Evaluating Pedagogy To Promote Dialogic Space In Internet Mediated Blogging Across Cultural Difference

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Chair: Dr Maggie Wang

Abstract:
It has been claimed that dialogic education implies a direction of change upon an ontological dimension from monologic closed identities in the direction of more dialogic identifications characterised by greater openness to the other and greater identification with 'dialogic space' or the process of dialogue itself. This talk outlines that theory, proposes a dialogic methodology for researching the impact of dialogic education and presents some findings from an evaluation of the impact of a programme designed to promote greater dialogic open-mindedness: the 'Generation Global' project which supports schools in over twenty different countries to engage in dialogue with each other through videos and blogs with a long-term view to preventing extremist violence. The findings offer some clear evidence of a shift in identifications resulting from dialogue through the analysis of changes in online language use supported by interview evidence. This qualitative evaluation of change is supported by rigorous statistical analysis of changes in online language use, particularly the use of pronouns. This analysis indicates a shift over the time-scale of the pedagogical intervention in the way that language is used suggesting 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 'dialogic space' that unites and also encompasses the two terms. This study suggests that a pedagogical intervention focusing on improving the quality of online dialogue has the potential to open and sustain shared dialogic spaces and also that it is possible to rigorously evaluate this impact.

About the speaker:
Rupert Wegerif is Professor of Education at the University of Cambridge. His research focus is on the theory and practice of dialogic education particularly in relation to teaching thinking and the use of new communication technologies. This focus can be seen in developing educational theory as well as in his research on ways of teaching dialogue in classrooms and via the Internet. He has gained over £2 million in research funding as principal investigator, published 9 books and over 50 peer-reviewed articles in international journals. He, founded and co-convenes the EARLI SIG on Educational Theory and was founding lead editor of the Elsevier SSCI journal *Thinking Skills and Creativity* until 2017. As Director of Research from 2007 to 2014 he steered the Graduate School of Education at Exeter to an excellent REF result.

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