

Christchurch  
October 6-9  
2009

Teaching  
Through Dialogue

Common Sense or  
Innovative Practice?



Richard Millwood

Core Education UK



Sarah Jones

# Teaching Through Dialogue - What is it?

In this session the ideas of Prof Robin Alexander concerning Dialogic Teaching will be presented and along with an account of the project 'Teaching Through Dialogue' being carried out in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham by Nikki Gamble. Video material will be presented to illustrate the pedagogic ideas and practices that this entails and questions raised about the approach to continuing professional development.

<http://www.robinalexander.org.uk/dialogicteaching.htm>

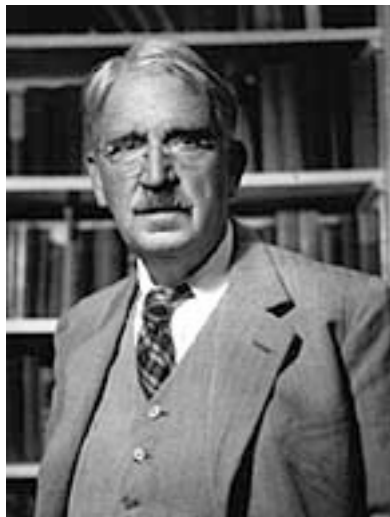
- Purpose - to consider relationship between effective facilitation practices in the classroom and online to create dialogue for learning
- 20 minutes - presentation
- 50 minutes - work in groups / reactions to 'What is it' / experiences of similar strategies / experiences online / connections between classroom practice and online practice
- 20 minutes - report back

# Year 6 - Hilary - March 2008



But first,

Richard Millwood's  
thoughts on the essence  
of learning



"In sum, I believe that the individual who is to be educated is a social individual and that society is an organic union of individuals. If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass. **Education, therefore, must begin with a psychological insight into the child's capacities, interests, and habits.**

John Dewey  
from 'My Pedagogic Creed'  
School Journal  
vol. 54, pp. 77-80  
(January **1897**)



**Learner**



skills  
creativity  
inquiry  
pedagogy  
technology tools  
mental-models  
facts  
memory  
intelligences  
bio-technology

teachers  
parents  
peers  
stakeholders  
costs & finance

buildings & equipment  
internet  
mobility  
timetable  
lifelong  
access

authority  
multimodality  
user-generated  
intellectual-property  
universality  
global-local  
language & culture

### 4 Community

### 5 Environment

### 6 Source

### 3 Process

Who can help me, and I them?

Where and when?

What resources can help?

How do I come to know?

What have I achieved and what next?

communication  
judgement  
planning  
progression  
continuity  
testing  
specialisation

### 7 Assessment

culture  
tradition  
discipline  
ethnicity  
society  
literacy

What is there to be known?

### 2 Importance

How do I convince others?

### 8 Recognition

reward  
accreditation  
standards  
qualification  
portfolio  
employment  
portability

### 1 Motivation

fulfilment  
enjoyment  
relevance  
curiosity  
economics  
expectation

Why do I want to know and share?

**Learner**

**responsibilities rights**

Thinking a thought  
in response to  
listening, watching or  
reading

Speaking, playing,  
performing or doing

Writing, drawing,  
proving, planning or  
computing

# Expression

(what you do to communicate an idea)

# Evaluation

(deciding if it's right)

Does it make sense  
to me?

Do other people  
understand me?

Does the computer  
do what I expected?

# Barking and Dagenham's Teaching Through Dialogue project

- seeks to promote challenging learning opportunities
- through increasing the quality of teacher/pupil dialogue
- in whole class and group teaching
- Nikki Gamble  
[nhgamble@aol.com](mailto:nhgamble@aol.com)  
<http://www.writeaway.org.uk>





# Background

- derived from the international comparative studies by Professor Robin Alexander, Cambridge
- one of the key differences between national systems lies with the value placed on classroom talk as a means of learning
- in some countries spoken language plays a crucial part in the teaching process

# Alexander's Dialogic Teaching

- the predominant type of classroom talk in the UK is recitation
- recitation relies on right and wrong answers and fails to develop understanding
- 'Dialogic Teaching' employs demanding talk, where teachers challenge pupils and elicit deeper understanding as part of a cumulative process

# Strategies for teaching through dialogue

**sustained exchanges** between teachers and learners which are scaffolded to promote thinking and new learning including extending oral work with a single learner, who acts as a representative of the class in exploring an idea publicly

seating learners in a **horseshoe formation** so they can see each other and communicate together more productively

use of disagreement and justification to develop **intellectual argumentation** to develop understanding

expecting learners to use **technical vocabulary**

promoting audible speech in **complete sentences** which offer **well thought out explanations** to the class

insisting on **formal modes of conversation** in Standard English as an alternative to the more colloquial forms of the street or the playground

developing the **metalinguage** that enables learner to reflect on the effectiveness of their talk

# Plans for Professional Development

**mentoring, reflection and discussion** in school which may include team teaching to further develop dialogic practice

**monthly meetings** with other leading teachers in the borough

**reflective process diary** to record critical incidents

**mentoring** for lead teachers to enable them to become **advocates** for dialogic teaching in their own schools and later more widely

collection of good and excellent examples of genuine dialogic teaching on **video**

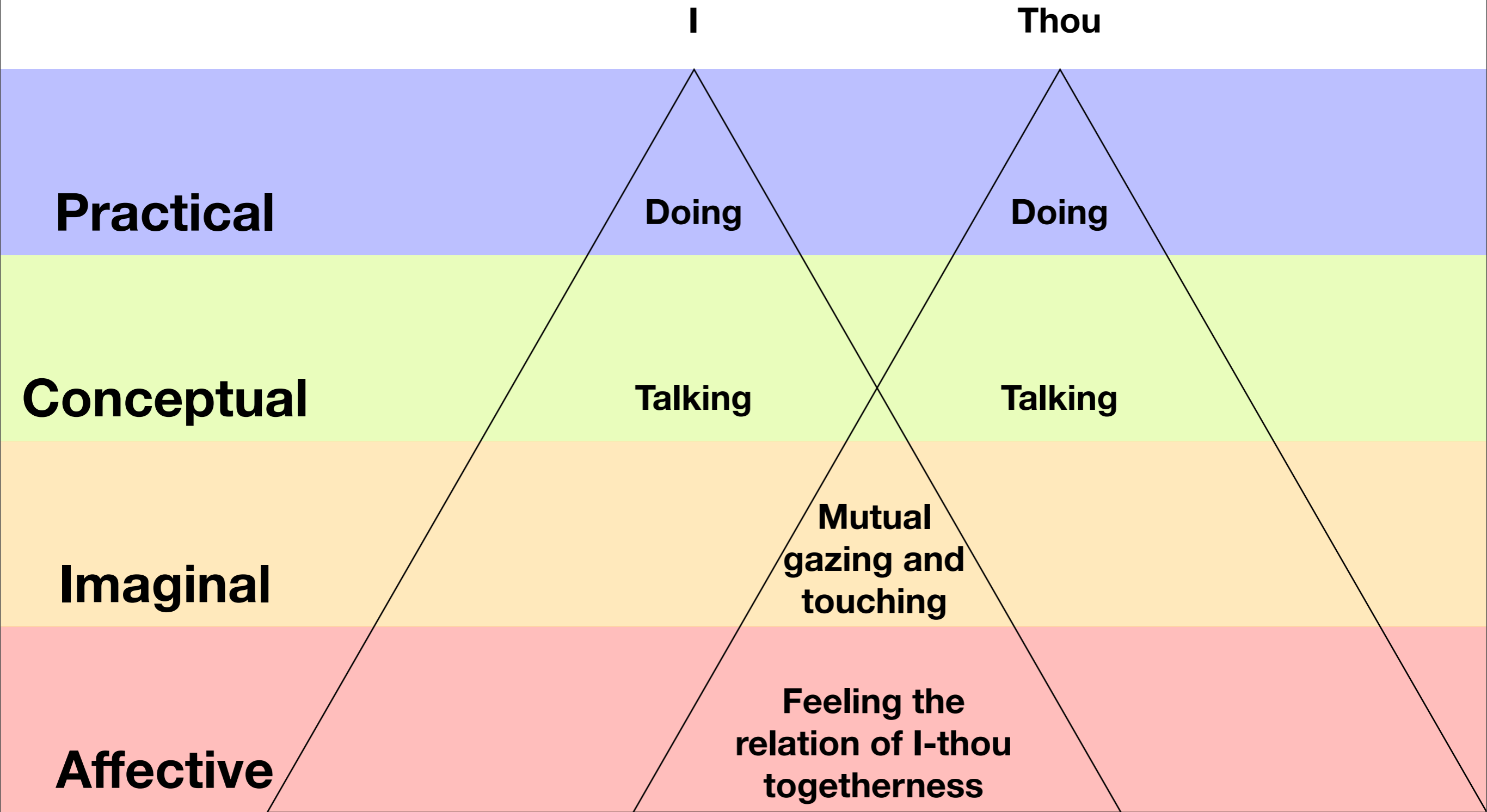
written **guidance** and video exemplification will be made available to other schools, together with face-to-face **training**

use of **transcripts** for micro-study

Year 5 - Laura - November 2008



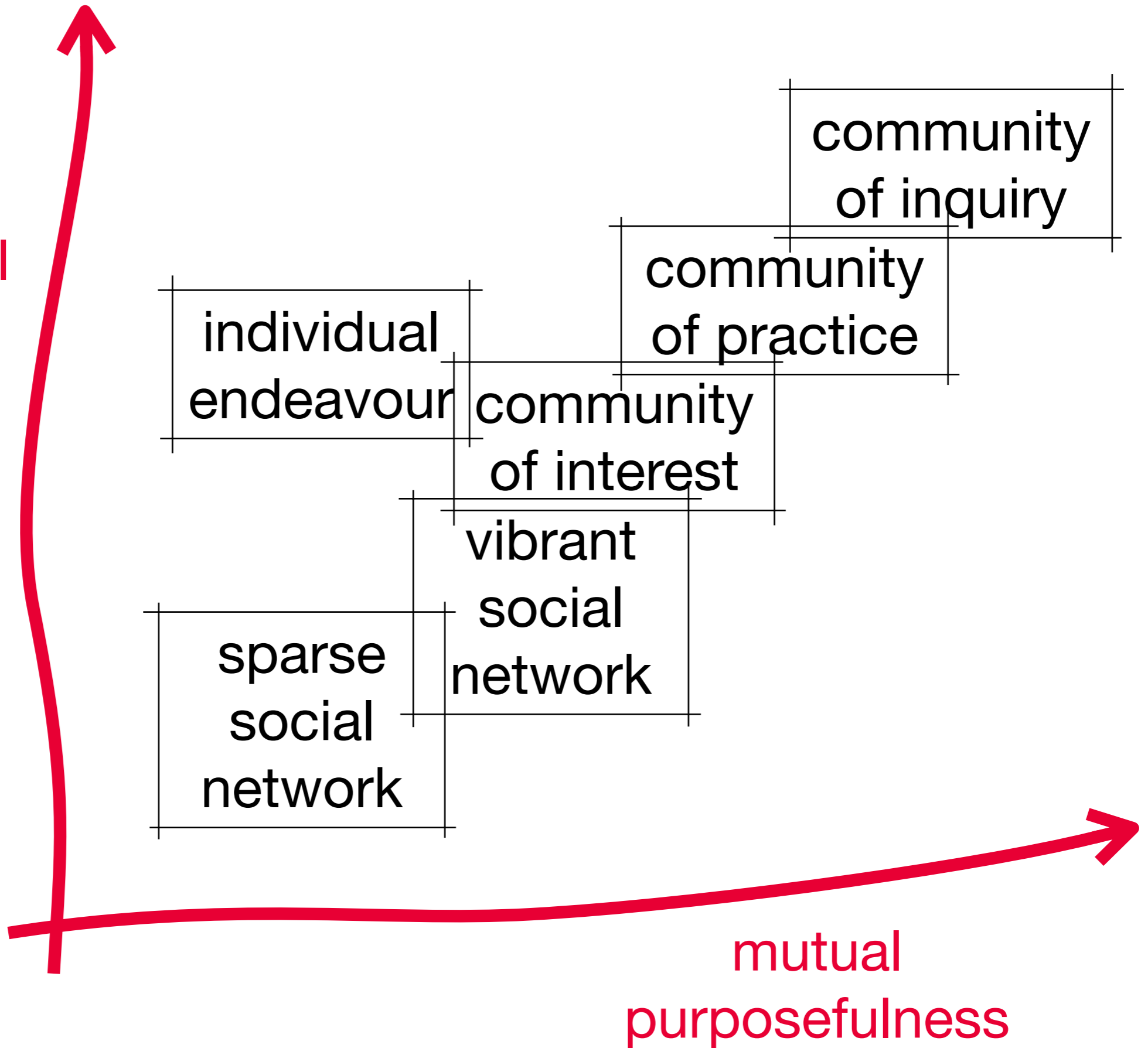
# Participatory Feeling



“Of course, the drift away from participatory feeling is not inevitable”

John Heron - p34, Feeling and Personhood

intellectual  
formality



# Workshop

- What are your reactions?
- What experiences do you have of similar strategies?
- What experiences of successful/failed dialogue online?
- What connections would you make between classroom practice and online practice?
- TAKE NOTE - SUMMARISE - REPORT BACK!



# Notes from our discussion

Email - mostly factual / eroding communication / importance of gestures / need to develop language for email - smileys etc? <http://inquirylearning.wordpress.com/2008/09/24/new-to-online-discussion-does-a-code-of-practice-help/>

Safety - physical/emotional people need to feel comfortable talking / table can help some / direct gaze can be uncomfortable individually and culturally diverse reactions / listening by using a 'displacement' activity? / online communities as real as F2F once relationships are established / words only a small percentage of F2F communication / anonymity permits mischief - being who you really are leads to integrity?