

# Evaluating the impact of Internet Mediated Dialogue across Cultural Difference

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# Overview

Extremism

The study

Methodology

Measuring dialogic growth

A vision for education



# Extremism

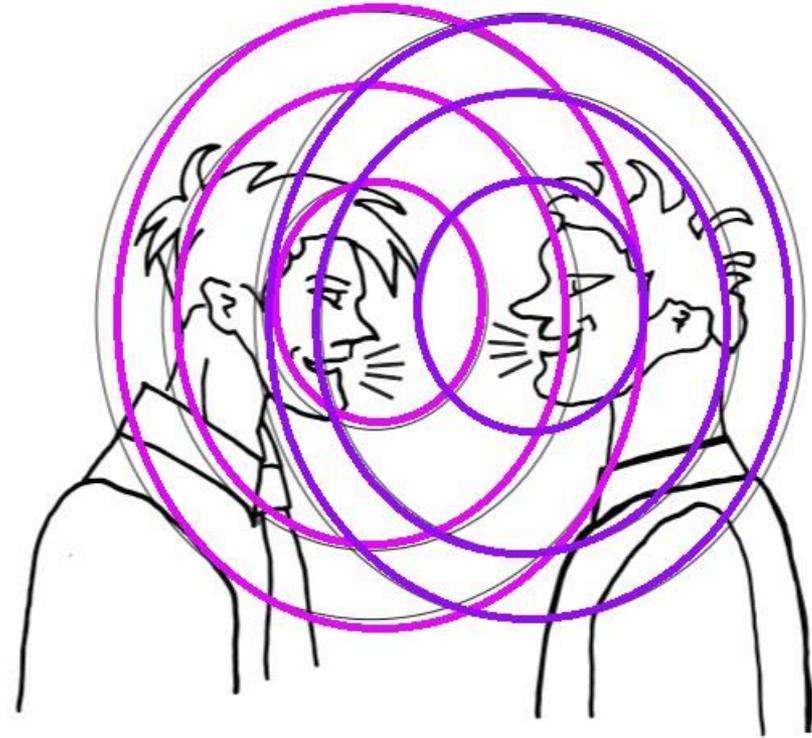
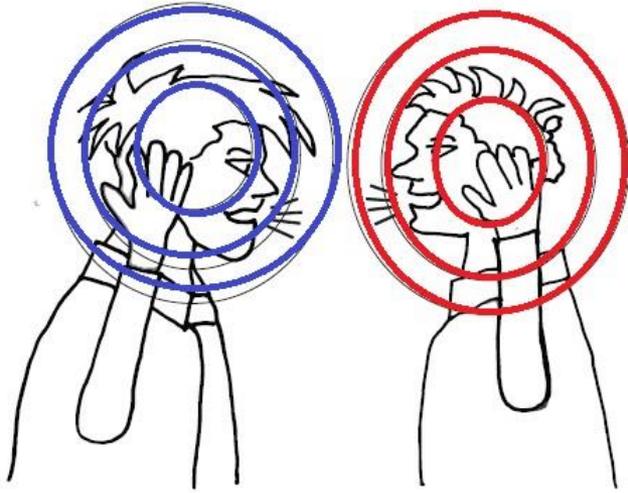
Extremist world views are monologic.

Mono = single logic = voice, word, discourse etc

Intolerance of ambiguity and multiplicity

Extremist attitudes are supported by monologic education. (Rose, 2015)

# Dialogic space



Small group work  
in classrooms.  
Voices resonate  
together.

# Big issue

Ethics linked to dialogic space

Thousands of years of in-group morality and between group violence.

Entanglement of voices at a distance eg

Doestoevsky & Bakhtin

So can Internet help us create a global dialogic space?

How to evaluate?



# Generation Global (was Face-to-faith programme of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation)

Hundreds of schools around  
the world in dialogue about  
differences in culture and faith  
via video conferences and team

blogging. Involves an eight week educational  
programme in dialogue. Aim is to promote  
open-mindedness and combat extremism.

# VC Example – Egypt and Israel



# VC Example – school in Egypt and Israel

*This is N and I was wondering what your perception is of other Arabs?*

Background voice: ‘we are not Arabs’ to which a third student replies ‘yes we are’.

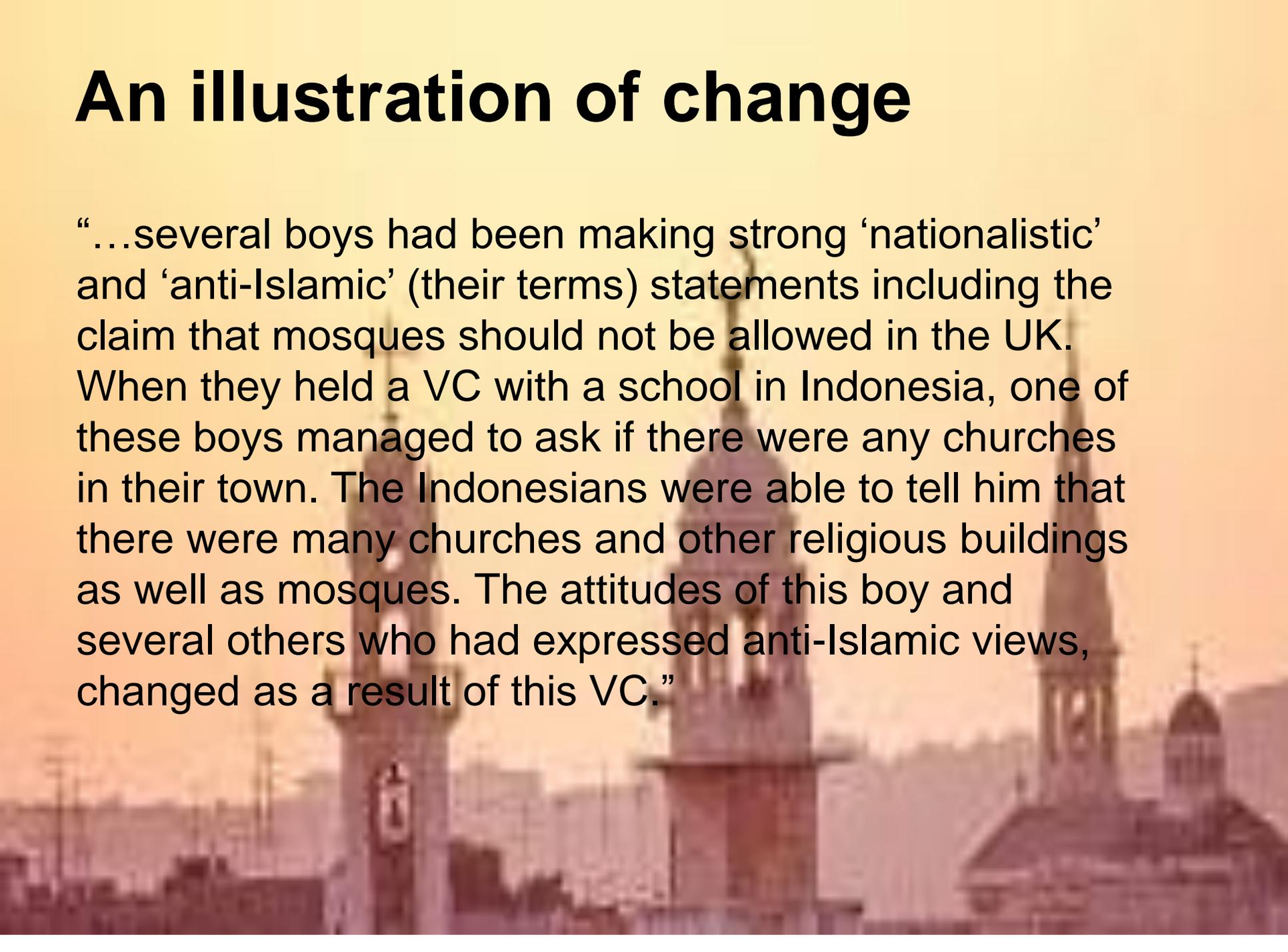
*We do have Arabs in our country of course and – in my opinion of course - we treat them as normal people ....they have power in the city they have err err influence and they are really as anyone else. Thank you.*

*What M just said – I think Arabics have - like – they have the same rights as what we the Jewish have but they aren’t being treated equal – ... they have less chance in Israel to get a high job .*



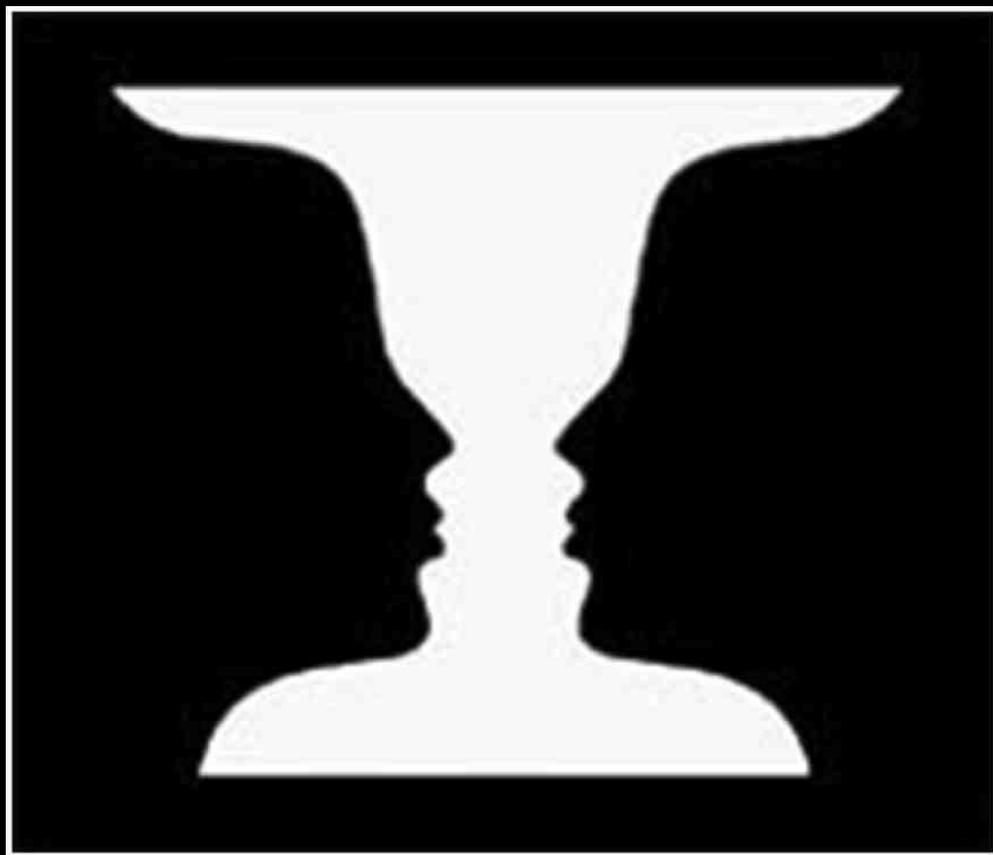
# An illustration of change

“...several boys had been making strong ‘nationalistic’ and ‘anti-Islamic’ (their terms) statements including the claim that mosques should not be allowed in the UK. When they held a VC with a school in Indonesia, one of these boys managed to ask if there were any churches in their town. The Indonesians were able to tell him that there were many churches and other religious buildings as well as mosques. The attitudes of this boy and several others who had expressed anti-Islamic views, changed as a result of this VC.”



# Chiasm Methodology

'I see the world: the world sees me'



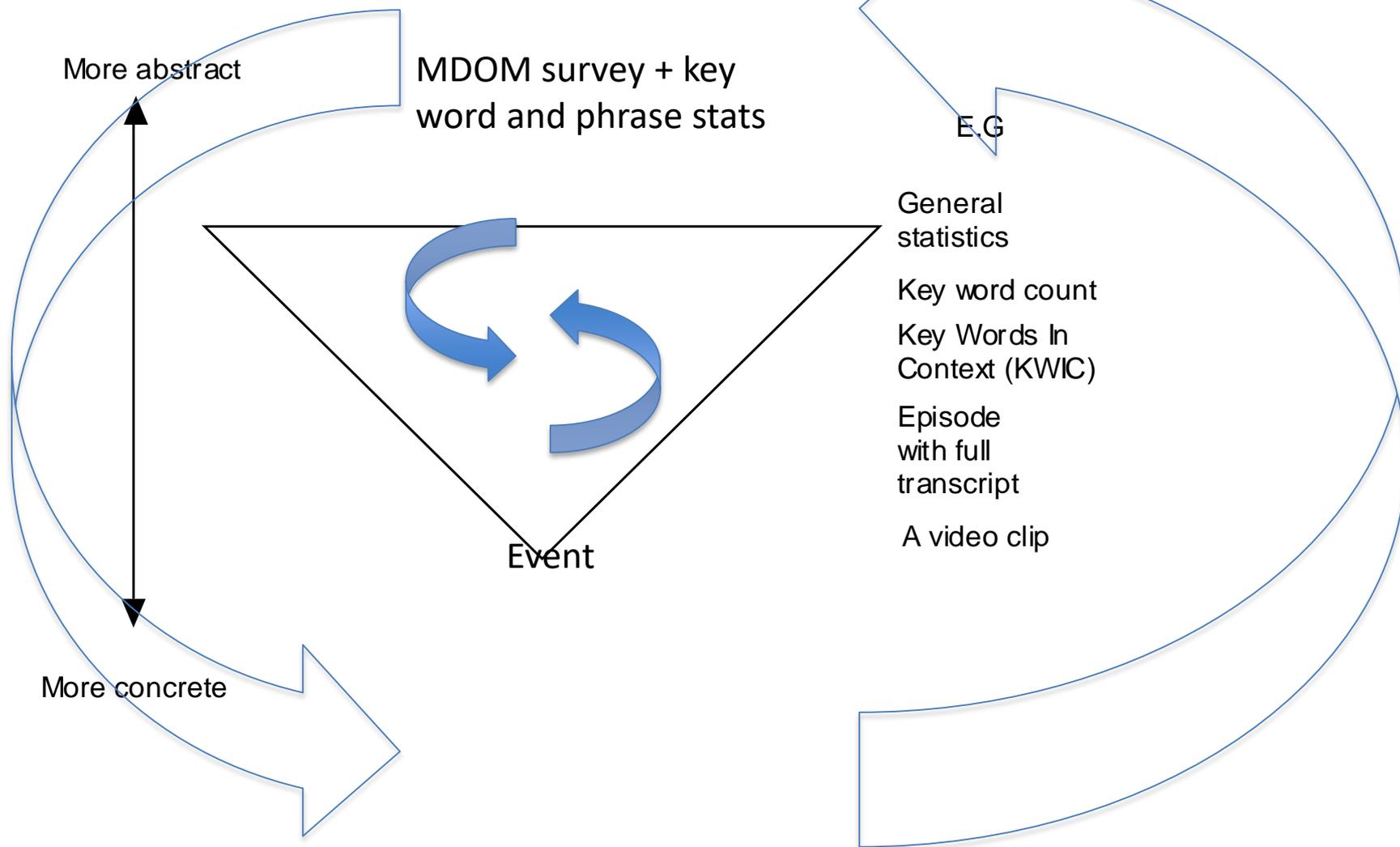
(Merleau-Ponty)

each event  
creates the  
horizon that  
locates it

Meaning emerges at boundary

# Methodology: inside outside chiasm

Events are selected by statistics and – when possible - statistics are drawn out from and informed by events



# Dialogic Open-Mindedness Student Questionnaire

## Dialogicity questions

'After talking to others I sometimes think differently about myself'

'I love to bounce ideas around with other people'

## Tolerance of ambiguity (MDOM)

'There is not always a correct answer...'

## Self-confidence in the face of diversity (MDOM)

'I can interact confidently with people from another culture or point of view – without getting angry or defensive..'

## Knowledge and Experience of Difference – Approach and Avoidance (MDOM)

'Do I approach or avoid the Other...?'

## Just World Hypothesis (MDOM)

'you get what you deserve and deserve what you get'

## Knowledge and Experience of Difference (KED)



# Case studies

The findings of the questionnaire data helped us to focus in on schools where the programme is working well and also schools where it is not working so well. Case studies of eight schools in total across four countries gave us interviews with teachers and students and some insights into issues impacting on the programme.

*'Before it used to be "they are Pakistanis" but now they are their friends.'* (Teacher in India)

# Team-Blogging Reflections



How do you feel about people from those countries, communities, cultures and faiths you [have met OR will meet] while team-blogging? Please do not be afraid to share both negative and positive points.

Why do you feel like this? Write about things in your experience that have shaped your views.

# Pre-post blogging kwic analysis

Both the use of 'we' and 'they' increase significantly between the pre and the post reflection while the use of 'I' declines. What is more interesting is the way in which the use of 'we' and 'they' changes.

*E.g "All of them where extremely different. Each has their own opinion and worldview. Some of them differ from me and some are quite similar."*

Pronoun	Pre frequency	As %	Post frequency	As %
I	122	6%	105	5.46%
We	32	1.6%	43	2.2%
They	45	2.2%	65	3.3%

# KWIC analysis of blog reflections

On qualitative examination the change in the use of pronouns to refer to self and other between the pre-team-blogging reflection and the post-team-blogging reflection indicates a shift in identity from a relatively closed sense of 'us' defined against an abstract sense of 'them' towards a more dialogic identity which can best be described as identification not with 'us' against 'them' but with the dialogue that unites encompasses the two terms.

# A direction of dialogic growth ?

What is the direction of learning in Interfaith Dialogue? Dialogue as an end in itself with cognitive by products.

Dialogues are limited by identity on one side (if  $A=A$  no dialogue) and by a breakdown of empathy on the other – too big a stretch and they crash.

Education can expand this distance. Ultimately everything can be brought into constructive dialogue with everything else. ('Great Time')

# Ethics and cognition are linked

Learning to think together improves individual thinking but it also improves classroom behaviour. Link to ethics.

The Face-to-Faith programme involves teaching dialogue before the video-conferences and teachers report that test results go up.

Dialogicity – being open to the other – is the antidote to extremism. But it also helps small groups think together better.

The dimension of identity change from monologic black and white, true and false thinking to dialogic complex thinking is both about values and about cognition.

# ‘There are no last words’ Bakhtin

The essence of dialogic thinking is inter-illumination around a gap between different perspectives held together in the tension of a dialogue.

Dialogic thinking is complex and ‘embodied’, including issues of identity and emotion.

It has many levels, individual ‘reflection’, small group thinking, whole planet thinking.

# A proposed vision of education

One function of education should be teaching for dialogue as an end in itself.

Education is about (amongst other things) expanding the dialogue – shifting identification from closed images of self and other to open dialogue – identifying with dialogue - becoming dialogue ...

# Thanks for listening!

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