “How can this study of conceptions of authenticity in university teaching inform future research and how does authenticity matter in the practical context of teaching?”

The study showed that there are different conceptions of authenticity, even within the formal conceptions held by philosophers writing on the subject. Authenticity emerged as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Lay-people, here students and lecturers from Physics, Law and English Literature, hold conceptions of authenticity in teaching that are aligned most closely within Dimensions A (“Being sincere, candid or honest”) and E (“Care for the subject, students, and interest in engaging students with the subject around ideas that matter”). Linked to this is the finding that students and lecturers associated authenticity in teaching with practicing a ‘constructive developmental pedagogy’ (Table 4). Dimension D (“Constructing an identity around ‘horizons of significance’”) was addressed considerably less frequently in the constructs generated in the repertory grid task, and only by lecturers. The remaining three formal dimensions of authenticity (Dimensions B “Being ‘true to oneself in a Heideggerian sense”, C “Being ‘true to oneself in a critical social theory sense” and F “A ‘process of becoming’ sustained through critical reflection on core beliefs and premises”, see Table 1), *which relate most strongly to the existential and critical perspectives*, feature the least strongly in lay people’s conceptions of authenticity in teaching, and were also not closely associated with teaching effectiveness (Table 7). Although students (and teachers) perceived some commonality between authenticity and effectiveness in teaching, they did understand these as two distinct phenomena (Tables 5, 7). As for teaching effectiveness specifically, the same six aspects were addressed by the

constructs of students and teachers. The differences in percentages reported in Table 6 for “Fostering independence in learning” and “Preparation for teaching and style of delivery” would suggest that, on the whole and not surprisingly, the proportion of teachers with sophisticated theories of teaching (e.g., Fox 1983)—meaning personal theories that have a focus on students becoming independent learners rather than on teacher performance—was greater than the proportion of students with sophisticated theories of teaching. Note though that in the focus group interviews some students commented on the importance of teachers fostering independence in learning (Table 8).

The observation that students and teachers do not conceptualise authenticity in teaching principally in relation to the existential, critical and communitarian perspectives was one of the key findings that emerged from the analysis of repertory grid data. Thus, rather than extending our understanding of these three perspectives on authenticity in the context of teaching, the repertory grid data suggested that these perspectives do not feature strongly in how participants understand the meaning of authenticity in teaching. However, the focus group data collected from students revealed a slightly different picture. Although the concrete teacher actions and attributes the students identified as helping them learn were linked mostly to Dimensions A and E (see Tables 7, 8), Table 8 illustrated that many of the teacher actions and attributes the students mentioned were associated also with Dimensions B, C and D. When describing teachers, in the grid task and in the focus groups, respondents inevitably focused on features that they could see or sense. These discernable features are reflected mostly in Dimensions A and E. Dimensions B, C and F (and also D), by contrast, refer to internal processes that are not easily visible to an observer. Strictly speaking, judgments about whether these processes are indeed present can only be made by a person focusing on his or her own experience of becoming authentic. It would be wrong, therefore, to conclude that because Dimensions B, C and F were identified less frequently in this study this constitutes evidence that these dimensions are of lesser importance to teaching. It seems more plausible to suggest that students (and teachers talking about other teachers) felt they could not comment with any authority on whether the teachers they knew were authentic in these ways.

Overall, teachers and students attached a positive value to authenticity in teaching (Table 2). However, earlier we reported on a few individual constructs that described the authentic teacher in negative terms (Table 3). Some of these oddities can perhaps be explained by students comparing individuals with idiosyncratic characteristics, some of which had no relevance for the particular role these individuals were representing in the grid task. However, there is another and perhaps more powerful explanation. We saw earlier that authenticity is increasingly associated with the narcissistic pursuit of private ends without any regard of the consequences for others (e.g., Potter 2010). This view may underlie the perspective held by the few students who felt that the authentic teacher they knew “does not care/does not notice how well students are learning”, was “not checking if material is understood”, “tended to be unwilling to accept opinions different from own”, was “condescending” and “gave only his own opinion” (Table 3). In reference to Taylor (1989, 1991) we suggest that this conception of what it means to ‘be authentic’ ignores that authenticity, properly understood, involves defining oneself dialogically.

Some implications

The aim of the present study was to shed light on a phenomenon that, although increasingly recognised as being of profound importance to teaching, has remained little understood. The six research questions derived from this aim were answered by combining

philosophical with empirical investigation, and qualitative with quantitative analysis. The premise underlying the study was that unless we seek to better understand the meaning of authenticity in the context of university teaching, the notion will either continue to be carelessly applied, thereby creating conceptual confusion, or be wrongly dismissed as being too slippery, too vague, and too ethically dubious (e.g., Potter 2010) to usefully inform teaching. The study showed that the philosophical concept of authenticity in university teaching is a notion rich in meaning and best understood as a multi-dimensional concept. The contribution this study makes lies in the significance of providing a conceptual framework on authenticity that serves to help us grasp the meaning of this phenomenon in a deeper way—namely in terms of its existential, critical and communitarian dimensions rather than merely in terms of questionable notions of ‘correspondence to “reality”’, thereby facilitating more fruitful communication about how authenticity matters in the context of university teaching (and professional development in teaching) and offer a hitherto lacking theoretical foundation for further research.

One possibility for future research would be to develop, based on the 328 constructs generated in this study, a standardised grid featuring as supplied constructs all those constructs that achieved high average extremity scores (e.g., Adams-Webber and Benjafield 1973) and thus were deemed most meaningful in the eyes of most respondents. This standardized grid could be administered to large samples of different types of teachers (for example, experienced and inexperienced, etc.). An aggregated grid could then be developed for each group (Puddifoot 1996) and analysed for the pattern of relationships between elements and constructs (e.g., through non-parametric factor analysis, principal component factor analysis and hierarchical cluster analysis, all commonly used for individual grid analysis). The results could be considered across groups (e.g., inexperienced and experienced lecturers) and in relation to the formal dimensions of authenticity (A to F) identified in the present study. Such purely quantitative work with large samples could be very useful and reveal new relationships between teaching effectiveness and authenticity. Even greater value we see in an in-depth qualitative longitudinal study with a small number of lecturers that would explore not only these lecturers’ *conceptions* but their own *experience* of striving for authenticity in the context of teaching, and whether, and if so, how, this experience is linked to processes described by the dimensions of authenticity identified here, especially Dimensions B, C and F.

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