Dialogic Reflection

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ABSTRACT

This article explores dialogic reflection as a transformative approach to meaning-making that often operates simultaneously as internal conversation and collaborative engagement with others. Drawing on theoretical foundations from Bakhtin, Freire, and Buber, the piece examines how genuine dialogue resists monologic closure and creates spaces where multiple voices engage in productive tension. Organized around five interconnected questions rather than prescriptive frameworks, the article considers the origins and fundamentals of dialogic reflection, possibilities for designing structured dialogic processes, digital environments' role in supporting reflection, relationships between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions, and approaches to research representation that invite genuine response. By embracing what Rilke called "living the questions," the article explores dialogic reflection not as a fixed technique but as an expanding field of practice that continues developing more sophisticated ways of taking account of and representing multiple perspectives while maintaining reflective depth.

Introduction

What does it mean to reflect dialogically in our academic and professional pursuits and practices? This article explores dialogic reflection as a potentially transformative approach to meaning-making that operates simultaneously as both internal conversation and collaborative engagement with others. Rather than treating reflection as a solitary, backwards-looking process of analysing past experiences, dialogic reflection embraces what Rilke called "living the questions"—an ongoing, open-ended exploration that recognizes understanding emerges through the questioning process itself rather than through predetermined answers or the transmission of knowledge.

This article was generously supported by a fellowship at the Paris Institute for Advanced Study, with the financial support of the French State programme "Investissements d'avenir" managed by the Agence Nationale de la Recherche. The topic aligns with the Institute's mission to promote reflection and create environments where collaboration and dialogue can flourish. This is a conscious and deliberate Paris Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) mission, achieved through
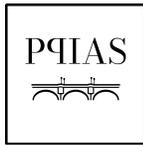
the leadership of Saadi Lahlou and Paulius Yamin and the broader research community. In other words, the Institute consciously and vigorously promotes the process and benefits of collaboration and dialogue (more later). I also benefitted from conversations with my fellow IAS writers in September 2025, especially Elinor Ochs and Alessandro Duranti. I carry with me (despite the constraints of decreasing memory) the voices, ideas and views of many, but Keith Richards and Steve Walsh are regular collaborators.

Drawing on theoretical foundations from Bakhtin, Freire, Buber, and others, this article examines how genuine dialogue resists monologic closure and instead creates spaces where multiple voices can engage in productive tension, whether those voices exist within our own consciousness (intrapersonal dialogue) or emerge through direct engagement with others (interpersonal dialogue). The article challenges traditional academic discourse by organizing itself around five interconnected questions that invite exploration rather than offering prescriptive frameworks, deliberately aligning its form with its methodological commitment to democratic and collaborative ways of knowing.

More specifically, the structure of this article embodies dialogic principles through its use of five interconnected questions: What are the origins and fundamentals of dialogic reflection? Can dialogic processes be deliberately designed or structured? How might digital environments support dialogic reflection? What is the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of reflection? Can we develop more dialogic approaches to research representation that invite genuine response and continued reflection? Each question serves not as a problem to be solved, but as an invitation for readers to enter into their own dialogic reflection, recognizing that understanding emerges through the questioning process itself (Bohm, 1996).

Following Edge's (2002) understanding that meaningful talk emerges through disrupting conventional patterns, this article adopts a questioning stance that challenges traditional academic discourse while remaining accountable to scholarly rigour. The goal is not to provide final answers but to model and illustrate the kind of exploratory engagement that characterizes authentic dialogic reflection—inviting readers into a conversation that extends beyond these pages into their own reflective worlds and practice (Buber, 1970; Alexander, 2020).

Dialogue One: What are the origins and fundamentals of dialogic reflection?

Most definitions of dialogic reflection concentrate on capturing a process in which a participant disrupts and reconceptualizes their views through internal dialogue and conversation with oneself. Our previous work (Mann & Walsh, 2017) accepts this definition but deliberately extends it to interactive and collaborative joint reflection. We recognize that reflection can be both an individual, solitary pursuit—a process of "discourse with the self"—and a fundamentally relational, interactive engagement with others. It can certainly be a relatively solitary process of diary writing or journalling. However, I'm more interested in the collaborative and interactive dimensions of reflection in this article.

Of course, the individual and the more collaborative/interactive are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, individual thoughts and experiences feed into talk and interaction both
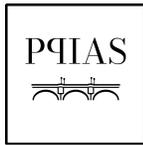
synchronously and asynchronously. Conversations and exchanges become the subject of individual reflection, to be mulled over and considered in relation to future stance and action. This dual nature, therefore, creates a productive tension: dialogic reflection operates simultaneously as an intrapersonal process (inner dialogue) and an interpersonal process (outer dialogue). Often these dimensions are "in play" at the same time, creating a complex interweaving of internal and external meaning-making. At the heart of dialogic reflection is the pursuit of multiple views. There is always the self-view where the 'self becomes an object to oneself' (Gillespie, 2007, p. 678), but it remains open to the views of others, either in collaborative dialogue or in dialogue mediated by texts and tools. A later question ('Dialogue Four: What is the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of reflection?') will explore this further.

Crucially, identity and self are fluid constructs that evolve across temporal and social contexts (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). This means that dialogic reflection inevitably involves conversations with previous versions of ourselves—what Markus and Nurius (1986) describe through their concept of "possible selves" encompassing who we were, who we are, and who we might become. The self, engaged in reflection today, dialogues with the self of yesterday or years past, creating what Edge (2011) terms a "temporal dialogue" where earlier voices continue to resonate and shape present understanding. Therefore, dialogic reflection is both prospective and retrospective. This ongoing conversation with our earlier and future selves serves as a crucial mechanism for identity development and professional growth (Alsup, 2006). We can still see this process as essentially intra-personal, and so we also need to see how it maps onto the inter-personal. Simply, considering the temporal aspects of dialogic reflection allows us to bring into focus both its forward and backward facing elements and also that these processes draw on a multitude of voices and texts (recent and historical).

Reflection versus reflexivity

Before exploring the inner/outer dimensions further, we must distinguish between reflection and reflexivity—terms often conflated but representing different orientations to experience (Mann 2016). Reflection typically involves looking back at experiences, analysing what happened, and drawing lessons for future action, assuming a relatively stable self that is doing the examining. Reflexivity, by contrast, involves an awareness of how we are constructing our understanding, often in the very moment of understanding. In any case, it is more focused on how we influence and are influenced. It also recognizes that the observer and observed are mutually constituted— we can not separate our ways of knowing from what we come to know. Dialogic reflection incorporates both orientations but leans toward reflexivity in its recognition that meaning emerges through the dialogic process itself, rather than being simply discovered or extracted from experience. In qualitative research in particular, reflexivity has become an important dimension for considering how the researcher takes account of the influences on and impact of their methodology.

This epistemological commitment to reflexivity—to recognizing that meaning is constructed rather than found—naturally leads to a constructivist orientation in my work. Such an approach aligns with the epistemological position that reality is socially constructed through language, interaction, and shared meaning-making (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Vygotsky, 1978). This
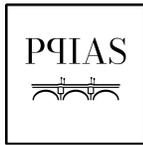
constructivist stance rejects the notion of a fixed, discoverable truth in favour of recognising multiple, co-constructed realities that emerge through dialogic engagement (Gergen, 2009). Within this framework, the self is not a stable entity to be objectively examined but rather an ongoing social and linguistic construction, continually reconstituted through reflective dialogue with oneself and others. This stance also allows us to take account of the embedded, situated, and contextual nature of interaction and collaborative research processes.

Reflexivity is especially valuable in qualitative research because it foregrounds the mutually shaping relationship between researcher and researched—what Edge (2011, p. 35) calls the "ongoing, mutually shaping interaction between the researcher and the research." In qualitative interviews, this bidirectionality is particularly evident: the researcher's beliefs, values, and ways of conducting research inevitably influence the research outcomes, while simultaneously the research process shapes and changes the researcher (Mann, 2011). As Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) established in ethnomethodology, action and context are reflexively configured—each shapes and is shaped by the other. This recognition of mutual influence moves us beyond linear cause-and-effect thinking towards a more nuanced understanding of how meaning emerges through interaction itself.

Even on an individual level, the dialogic process is necessarily one where meanings are mediated by language, especially where they are recorded in written text such as journals or diaries. This is both reflexive and temporal, as it involves the individual situating themselves constantly in an internal and temporal dialogue between earlier and later self in support of self-evaluation and meaning making. This past-present parameter is unique to each individual:

> We are embodied agents, living in dialogical conditions, inhabiting time in a specifically human way, that is, making sense of our lives as a story that connects the past from which we have come to our future projects. (Taylor, 1991, pp. 105-106)

Traditional hierarchical accounts often position dialogic reflection between descriptive reflection (simple narrative accounts) and critical/transformative reflection (deep systemic analysis). However, our understanding (see Mann & Walsh, 2017) suggests a more recursive, non-linear process where different modes of reflection interpenetrate and inform each other. Rather than moving through fixed stages from simple description to complex critique, practitioners may find themselves cycling back to seemingly 'basic' descriptive accounts that, through dialogic engagement, reveal new insights previously obscured by premature theoretical framing. The inner and outer dimensions don't represent developmental stages but rather complementary aspects of an ongoing meaning-making process. This challenges deficit models that view certain forms of reflection as inherently superior, recognizing instead that different reflective modes serve different purposes depending on context and need (Boud & Walker, 1998). A novice teacher's detailed account of classroom interactions may contain more authentic reflexivity than an experienced practitioner's rehearsed application of critical frameworks, precisely because the former remains open to genuine surprise and uncertainty. Reflective processes are not necessarily linear and progressive and are more likely recursive, varied, and unpredictable.
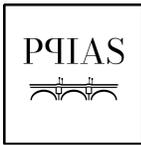
## Dialogic Reflection: A Fundamentally Social Process

Our lives are then inherently dialogic. We watch television, films, TikToks and absorb snippets of information and memories that form the basis of reflection. Even music opens up spaces for different kinds of reflection—"The Sound of Silence" by Simon and Garfunkel explores internal dialogue and the challenge of authentic communication, while "Both Sides Now" by Joni Mitchell examines how perspectives change over time and experience. These are perhaps rather dated and obvious examples, but we constantly engage in this process of internalising cultural voices that later resurface in our internal dialogues. A phrase from a podcast overheard during a morning commute might echo in our mind's weeks later during a different conversation. A character's dilemma in a Netflix series might frame how we understand our own professional challenges. The algorithm-driven content we scroll through creates an ever-shifting collage of perspectives that become part of our internal dialogic repertoire (if we are lucky enough to have the space to shift into more reflective gears and spaces). Metaphors, critical incidents, narratives, reports, anecdotes, news, lyrics, can be recycled, re-examined and re-articulated, sometimes in different ways and for different purposes.

This recognition—that our thinking is fundamentally populated by both our own experiences and influences AND others' voices—forms the foundation of what Mann and Walsh (2017) identify as dialogic reflection. A core dialogic principle is that meaning emerges through the interplay of multiple voices rather than individual authorial control. As David Bowie said regarding Burroughs' influence: "I have always been drawn to the Bill Burroughs of this world, who produce a vocabulary that is not necessarily a personal one, but something that is made up of ciphers and signifiers which are regurgitated, reformed, and re-accumulated" (American Songwriter, 2021). Bowie describes a creative process where meaning is constructed through the recombination of existing cultural materials—what we might call creative bricolage. Dialogic reflection operates similarly: we don't generate meaning from nowhere but rather remix, recontextualise, and rearticulate the voices we've internalised from our cultural environment. When we reflect, we're rarely engaging with purely original thoughts; instead, we're entering into dialogue with the accumulated voices of parents, teachers, authors, influencers, colleagues, and cultural narratives that have shaped our consciousness. This recognition challenges romantic notions of individual creativity or autonomous reflection, revealing instead that even our most private thoughts are fundamentally social in origin and dialogic in character. We mimic too: We try on voices often signalling our degree of attachment and/or ownership through phonological or lexical means.

Key Characteristics of Dialogic Reflection

In Mann and Walsh (2017), we see dialogic reflection as a form of reflective practice that emphasizes the conversational, relational nature of learning and meaning making. Key characteristics include:

- *Conversational engagement*: It involves active dialogue with others, texts, ideas, or even internal voices, rather than passive contemplation. The reflection emerges through this back-and-forth exchange.
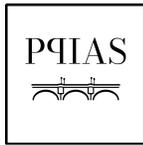
- *Multiple perspectives*: It acknowledges that any situation can be understood from various viewpoints and seeks to engage with these different voices, rather than settling on a single interpretation.
- *Relational understanding*: Knowledge and insight are seen as co-constructed through relationships and interactions, not as something individuals possess independently.
- *Questioning and inquiry*: Rather than seeking definitive answers, dialogic reflection emphasizes ongoing questioning, wondering, and exploration of possibilities.
- *Dynamic process*: It's not a linear progression toward a fixed conclusion, but an evolving, open-ended conversation that can lead to new questions and insights.

These characteristics rest on deeper philosophical commitments about what makes dialogue authentic. Martin Buber, Paulo Freire, and David Bohm emphasize that true dialogue requires four essential elements:

- *Equality of participation* (even if roles differ): Buber (1970) distinguished between "I-Thou" and "I-It" relationships, arguing that authentic dialogue occurs only when participants relate to each other as subjects rather than objects. Freire (1970) critiqued the traditional "banking model" of education, advocating instead for dialogical education where "the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers" (p. 80).
- *Openness to being changed by the conversation*: Bohm (1996) emphasized that dialogue requires participants to suspend their assumptions and be willing to have their views transformed, arguing that "in dialogue, one does not try to convey information to another as much as to reveal the incoherence in one's thought" (p. 7). Buber (1965) described this as the willingness to be "surprised by the other" and to allow genuine encounter to reshape one's understanding.
- *Genuine curiosity about the other's perspective*: Freire (1970) identified love, humility, and faith as foundational elements of dialogue, writing that "dialogue can not exist without a profound love for the world and for people" (p. 89). Buber (1970) described this as "experiencing the other side"—the capacity to imaginatively inhabit another's perspective without losing one's own ground. Bohm (1996) emphasized "proprioception of thought"—becoming aware of one's own thinking processes while remaining genuinely curious about others' mental models.
- *Co-creation of new understanding*: Bohm (1996) described dialogue as a process where "new kinds of mind begin to come into being which are based on the development of a common meaning" (p. 9). Freire (1970) argued that through authentic dialogue, participants engage in "co-investigation" of reality, creating new knowledge together. Buber (1965) spoke of dialogue as creating a "between" space where new meaning emerges that belongs to neither participant alone but exists in their relationship.

These desirable elements of dialogic reflection are not accidental and can be fostered, encouraged, and supported. We will come back to this challenge in our second question ('Dialogue Two: Can dialogic processes be deliberately designed or structured?')
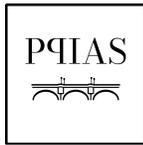
Grounding in Intersubjectivity

Dialogical reflection is grounded in what Husserl identified as the foundational structure of human intersubjectivity. As Duranti (2010, p. 9) explains, "before being an interactional problem, intersubjectivity is, at its most fundamental level, the existential condition for there being practical problems of the kind observed and defined by constructivist scholars". This positions dialogical reflection not as creating intersubjectivity but as operating within it as a pre-existing condition that enables collaborative inquiry. The mechanism underlying this process is what Husserl called "trading places" (Platzwechsel), where participants engage in genuine attempts to see from others' standpoints through what Duranti (2010) describes as "empathy (Einfühlung), understood as the primordial experience of participating in the actions and feeling of another being without becoming the other" (pp. 7-8).

This collaborative construction operates through what Goodwin (2018) terms "professional vision"—the ability to see and categorize the world in ways relevant to particular communities of practice. Goodwin demonstrates that "growth in intersubjectivity occurs as domains of ignorance that prevent the successful accomplishment of collaborative action are revealed and transformed into practical knowledge" (p. 219). This multimodal process involves "the visible, public deployment of multiple semiotic fields that mutually elaborate each other" (p. 174), where participants deploy gesture, gaze, spatial positioning, and temporal coordination alongside verbal exchange to construct shared understanding.

Dialogic Reflection as a Fundamental Human Capacity

The case for dialogic reflection extends beyond pedagogical preference to rest on a deeper anthropological foundation: cooperation and collaborative meaning-making represent fundamental human capacities with deep evolutionary roots. Levinson (2006) argues that humans possess an "interactional engine"—an innate cognitive infrastructure that enables the rapid, tacit coordination essential for collaborative action. This capacity allows us to simulate others' mental spaces and anticipate their responses, creating what Levinson describes as a "mirror world" where "we can tacitly coordinate by each thinking what the other would think" (p. 51). Crucially, this coordinative capacity operates not through fixed conversational rules but through continuous mutual adjustment—precisely the mechanism underlying dialogic reflection.

Goodwin (2018) demonstrates how this interactional engine manifests in what he terms "co-operative action," where meaning emerges through participants' simultaneous contributions rather than individual mental states. He argues that "new action is built by decomposing, and reusing with transformation the resources made available by the earlier actions of others. We thus inhabit each other's actions" (p. 23). This captures the essence of dialogic reflection: participants don't merely respond to each other but actively transform and build upon contributions, creating genuine co-construction of understanding. As Goodwin emphasizes, "What is being focused on are not psychological states that make human cooperation possible, but instead public social practices that human beings pervasively use to construct in concert with each other the actions that make possible, and sustain, their activities and communities" (p. 37).
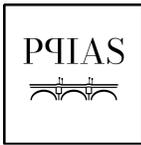
Duranti and La Mattina (2022) extend this argument, demonstrating that cooperation itself is semiotically constituted through ongoing intersubjective attunement rather than pre-existing shared mental states. Dialogic reflection thus represents not merely an instructional technique but an activation of fundamental human capacities for collaborative sense-making—capacities that are, as Levinson suggests, part of our evolutionary inheritance as an intensely social species.

**Dialogue Two: Can dialogic processes be deliberately designed or structured?**

Can we intentionally create conditions that nurture genuine dialogic reflection, or must it emerge organically from authentic human connection? This tension between design/structure and spontaneity sits at the heart of educational, organizational, and community practice. The evidence suggests a paradox: while authentic dialogue resists prescription, carefully designed frameworks can nonetheless invite and sustain dialogue. This section explores how we might navigate this paradox, particularly in an era marked by epistemic fragmentation, digital echo chambers, and escalating incivility in public discourse (Bosetti et al., 2025).

From Argument Culture to Collaborative Inquiry

The challenge begins with recognizing what we're working against. Tannen (1998) identifies the "argument culture"—a pervasive orientation framing intellectual exchange as adversarial combat where ideas must be defended and opponents vanquished. Academic discourse particularly operates through what she terms "agonistic patterns" where "a single source of opposition is set up, framed as polarized debate" (2002, p. 1652). This combative stance has intensified recently into what Bosetti et al. (2025) describe as "cultures of incivility" in higher education. Meanwhile, Barclay (2018) documents how misinformation proliferates, while Pariser (2011) shows how digital "filter bubbles" create self-affirming silos that prevent genuine encounter with difference. Sunstein (2017) extends this analysis, demonstrating how online environments amplify polarization rather than facilitating understanding.

Against this backdrop, but going back in time somewhat, the physicist and philosopher David Bohm (1996) developed perhaps the most systematic approach to transforming talk. He distinguishes between discussion (from Latin "to shake apart"), where we defend positions and seek victory, and dialogue (from Greek "through meaning"), where we suspend assumptions and think together. Bohm's principles directly challenge adversarial norms: suspension of judgment—temporarily holding certainties lightly; proprioception of thought—developing awareness of our thinking processes as they unfold; and collective meaning-making—treating insights as emerging from the group rather than owned by individuals (see also Ellinor & Gerard, 1998; Senge, 1990).

Isaacs (1999), building on Bohm's work, identifies four capacities essential for dialogue in organizational settings: listening (attending to what wants to emerge, not preparing our response); respecting (honouring others as legitimate, even in disagreement); suspending (holding beliefs gently rather than defending them); and voicing (speaking authentic truth while remaining open to change). These capacities don't emerge naturally from conventional academic or professional discourse—they require cultivation (Yankelovich, 1999).
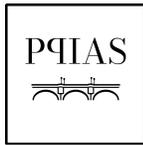
The Question of "Natural" Talk

Conversation analysts emphasize 'naturally occurring talk'—spontaneous, unscripted interaction constructed sequentially in the moment (Sacks et al., 1974). This concept usefully distinguishes authentic exchange from contrived performance. However, the notion of what is "natural" can mislead us, implying that modification represents artificiality. Heritage and Clayman (2010) demonstrate that all talk operates through culturally shaped norms forming spoken genres that pattern expectations and constrain possibilities. As Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) argue, these genres prove remarkably resistant to change precisely because they feel natural to participants. However, it is possible to learn and operate in new spoken genres with particular norms and practices.

The question, then, isn't whether to structure dialogue but how to structure it. Can we design frameworks that feel organic to participants while opening space for reflection? Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) suggest that "realistic reflection" requires explicit attention to the conditions that support or constrain reflective thinking. Drawing from my collaboration with Julian Edge at Aston University, where we experimented extensively with designing reflective talk through "cooperative development" (Edge, 1992, 2002, 2011), I propose several principles grounded in Rogerian understanding—Rogers' (1961, 1980) emphasis on empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard. These follow in the next section.

Principles for Designing Dialogic Spaces

The following principles can be helpful in designing productive and reflective spaces:

Creating Non-Judgmental Space: Rogers (1992, p. 28) identifies our tendency to "judge, to evaluate, to approve or disapprove" as the primary barrier to understanding. Naturally occurring professional talk often includes immediate evaluative responses (Copland et al., 2020), but reflective dialogue requires suspending judgment to create exploratory space. Brookfield (2017) extends this insight, arguing that premature evaluation forecloses the "productive disequilibrium" necessary for transformative learning. As Burbules (1993) notes, genuine dialogue demands "communicative virtues" including patience, tolerance for ambiguity, and willingness to risk misunderstanding.

Shifting from Direction to Facilitation: Edge's (1992a, p. 6) interpretation emphasizes that "each person's development remains in that person's own hands." This suggests moving from advice-giving toward facilitative questioning that helps speakers achieve clearer self-understanding. Schön's (1983, 1987) work on reflective practice supports this shift, demonstrating how professional knowledge develops through guided inquiry rather than knowledge transmission. Van Manen (1991) similarly argues that reflection requires "a certain space and freedom" that directive interaction undermines.

Emphasizing Process Over Content: Humanistic psychology's focus on self-actualization (Maslow, 1968) suggests attending not just to what is said but how thinking unfolds. This involves slowing down to allow pausing and reflection (Rodgers, 2002), exploring underlying assumptions (Mezirow, 1990), making thinking visible (Ritchhart et al., 2011), and connecting ideas to personal
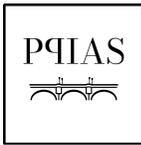
values and experiences (Palmer, 1998). Dewey's (1933) classic formulation of reflection as "active, persistent, and careful consideration" emphasizes this processual dimension.

Cooperative Rather Than Competitive Exchange: Cooperative Development emphasizes working "with" rather than "on" someone (Edge, 2002). While naturally occurring professional talk can become competitive or performative (Hargreaves, 2000), reflective dialogue requires genuine collaboration. Johnson's (2009) sociocultural perspective on teacher learning demonstrates how such collaborative engagement mediates professional development more effectively than individualistic models. Wenger's (1998) communities of practice framework similarly shows how identity and knowledge develop through mutual engagement rather than individual achievement.

Cooperative Development: Operationalizing Dialogic Reflection

CD represents a practical methodology for fostering dialogic reflection through consciously structured interaction. The framework operates through deliberately asymmetrical roles: one "Speaker" explores an idea or concern while "Understanders" use specific conversational moves designed to facilitate articulation without imposing direction. The use of the term 'articulation' is deliberate and captures the key aspect of reflection that it is often emergent and focused on something incomplete and becoming:

> Articulations are not simply descriptions . . . articulations are attempts to formulate what is initially inchoate, or confused, or badly formulated. But this kind of formulation, or reformulation, does not leave its object unchanged. To give a certain articulation is to shape our sense of what we desire or what we hold important in a certain way. (Taylor, 1985, p. 36)

In what follows, the term 'articulation' is used to describe what the Speaker does in a CD session. Three core moves scaffold thinking dialogically:

- *Reflection*—offering back a version of what the Speaker said, creating what we might call "external internal dialogue" that enables new perspectives on one's thinking. Interestingly, even inaccurate reflections prove productive (Boshell, 2002), prompting deeper articulation when Speakers recognize mismatches between intended and received meanings. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) notion that thought develops through its expression in speech.
- *Focusing*—directing attention to something previously mentioned: "a few minutes ago you said X, would you like to say more?" This demonstrates temporal layering—returning to earlier conversational threads and building upon them. Understanding doesn't emerge linearly but through recursive engagement, echoing Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle.
- *Relating*—presenting two or more aspects of the Speaker's talk back to them, asking how they connect. This is quintessentially dialogic: meaning emerges from interplay between multiple perspectives. The Understander functions as a collaborative partner, making visible connections the Speaker may not consciously recognize (Bruner, 1986).
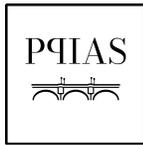
The framework's power lies in its departure from conventional academic discourse. By capitalizing role terms and establishing explicit "moves," CD makes visible the usually invisible interactional choices that enable or constrain reflective thinking (Mann & Walsh, 2013, 2017). This conscious adoption of Rogerian principles creates safety and trust—conditions Hatton and Smith (1995) identify as essential for genuine reflection.

Structured Approaches Across Contexts

Numerous researchers have developed complementary frameworks. Bain et al. (2002) created the 5R framework (Reporting, Responding, Relating, Reasoning, Reconstructing) for pre-service teachers, while Gibbs (1988) proposed a reflective cycle including Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusions, and Action planning. Though differing in specifics, these frameworks share a commitment to structuring reflection without prescribing its outcomes. In some ways, it does not matter necessarily which design or model you adopt, but that there should be a shared commitment to buy into it and perhaps adapt and change it as time goes on, based on mutual experience, discussion, and agreement.

In teacher education, Farrell (2015, 2018) demonstrates how a framework for reflective practice scaffolds professional development across career stages. Gebhard and Oprandy's (1999) work on language teaching supervision, Freeman's (1991, 2016) research on teacher cognition, and Underhill's (1992) humanistic approaches show how dialogic principles translate into systematic practice. McGill and Beaty's (1992) action learning and Heron's (1996) six-category intervention analysis extend these principles to broader educational relationships.

Professional learning communities offer another context for fostering dialogic reflection. Poortman and Brown (2018) document how Professional Learning Networks create collaborative environments focused on improving practice. Stoll et al. (2006) identify key characteristics including shared values, collective focus on student learning, and reflective professional inquiry. Importantly, Rosenholtz (1989) shows that school cultures emphasizing collaboration significantly impact teacher learning—suggesting that organizational structures profoundly shape possibilities for reflective dialogue.

Innovative Formats and Large-Scale Applications

Beyond traditional settings, innovative formats demonstrate dialogic principles in action. Fishbowl conversations involve four speakers responding to unseen questions, with audience members tapping speakers' shoulders to rotate participation. This format disrupts conventional speaker-audience hierarchies, creating fluid exchange (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005).

Structured post-talk engagement includes brief presentations followed by small-group discussions, with speakers rotating through groups. Crucially, speakers provide questions guiding discussions, ensuring dialogue continues beyond the presentation. This format embodies what Freire (1970) called "problem-posing education" rather than "banking" approaches.

At the organisational level, Involve—the UK's leading public participation charity—shows how deliberative processes foster reflective talk (Involve, 2019). Their citizens' assemblies bring
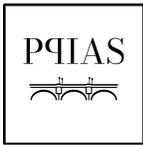
together demographically representative groups to consider public issues over multiple days through learning, deliberation, and decision-making phases. Professional facilitation ensures all voices are heard while maintaining productive dialogue. This approach realizes Habermas's (1984) vision of "communicative action," where understanding rather than strategic influence guides interaction. Fishkin's (2009, 2018) work on deliberative polling similarly demonstrates that structured deliberation produces more informed, nuanced public judgment.

Critical Perspectives and Limitations

We must acknowledge limitations. Segal (2024) questions whether "widespread implementation of collective reflection in teacher PD, presumed to contribute to improvement of teacher practice, may not in fact accomplish this PD goal." This reminds us that structure alone doesn't guarantee meaningful dialogue. Cornford (2002) similarly critiques uncritical enthusiasm for reflection, noting it can become a ritualistic performance rather than a genuine inquiry. Zeichner and Liston (1996) warn that reflection can reproduce rather than challenge power relations if structural inequities remain unaddressed.

Moreover, dialogic reflection faces practical constraints. Timperley (2011) documents how time pressures, accountability demands, and organizational cultures often undermine reflective practice. Achinstein (2002) shows how seemingly collaborative spaces can mask conflict and disagreement rather than productively engaging them. The challenge becomes creating conditions where difference enriches rather than fragments dialogue—what Burbules and Bruce (2001) call "productive engagement with disagreement."

Practical Adaptations

Despite the kind of challenges that Segal (2024) outlines above, there is widespread agreement that concrete strategies can support dialogic reflection. In considering the design and/or support of dialogic reflection, it is likely that the following will need careful consideration:

- *Questioning Strategies*: Move from closed to open questions, inviting exploration: "What's making you think about this?" rather than "What should you do?" (Costa & Garmston, 2002).
- *Response Patterns*: Replace immediate reactions with reflective responses: "That sounds like..." or "I'm hearing..." rather than "You should..." This echoes Cazden's (2001) analysis of productive classroom discourse patterns.
- *Time and Pacing*: Allow silence and processing time that conventional talk lacks. Rowe's (1986) research on "wait time" demonstrates how even brief pauses significantly affect thinking quality.
- *Meta-cognitive Awareness*: Explicitly attend to thinking processes: "What assumptions are we making?" or "How are we approaching this?" Flavell's (1979) foundational work on metacognition supports this emphasis.
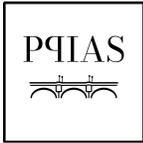
The Paris IAS Example

The Paris Institute for Advanced Study demonstrates systematic fostering of dialogic reflection through its "reverse seminar" format. Unlike traditional presentations prioritizing knowledge display, these seminars make sessions "as useful as possible for the speaker" by positioning fellows as collaborative problem-solvers. Speakers present challenges they're facing while listeners contribute ideas, tools, and references across disciplinary boundaries.

Multiple dialogic layers structure the process: initial discussant commentary, extended 110-minute fellow feedback, and crucially, a follow-up session one week later where speakers reflect on "what you have learned from their feedback, and how and why you plan to implement it (or not)." This temporal separation enables reflection "away from the pressure of the moment"—what Eraut (1994, 2000) terms "deliberative reflection" as distinct from immediate "reflection-in-action." This allows issues of 'face' to be less of an issue, in that any acceptance, adoption, acknowledgement, and especially 'not accepting' become less problematic (or socially desirable) with time having passed.

The reverse seminar creates "reciprocal epistemic labour"—speakers articulate emerging problems while listeners engage generously across disciplines. Removing "disciplinary or publication competition" enables genuine co-construction of understanding. This reversal transforms seminars from monologic knowledge transmission into dialogic spaces where meaning emerges through sustained, multi-perspectival conversation across time. The IAS approach embodies what Lave and Wenger (1991) describe as "legitimate peripheral participation," where learning occurs through collaborative engagement rather than knowledge transfer.

Conclusion: Structure as Invitation

Returning to our opening question: Can we intentionally foster dialogic reflection? The evidence suggests yes—but with important caveats. Structures and frameworks can invite dialogue by removing barriers, creating safety, and modeling alternative discourses. They can not compel authentic engagement, which remains fundamentally voluntary and emergent. As Rogers (1961, p. 33) observed, we can create "proper conditions" for growth but can not force it.

The key lies in understanding structure not as prescription but as invitation—scaffolding that supports without constraining, guides without directing. Like good musical improvisation, dialogic reflection requires both form and freedom. The frameworks discussed here offer form—conversational architecture, creating space for reflection. But the content, the insights, the growth must remain in participants' hands. This paradox—that we foster spontaneity through structure—captures the essence of designing for dialogic reflection. It is both a challenge and an opportunity.

Dialogue Three: How might digital environments support dialogic reflection?

Do digital environments enhance or constrain dialogic reflection? This question has become increasingly urgent as educational and professional contexts migrate online. The relationship between technology and dialogue is neither a straightforward enhancement nor a simple
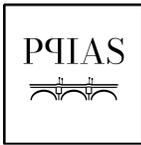
impediment, but rather a complex reconfiguration of how reflective conversations can unfold across time, space, and modalities.

Contemporary multimodal discourse scholars like Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, 2006) have extended Bakhtin's heteroglossia beyond verbal language to include "the combination of different semiotic modes—for instance, language and music—in a communicative artifact or event" (Van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 281). Building on this foundation, Jewitt et al. (2021) have demonstrated how digital environments create new forms of heteroglossic interaction where "diverse ways in which a number of distinct semiotic resource systems are both co-deployed and co-contextualized in the making of a text-specific meaning" (Baldry & Thibault, 2006, p. 21). This theoretical lens helps us understand how digital tools don't merely replicate face-to-face dialogue but create qualitatively different dialogic possibilities.

Recent scholarship has explored these different dialogic possibilities. In doing so, it has conceptualized technology not merely as a tool for recording practice but as a dialogic partner that mediates and deepens reflective inquiry in teacher education and classroom contexts. Studies demonstrate that digital affordances—including classroom discourse visualization (Wang et al., 2025), video-enhanced assessment platforms (Hidson, 2024), and AI-supported feedback systems (Xerri, 2025)—can foster what Xerri describes as "the active co-construction of knowledge between teacher, tool, and peer, where insights emerge through critical engagement rather than passive review."

However, the kind of technological interventions, outlined above, prove most effective when embedded within collaborative structures that preserve the essentially social nature of dialogic reflection; whether through digital collaborative tools (Lantz-Andersson et al., 2022), dialogic journals (Zarei & Mohammadi, 2024), or online professional learning communities (Xerri, 2025), the emphasis remains on creating spaces where multiple voices engage in productive tension. Critically, researchers caution against technological determinism, insisting that digital tools must be grounded in pedagogical frameworks that support progression from descriptive to critical reflection (Barak & Lefstein, 2024; Skoglund & Garmannslund, 2024) while maintaining teacher agency and contextual appropriateness. The emerging consensus suggests that technology's role in dialogic reflection is fundamentally about supporting and amplifying human capacities for meaning-making rather than automating reflective processes, positioning educators as co-designers of professional knowledge in increasingly complex, digitally mediated learning environments.

Digital Tools and Dialogic Mechanisms

Digging a little deeper into this kind of recent research, we can consider specific ways digital tools can enhance dialogic reflection. Wang et al. (2025) developed classroom discourse visualization tools to support students' dialogic reflection, showing that visualizing classroom discourse enables students to embrace alternative problem-solving approaches and actively engage in both collaborative and individual reflection. This work demonstrates that making dialogue visible through digital representation can itself become a catalyst for deeper reflection.
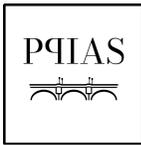
In a recent article (Gulzar et al., 2025), the authors account for how digital tools produce dialogic effects through several interconnected mechanisms. Digital tools can enable three layers of dialogic communication: dialogue with self (internal reflection), dialogue with peers (collaborative reflection), and dialogue with mentors/researchers (guided reflection). This layered model recognizes that dialogic reflection operates simultaneously across multiple relational dimensions, with technology potentially supporting each level while also enabling connections between them.

E-portfolios encourage specific dialogic practices through multimodal self-expression, allowing students to use various media (text, images, videos, word clouds) to represent thoughts in ways that prompt deeper self-dialogue (Gulzar et al., 2025). The knowledge that others will view the portfolio creates a dialogic relationship between author and potential readers—what we might call audience awareness. This anticipatory dialogue shapes the reflective process even before any direct interaction occurs. Students can revisit, revise, and reconstruct their reflective entries over time through recursive decision-making, while peer buddy schemes provide structured pairing systems that facilitate collaborative meaning-making through shared digital spaces.

Video technologies support dialogic reflection through tagging and commenting systems that enable precise identification of teaching moments that become focal points for discussion. Replay functionality allows repeated viewing that supports deeper analysis and multiple perspectives— creating what we might understand as dialogue with one's past self across temporal distance. Collaborative review protocols create structured processes where peers can comment on and discuss specific tagged moments, while customizable frameworks allow student-developed tag sets that focus dialogue on contextually relevant aspects. This customization matters: it shifts agency from prescribed categories to collaborative meaning-making about what merits attention.

Effective dialogic reflection through digital tools requires evidence-based dialogue (digital artifacts provide concrete reference points for discussion rather than relying on memory), flexible yet structured approaches (tools that provide frameworks while allowing personal choice and agency), sustained interaction (ongoing exchanges rather than one-time reflective tasks), and social construction of meaning (collaborative analysis that builds understanding through interaction). Critically, the dialogic effect emerges not from the technology itself, but from how it's implemented with appropriate pedagogical scaffolding, feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for meaningful peer interaction. This observation echoes our earlier conclusion about structured approaches: technology, like methodological frameworks, functions as an invitation rather than a guarantee.

Podcasting as Dialogic Medium

Podcasting has emerged as a fundamentally dialogic process that creates unique conditions for collaborative knowledge construction through interactive discourse. The medium demonstrates what Barnes (2008) conceptualizes as "exploratory talk," where thinking develops through tentative speculation and collaborative refinement rather than predetermined scripts. Unlike written academic discourse with its emphasis on polished argumentation, podcasting privileges the process of thinking-aloud with others.
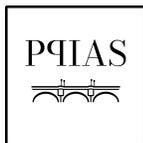
Podcast analysis reveals the medium's distinctive dual-audience interaction management, where hosts must simultaneously navigate immediate co-participant dialogue while performing for an imagined audience. This creates what Heritage (2012) terms "epistemic positioning"—the ongoing negotiation of knowledge territories between speakers. The dialogic nature manifests through real-time collaborative repair and refinement of ideas, visible in the conversation's natural rhythm of building, questioning, and reconstructing meaning together.

The temporal and modal dimensions of podcast dialogue are particularly significant. Hedging language ("could this be seen," "I'm just wondering") demonstrates how the medium creates space for collaborative ideation through tentative speculation and articulation . This aligns with Mercer and Littleton's (2007) understanding of how dialogue facilitates thinking development through shared exploration of ideas. The recorded but conversational nature allows for intellectual risk-taking that more formal academic genres may constrain.

Podcasting functions as what Wenger (1998) would recognize as a community of practice, where learning occurs through participation in shared discourse. The medium's affordances—its asynchronous, recorded nature—create a "low-stakes environment" that enables risk-taking in ideation compared to synchronous formats. This dialogic space allows for what Schön (1983) conceptualized as reflection-in-action, where professional learning emerges through collaborative enquiry. Yet because the conversation is preserved, it also enables what Eraut (1994) terms "deliberative reflection"—listeners can return to episodes, hearing the dialogue anew through their evolved understanding.

Networked Dialogue Across Time: Evidence from TEFLology Podcast

One of my current PhD students (Mathew Turner) is examining the discourse of development in his 'TEFLology Podcast' and it reveals how digital media can scaffold dialogic reflection through inter-episode referencing, creating what might be called a "networked dialogue" across time. This work illuminates a distinctive affordance of digital reflective media: the capacity to maintain and revisit conversational threads across temporal distance, transforming episodic exchanges into cumulative dialogue.

The following extract occurs at the start of Matthew's discussion of a news story on the banning of English in Iran. The central concept under consideration here is cultural invasion:

> **Matthew:** This idea of a cultural invasion, though, or, you know, English as a type of cultural invasion, it reminded me of something that Reiko Yoshihara said in the panel discussion from our JALT presentation. I think she asked Hugh Starkey this idea of, you know, I think she expressed that maybe she felt, occasionally she felt a little conflicted that, by teaching English, is she then promoting Western values.
> **Rob:** Yeah.
> **Matthew:** What do you think about that?
> **Rob:** Well, I mean, so, Robert Philipson, in his linguistic imperialism sort of thesis. He, I mean, this is part of what he talks about in that.

Matthew references Yoshihara's earlier comments, hedging carefully with phrases like "I think she expressed that maybe she felt a little conflicted." Her voice is recycled but acknowledged
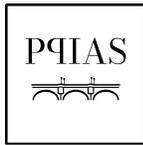
as refracted through his memory and recall. This exchange demonstrates how the podcast medium enables dialogue not only between present participants but also with shared or broadcast voices from earlier episodes, creating multiple conversational layers that support attempts to articulate more nuanced meaning-making than single-encounter reflection typically allows. The dialogue becomes polyphonic in Bakhtinian terms—multiple voices, multiple times, engaging in productive tension.

Another extract shows direct impact on professional practice:

```
Matt: I've tried to stop saying context, because I listened to, you know your
interview you did with Adrian Holliday.
Rob: Right.
Matt: He, I remember him saying, oh, you shouldn't say context, or...
Rob: Yeah, well, so he wrote the book Appropriate Methodology and Social Context,
and I think his general view is that the idea of context has come to replace the
idea of sort of national stereotype, essentially.
Matt: Okay, yeah.
```

Matt directly attributes a change in his professional practice to listening back to an Adrian Holliday interview (an earlier podcast). This represents dialogic reflection's impact on real-world practice through temporal layering—the original interview with Holliday, Matt's subsequent listening, his changed practice, and now his reporting of that change back to Rob, who collaboratively reconstructs Holliday's position. Matt's tentative recollection ("I remember him saying") prompts Rob to elaborate, demonstrating how the digital archive enables collaborative reconstruction of meaning. The podcast becomes both a conversational space and a reflexive resource, allowing participants to revisit and refine understanding over time.

Other data Mathew has collected shows participants recognizing how their ongoing dialogue across episodes has shifted their understanding—the podcast doesn't just record reflection but actively generates it through temporal and interpersonal layering of voices and ideas. The conversation has developed its own history, creating context for ongoing meaning-making. This is recognised by the participants with comments like "Well, there you go. See these threads through time". This metaphor of "threads" encapsulates how dialogic reflection operates: not as a linear progression but as interconnected strands woven across conversations, participants, and temporal moments. The digital podcast medium uniquely enables these threads to remain visible and retrievable, allowing participants to trace, reconnect, and extend lines of inquiry that might otherwise remain fragmentary. The process of recording and recycling these digital artefacts supports the recall of such threads. This threading demonstrates that dialogic reflection thrives when supported by technologies that preserve conversational history while enabling ongoing reengagement—transforming episodic exchanges into a cumulative, collaborative knowledge-building enterprise.

AI as Dialogic Partner?

The question of whether AI systems can participate in genuine dialogic reflection remains contentious. The current debate about AI is largely sceptical. McCann and Sweeney (2025) argue in The Guardian that "generative AI undermines teaching and learning, bypasses reflection and
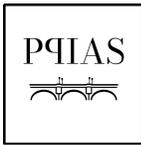
criticality, and deflects students from reading original material... Generative AI results in generic, dull and often factually incorrect output." This critique echoes broader concerns about technology replacing rather than supporting human thinking processes. However, many students report examples of how AI has helped them clarify ideas, using AI as a dialogic tool rather than a mere information retrieval system. This divergence between institutional critique and user experience merits careful examination. What conditions might enable AI to function dialogically rather than monologically? Several dimensions seem relevant:

- The capacity for genuine co-construction of ideas, where the conversation involves iterative refinement of concepts, with AI responses prompting new questions or perspectives that lead to exploring different angles not initially considered.
- Mutual influence on the direction of inquiry, where the path of discussion genuinely emerges from interaction rather than following predetermined scripts.
- Productive disagreement and revision, when challenges or refinements lead to a more nuanced understanding developing through the exchange itself.

However, important limitations constrain these possibilities. The dialogic quality is constrained by AI's nature as a system without lived experience or independent agency in the way another human would have. It is not inherently intersubjective in the sense outlined by Duranti and Goodwin above. However, there remain fundamental questions about whether genuine dialogue requires the uncertainty and unpredictability that comes with authentic human agency.

Despite these valid worries and doubts, many users report that thoughtful engagement with AI can genuinely surprise them, challenge their assumptions, and lead to insights they wouldn't have reached alone. The key seems to be approaching the interaction with genuine curiosity rather than treating it as mere information retrieval—much as we've emphasized throughout this article that dialogic quality emerges from how we engage rather than from external structures alone. Perhaps AI functions best as what we might call a "dialogic catalyst"—not itself a full dialogic partner, but a stimulus for internal dialogue and subsequent human-to-human reflection about ideas the AI interaction generated.

One promising example of AI supporting dialogic reflection through awareness-raising is the Noticing platform, developed by Elena Oncevska Ager and Matthew Ager (Oncevska Ager, 2024). Rather than positioning AI as a content generator that narrows knowledge-building processes, Noticing employs AI as an interlocutor—a dialogic partner designed to prompt rich thinking through scaffolded 'mentoring' discussions. The platform simulates pre-lesson mentoring conversations that help teachers notice incompleteness in their thinking, find moments of productive confusion, and revise their understanding through non-judgmental dialogue. The hybrid intelligence framework emphasizes that AI systems should coordinate and supplement human intelligence so that both are stronger together than separately, requiring a clear articulation of the roles of teachers, students, and AI in learning processes (Järvelä et al., 2023). This approach allows humans and AI to collaborate by playing to each other's strengths rather than AI replacing human cognition (Oncevska Ager, 2024). In this way, AI augments rather than replaces human intellect (see also Akata et al., 2020; Cukurova, 2024). Teachers using Noticing report appreciating its "patience," privacy, and validation—qualities that create safe spaces for the kind of exploratory
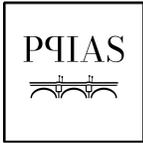
talk essential to genuine reflection. Crucially, the platform embeds what Oncevska Ager calls an "agency test"; users emerge from interactions feeling better prepared and more confident because they have actively generated their own insights rather than passively receiving AI-produced content. This represents a significant shift from AI as answer-provider to AI as awareness-raiser, creating conditions where noticing—the fundamental skill of reflective practice—can develop through structured yet open-ended dialogue.

**Consciousness, Self-Modeling, and Digital Reflection**

At this point, I'd like to take a slight side-step and consider the work of one of the previous residents of the Paris Institute for Advanced Study. I became particularly interested in the work of Daniel Yon, whose research on consciousness and self-perception intersects provocatively with questions of dialogic reflection, after checking out previous academic fellows. Yon's book explores how the brain actively constructs our perceptions, judgments about others, and beliefs about ourselves—a recursive, self-referential process that illuminates the deeply reflective nature of consciousness itself.

Yon's research reveals three interconnected levels of reflection that demonstrate how profoundly our minds turn inward on themselves. First, metacognitive self-modelling: the mind doesn't just receive or perceive; it monitors its own perceptual processes, continuously evaluates the reliability of its own judgments, and forms theories about itself while simultaneously modelling the inner mental states of others. This self-modelling isn't static—we articulate and build models of ourselves and the world around us that shape our perceptions, actions, and decisions, but these models remain perpetually open to revision.

Secondly, self-perception is an active construction: Yon reveals that our sense of self isn't passively received but actively constructed. The beliefs we form about ourselves are not direct observations but theoretical constructions by our predictive brain. Self-reflection, then, isn't just thinking about a fixed self—it's participating in the ongoing construction of that self. This ties explicitly back to the notions of reflexivity and self that we explored in an earlier section. In other words, Yon's work connects powerfully to dialogic reflection's emphasis on meaning-making through interaction: just as understanding emerges through dialogue with others, self-understanding emerges through internal dialogue, where different aspects of consciousness engage each other.

Thirdly, the uncertainty of self-knowledge: Yon's work explores how uncertainty is a fundamental part of the human experience. This suggests that genuine self-reflection must grapple with the fundamental uncertainty of self-knowledge—we can never be entirely sure our self-models are accurate. We are always in a process of becoming and emerging (Edge, 2002). The deeply reflective nature of consciousness, according to Yon, lies not in achieving perfect self-knowledge, but in the ongoing, uncertain, predictive process by which the brain constructs both world and self simultaneously.

Yon's position that it is very difficult for us to take into account what others are saying (because we're always filtering through our predictive models) has profound implications for
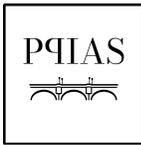
dialogic reflection and probably reinforces the need to find spaces which are 'safe' and relatively non-face-threatening. It probably means that we need to slow things down. I think technology and digital tools have an important role to play here.

Crucially, Yon considers that the same applies to how we "listen" to ourselves—our internal dialogue is similarly filtered through predictive models that can distort what we actually think we're thinking. This suggests that the value of external dialogue partners—whether human interlocutors, recorded conversations we can revisit, or even AI systems—may lie partly in disrupting our predictive models, creating what we might call "cognitive distance" from our own thinking (Yon, 2025). It may also point to the value of recording in some form (e.g., journals, podcasting) so that we can reflect on different versions or articulations in diachronic ways. This is precisely the kind of process that the Noticing platform seeks to promote (see Oncevska Ager, 2024).

Writing this article at the end of 2025, Yon's recent ideas seem particularly resonant:

> And the solution that psychologists and neuroscientists have kind of landed on is that we should change our minds when the world around us seems to be changing. That there's a sense in which if the world seems stable and predictable, we should stick with what we know because the world's stable and say the past is gonna be a good predictor of the present and the future. But if we think that the world is changing, if we find ourselves living through volatile or unstable times, that should make our points of view and our perspectives and our models and our predictions more flexible (Yon, 2023).

This insight resonates powerfully with our current moment. Living in uncertain and changeable times requires finding ways to innovate and explore flexibly—precisely what dialogic reflection enables. Digital environments, despite their limitations, offer affordances for this flexible exploration: the capacity to revisit and revise, to maintain multiple perspectives simultaneously, to trace threads across time, and to disrupt our own predictive models through engagement with diverse voices. The question isn't whether digital tools can replicate face-to-face dialogue, but how they can support distinctively valuable forms of reflective engagement that complement and extend our dialogic capacities.

Conclusion: Digital Dialogic Possibilities

Returning to our current question: How might digital environments support dialogic reflection? The evidence suggests that digital tools create qualitatively different dialogic possibilities rather than simply replicating or replacing face-to-face interaction. These possibilities include: temporal threading that maintains conversational continuity across episodes (especially in podcasts); multimodal representation enabling expression through varied semiotic resources; asynchronous engagement allowing deliberative reflection alongside immediate response; preservation enabling return and revision; and collaborative archiving where shared conversational history becomes a resource for ongoing meaning-making.

Yet these affordances only materialize dialogically when implementation attends to the fundamental principles we've explored throughout: structures that invite rather than prescribe, interactions that privilege process over product, environments that create psychological safety, and
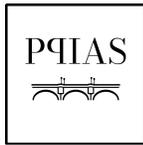
frameworks that maintain openness to multiple perspectives. Technology, like teaching methodology, offers architecture for dialogue but can not compel authentic engagement. The digital environment becomes dialogic not through its features but through how we inhabit it—approaching screens and devices with the same curiosity, generosity, and genuine uncertainty we would bring to face-to-face conversation. In Yon's terms, we must recognize that our engagement with digital tools is filtered through our predictive models, and part of dialogic reflection involves questioning those very models, including our assumptions about what technology can and can not do for our thinking.

Dialogue Four: What is the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of reflection?

The most intriguing aspect of dialogic reflection may be how intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions interpenetrate rather than exist as separate domains. In many ways, this is the central question and central contribution of this article. Consequently, I devote more attention to this question and include several types of data in considering its manifestation and importance. Perhaps a starting point is to say that inner dialogue prepares us for outer dialogue, while outer dialogue enriches and complicates our inner conversations. The voices we internalize from external dialogues become part of our internal dialogic repertoire, while our internal processing shapes how we engage in external conversation. We saw this in Matt's data above, where the ideas and comments from Holliday and Yoshira are heard, internally processed and then recycled for collaborative and interpersonal reflection at a later date. This reciprocal relationship suggests that the boundary between "self" and "other" in reflective practice is more permeable than traditional models acknowledge.

The distinction between monologic and dialogic reflection extends to understanding how dialogic processes operate both as inner conversations and as interactive exchanges with others. While I have articulated this intrapersonal-interpersonal relationship in conventional academic discourse throughout this article, the distinction itself resists purely analytical treatment. The following paired poems attempt to capture what theoretical prose sometimes struggles to convey: the lived experience of dialogue as simultaneously an internal process of conversing with earlier selves and an external process of meaning-making with others. These verses represent an experiment in whether poetic form might offer insights that complement—or perhaps exceed—what traditional academic representation can accomplish. I return to questions of representation and alternative forms of scholarly expression in the article's final section, where I explore the relative freedom that postmodern and autoethnographic approaches might provide. Ok – on a for what it's worth basis:

Inner Dialogue
With my earlier selves, in the here and now, I ponder and 'speak',
In cycles, turning positions and statements round and round,
Where meanings shift and new perspectives creep
Through conversations but with no outward sound.

I question why, then question why I question,
Chiselling edges, I thought were solid as Rodin's stone
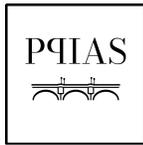
Each response births another small shoot or seed,
Echoes of others' voices, I'm never really alone.

Outer Dialogue
Between your thoughts and mine, we meet and speak,
In spaces where our different voices resonate as sound
Where meanings merge, as new insights spin
Together, our conversations weaving all around.

You offer new threads, I weave them with my own,
Co-creating fresh collages from words we've sown
Each exchange shapes the composite of our emerging canvas,
In dialogue, together we've grown.

These poems attempt to articulate through metaphor and rhythm what the intrapersonal-interpersonal distinction means in practice to me. The first poem emphasizes temporal dialogue—the ongoing conversation with "my earlier selves, in the here and now"—where past positions become resources for present reflection. The second foregrounds spatial dialogue—meeting in "spaces where our different voices resonate as sound"—where meaning emerges through interaction with others. Yet both poems resist clean separation: inner dialogue is never "really alone," while outer dialogue involves "weaving" threads with "my own" perspectives.

I recognize this poetic representation introduces methodological tensions. Does the shift to verse help readers grasp the simultaneity of inner and outer dialogue in ways that analytical prose can not? Or does the dramatic, almost mystical quality of poetic language obscure rather than illuminate? I confess ambivalence about this form of representation—what Oakley (1981) might call "resistance" to departing from conventional academic discourse. Yet this very resistance raises important questions: If dialogic reflection genuinely values multiple voices and ways of knowing, must our representations of research embrace corresponding multiplicity? Can scholarly writing maintain intellectual rigour while incorporating forms traditionally excluded from academic discourse? These questions return us to the article's final exploration of how we represent dialogic reflection itself.

Perhaps it is worth making one additional point; the text or artefact (whether poem, video, metaphor, framework, visualisation) becomes an externalised version of our emerging and target meanings. It gets revised and worked on. In applied linguistics, we might distinguish between intended meaning (the writer's mental representation of what they wish to communicate) and realized meaning (what the current text actually inscribes). While Flower and Hayes' (1981) writer-based/reader-based distinction concerns adapting text for audience comprehension, Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) knowledge-transforming model better captures the writer-text dialogue: writing becomes a dialectic between content space (what I want to say) and rhetorical space (what the text currently says). From a dialogic perspective, this relationship is not linear but recursive—the emerging text talks back to the writer, revealing meanings not originally intended while simultaneously falling short of target meanings. Externalizing thought makes it available for interrogation. Each revision represents a 'turn' in this writer-text dialogue, with meaning neither fully present in intention nor in inscription but emerging through their ongoing negotiation. The
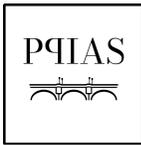
gap between intended and realized meaning is thus generative rather than problematic—each draft is a dialogic turn through which meaning progressively emerges and transforms.

Beyond poetry, there is always this relationship between the self and other, between thought and expression of thought, between impetus and articulated versions. In professional development, therapy, and educational settings, this interplay allows for nuanced, flexible thinking. Rather than seeking simple solutions, dialogic reflection embraces complexity and ambiguity, recognizing that understanding develops through ongoing questioning and exploration. This section explores how dialogic reflection operates across temporal boundaries and through conversations with other researchers, using an extended example from qualitative interview research to illuminate these processes.

A story and group development

The temporal and interpersonal dimensions of dialogic reflection become visible when we examine how stories, metaphors, and frameworks operate as shared resources that persist and resonate across conversations. The following transcript excerpt from a group discussion captures this dynamic in action, revealing not one but multiple layers of dialogic engagement. The exchange demonstrates what Bakhtin meant by heteroglossia: participants think with and through voices, stories, and metaphors that originated externally or from shared experiences but have become part of their internal dialogic repertoire.

1	Harry	a st<u>o</u>ry got- I mean more on st<u>o</u>ries cos it's- it's s<u>o</u>rt
2		of tied <u>in</u> but I remember it quite dist<u>in</u>ctly it's in
3		Disney it in <u>Ep</u>cot I think in in ° America° but the only
4		thing I took b<u>a</u>ck from there, *with any memory of great*
5		*aff<u>e</u>ction I have to s<u>a</u>y* and it's dead s<u>i</u>mple you
6	Nicholas	=from what
7	Harry	with any aff<u>e</u>ction (.) the memory of th<u>i</u>s is the only
8		thing I th<u>ou</u>ght I saw in the whole of D<u>i</u>sney that
9		left any thing apart from G<u>o</u>d it's pl<u>a</u>stic=
10		[ ]
11	Nicholas	I'm sorry
12	Robert	=*ha ha ha HA ha*
13	Nicholas	[*ha ha ha ha ha:::::*
14	Harry	sorry to say it but this r<u>ea</u>lly got to me (.) and
15		it's s<u>i</u>mple (.) there are two- (.) there are some b<u>a</u>rs (.) one's
16		w<u>a</u>rm and one's c<u>oo</u>l (.) and you put your h<u>a</u>nds
17		on °on° these two th<u>i</u>ngs (.) and err okay there's no
18		problem at <u>all</u> and now he says NOW transfer
19		your h<u>a</u>nds to this thing in the m<u>i</u>ddle where
20		you've got a sel<u>e</u>ction of the b<u>a</u>rs, (.) thinner b<u>a</u>rs. (.) and
21		you put your h<u>a</u>nds out (.) and the first resp<u>o</u>nse is
22		it's BURNing (.) you think your h<u>a</u>nds- and
23		you've >just put it on a red hot je-< awff - va
24		and he say N<u>O</u> (.) all that's in the m<u>i</u>ddle are
25		these two b<u>a</u>rs (.) the cold ones and the w<u>a</u>rm
26		ones (.) but when you put them tog<u>e</u>ther the
27		body can't dist<u>in</u>guish (.) the senses CAN not
28		dist<u>in</u>guish between- it confuses the s<u>e</u>nses and

29		the message it gives is it's burning (.) and the
30		interesting thing there is (.) and this >turning<
31		to knowledge >w- just talking about< (.) you can
32		know that (.) but the effort it takes when you KNOW
33		that to say okay THIS time I'm going to put my hands
34		on there and leave- you can do it (.) or at least I find
35		that I can do it and then I gave up with Ethel who was (.)
36	Nicholas	[*ha ha ( )*
37	Harry	determined it- didn't care what she KNEW he hands
38		knew something different and they would come off
39	Robert	*ha ha ha*
40	Harry	and the wonderful thing ab- sometimes KNOWing
41		it isn't quite enough (.) that the visceral thing
42		is just sort of ( ) even more powerful
43	Nicholas	[mmm mmm
44	Harry	[so there's an interesting (.) in terms
45		of all that you were saying about connections there's
46		an interesting ((claps his hands three times in short
47		succession)) (0.8) touching point there
48	Robert	that's very strong yeah=
49	Harry	=yeah I remember that distinctly (.) wffff
50	Robert	I must say when I was listening to Elizabeth (.) I
51		was trying to pay attention to what she was
52		saying but at so- all the time it was- er- triggering
53		similar little stories in passing and so forth
54	Harry	[*ha ha ha*
55	Robert	in m- in my mind yeah? (.) and under gossipy
56		circumstances you'd say '"OH" yes I'll tell you
57		about °mine°'
58	Nicholas	[*ha ha*
59	Harry	[yeah yeah yeah
60	Elizabeth	but then earlier you were saying about we ARE the stories
61		(2.2)
62	Robert	yes
63	Elizabeth	[ermmm
64	Robert	but
65	Elizabeth	[this struck loads of Resonances with me as well
66		(.) we are the stories we tell (.) Halliday says we are
67		what we mean
68	Robert	that's ( ) way
69	Elizabeth	is it- is that the quote? (.) I- a person is what he means
70		(.) from Halliday
71		(1.2)
72	Nicholas	it fits (.) it makes sense I don't recognise

Several features of this exchange illuminate the intrapersonal-interpersonal relationship. First, the temporal complexity: Harry recalls a specific story ('I remember the only thing I took back from there was the only memory of great conversations we had'), and he signals that he has a story in line 1. This is a story that I have heard Harry tell a number of times over the years. It's probably a story has been told many times before. Each time it is shaped to a slightly different context or intended meaning. Apart, from some trouble sources and repair (lines 6-13), it is clear how this is story is, while Nicholas references past discussions that have become present resources
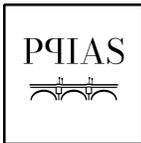
to be evaluated (e.g. on line 48) and reacted to (e.g., on line 65). The story also gets connected to a theory (e.g., Halliday on line 69). Stories and frameworks, etc., don't simply pass through conversation but stick, resonate, and become available for future dialogic engagement. Robert's comment—'that's very strong yeah'—marks recognition that certain stories achieve particular resonance, becoming especially productive resources for ongoing reflection.

Yet the dialogic process doesn't end with this initial exchange. In a subsequent episode, Elizabeth and I return to this very conversation a few weeks later, engaging in meta-level reflection on what had transpired:

1	Elizabeth	and see how m- often they are to do with a metaphor
2		(.) I don't know (.) I can remember quite a few that are
3		to do with metaphors (.) maybe the metaphors just
4		help you remember them (.) although the planning
5		and preparation one wasn't a metaphor one was it?
6	Steve	no (.) I mean it seems like (.) there are:: you mentioned
7		some there (.) there's- there's those sort of more general
8		representations of an experience or an aspect of our lives
9		like Harry's (.) then there's the- the metaphors (.)
10		I mean I remember that one about Harry's hot pipe
11		(.) do you remember that one where he talked about
12		holding onto a hot pipe in –in Disneyland (.) it was
13		about how- how the discourse sometimes allows you
14		because you give more space (.) this kind of co-operative
15		development (.) that you've got this idea and this idea
16		and you've got this idea and this idea (.) and your
17		initial reaction (.) like there's these pipes in Disneyland
18		where (0.8) when you put your hand on them (.) you
19		think they're burning you (.) because one's slightly warm
20		and one's slightly cold (.) and if you touch them individually
21		they don't feel anything at all but it's just some trick of
22		human senses that when you hold (.) a slightly warm and
23		slightly cold bar simultaneously (.) the body's confused and
24		thinks it is being burned (.) so your natural reaction is
25		arrahhhh (.) and he was s- he was just explaining that
26		sometimes >you know that< , someone will represent an
27		idea (.) and another idea and you're first reaction would be
28		urgh they don't go together at all (.) but when you give the
20		extra space that we give=
30	Jane	[yes yeah yeah
31	Steve	=to actually say Reflect >well< you say that idea and that
32		idea [Elizabeth: mmm] can you (.) can you tell us again why
33		you think there's a connection there (.) and when you
34		give the space for the Speaker to come back (.) you can
35		can sometimes (.) that extra of holding on to=

This meta-layer reveals dialogic reflection as fundamentally recursive and temporally extended. The original conversation about stories-as-resources itself becomes a resource for further reflection for the individuals in the group. Elizabeth and I, reflecting back on the earlier session, find ourselves in dialogue not only with each other but with our earlier selves and with
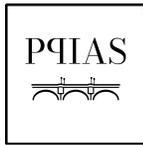
the voices of Harry, Nicholas, and Robert. This creates what we might call "temporal polyphony"—multiple voices from different moments speaking simultaneously within the ongoing group development process. My current analysis here adds yet another temporal layer, as I reflect on both the original exchange and the subsequent meta-discussion, creating a kind of palimpsest where earlier group conversations remain visible beneath later reflections.

This layered structure demonstrates several crucial aspects of dialogic reflection within group development contexts:

- *Dialogue as resource*: Group conversations generate artifacts (stories, metaphors, frameworks) that persist beyond the immediate exchange. These don't merely record what happened but create shared resources for future collaborative thinking.
- *Recursiveness*: Dialogic reflection doesn't move linearly from experience to analysis to closure. Instead, group conversations loop back on themselves—what we say in one session becomes available for collective reflection in subsequent sessions, which generates new insights, which themselves become available for future group work.
- *Interpersonal-intrapersonal dance*: Between the original conversation and the meta-reflection, substantial internal processing occurred. Group members likely rehearsed possible interpretations privately, perhaps returned to the ideas in their own thinking between sessions. These internal dialogues prepared participants for the interpersonal exchange, which in turn seeds new internal processing. The transcript captures only the external manifestation of a process that involves constant movement between private reflection and collaborative exploration.
- *Productive uncertainty*: Notice how both layers involve tentative, exploratory language ('I think', 'kind of', 'sort of'). This aligns with cooperative development's commitment to exploration over prescription. The recursive structure allows meanings to remain open, to be revisited and reconsidered rather than fixed—essential to genuine collaborative development.

This is dialogic reflection operating precisely where inner and outer meet, where past and present interpenetrate, where speaking and listening become inseparable within a sustained community of practice. The transcript reveals dialogue not as discrete exchanges but as temporal threading where past group conversations seed present thinking, current exchanges generate resources for future sessions, and later meta-reflections circle back to illuminate what earlier moments meant. Each layer—the original conversation, the meta-discussion, and this analytical commentary—represents not closure but invitation for continued dialogue within and beyond the group development process.

The Dialogic Interview: A Case Study

The following vignette captures a qualitative interviewer engaged in dialogic reflection—a process that extends far beyond the immediate interview encounter. The context involves research by Eljee Javier on visible ethnic minority native English-speaking teachers (VEM-NESTs), a category that problematizes the native speaker/non-native speaker binary in English language teaching. As a VEM-NEST researcher exploring the experiences of VEM-NESTs, Eljee occupies
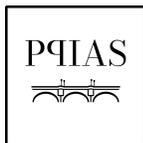
a complex position where personal and professional identities intersect, creating distinctive possibilities for dialogic engagement. In simple terms, she is a VEM-NEST, and she is recruiting and interviewing other VEM-NESTs.

The research employed a narrative-based methodology occurring in two stages. During the first stage, the researcher sent participants a written story of her own experiences as a VEM-NEST with an invitation to respond by writing their own stories. The second stage consisted of one-to-one interviews in which questions were based on participants' original written narratives. This methodological structure deliberately created multiple temporal moments for dialogue: the researcher's initial narrative, participants' written responses, and the face-to-face interview—each moment creating conditions for both internal and interpersonal reflection.

The transcript excerpt below reveals how dialogue operates across these multiple temporal and spatial boundaries. The turns are notably long and conversational, moving away from traditional question-answer formats toward genuinely dialogic exchange. For this reason, it is worth sharing here an extended extract.

Eljee's Transcript

```
 1   I: You grew up in- (.) with a large extended family
 2       (.) can you tell me a little more about how your
 3       cultural heritage was instilled in you (.) what
 4       what did that actually involve?
 5   P:  Well (.) I might of "mis-written" the situation.
 6       I mean I grew up with my nuclear family but I had
 7       a lot of contact with extended family so with
 8       visits rather than living in the same area <so to
 9       speak> I mean, it really involved getting
10       together for birthdays, celebrations and eating
11       certain foods listening to certain music I
12       suppose and I dunno, having a shared
13       consciousness as being different but open
14       conversations of overcoming those differences
15       or I don't know, acclimatising.
16       When I say open conversation I mean nothing
17       explicit but it was just, it wasn't a case
18       of "We're different and we're going to actively
19       try to stay different" it was kind of we want
20       to try to acclimatise as much as possible and
21       make the most of the opportunities of being
22       here whilst still keeping an identity in terms
23       of say food or music or language – this pidgin
24       English that was spoken in the house.
25       So yeah, it was sort of having a balancing act,
26       certainly not trying to blend in too too much
27       and lose a sense of identity.
28   I:  What do mean by "blending in too much", like
29       what was too much?
30   P:  That's a really interesting question.
31   I:  The reason why I ask that is because I wonder
32       that myself in a Canadian sort of culture so
33       I wondered what your take is on that?
34   P:  Yeah, it's interesting generally that your story
35       and then me reflecting on my story sort made me
36       think, "Oh I haven't really tackled these
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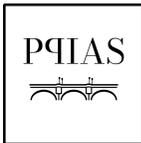
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37        questions very much growing up" (.) but I'm
38        trying even to think why that would be. (.) I'm
39        I'm sorry I'm not sure-
40   I:   Don't worry, I mean it makes me think (.) like
41        yeah finding that balance between being- growing
42        up in a Filipino household. It was interesting
43        when you mentioned Patois in your house, where
44        with my parents they spoke English to me and my
45        brother. That was quite specific. My mother can
46        speak German, English, both dialects in the
47        Philippines and Spanish and my dad speaks
48        English, Tagalog – the main dialect in the
49        Philippines – and Japanese and my brother and I,
50        we just speak English! I mean this linguistic
51        heritage here! And part of that was that they
52        wanted us to be Canadian and be really part of
53        so Canadian society English was the best way
54        forward and that was a choice growing up so I
55        guess I didn't notice it until I got older that
56        they still insisted, even up to high school, that
57        the values - for example the emphasis on family,
58        and the whole taking care of your elders, the
59        honorific system of how you address people – in
60        my family but certainly different things like
61        using English and getting an education in Canada.
62        That was kind of a path to try to negotiate
63        so I don't know if it's something similar
64        with you?
65   P:   It was very similar, I mean things like the
66        language thing for a start, I mean it was
67        expected, up there they'd speak Patois to us
68        all the time y'know to varying degrees. I think
68        my dad is much more a user of the dialect
70        whereas my mum you could probably say she's
71        got an accent until she swings into it full on
72        but it was never expected that we'd speak like
73        that and between either that or even having
74        a very strong black country accent as I mentioned
75        in my story it just wasn't expected. Again I
76        think that was a sense of they thought, they
77        really wanted us to be very well educated -
78        - my sister and I - they wanted us to get
79        a good education, it was always expected that we
80        would go to university and maybe me more so
81        than my sister as I was always more academic than
82        my sister. Anyway so it was definitely an
83        expectation that I would go. I think then
84        attached to that was a sense of well people
85        that do that, that speak a certain way, y'know
86        what I mean in order to get ahead in this society
87        that you're in (.) you need to speak a certain
88        way and y'know my parents…they were aware that
89        they were both working class, my mom dad worked
90        in a supermarket and a factory and I think they
91        felt that their background limited them really in
92        terms of achieving that…
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This exchange illuminates several crucial dimensions of how intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection interweave in dialogic practice. I expand on them in the following sections.
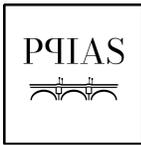
Temporal Layering: Multiple Dialogues Across Time

The transcript reveals how dialogic reflection operates across multiple temporal moments, creating what we might call "temporal layering" of reflection. The participant's reference to "your story and then me reflecting on my story sort made me think, 'Oh I haven't really tackled these questions very much growing up" (lines 34-36) demonstrates how the initial exchange of written narratives created an ongoing internal dialogue that continued to unfold during the face-to-face encounter.

This temporal structure enabled several layers of reflection to develop:

- *Pre-interview internal dialogue*: The researcher's process of writing her own narrative required intrapersonal reflection—examining her experiences, selecting which aspects to share, and anticipating how they might resonate with potential participants.
- *Participant's written response*: Upon receiving the researcher's narrative, the participant engaged in internal dialogue while composing her own story, creating an initial interpersonal connection through the written exchange.
- *Ongoing internal processing*: Between receiving the written narratives and the face-to-face interview, both researcher and participant continued internal reflection, as evidenced by the participant's comment about "reflecting on my story."
- *Real-time dialogic co-construction*: During the interview itself, these accumulated reflections became resources for collaborative meaning-making, with each speaker's contributions prompting further internal processing even as external dialogue continued.
- *Post-interview reflection*: The researcher's subsequent analysis and reflexive commentary (discussed below) represents yet another temporal moment where the dialogue continues internally, now informed by multiple previous iterations.

This temporal architecture demonstrates that dialogic reflection doesn't occur in discrete moments but unfolds continuously across time, with interpersonal exchanges generating intrapersonal reflection that in turn shapes subsequent interpersonal engagement. As Vygotsky (1978) theorized, thought develops through its expression in speech—but we can extend this insight to recognize that both internal and external dialogue develop through their recursive interaction with each other.

Shared Positionality and the Blurring of Boundaries

What emerges powerfully from this interaction is how the interviewer and participant's shared identity as VEM-NESTs creates a dialogic space where conventional interview boundaries become productively blurred. The researcher's extended sharing (lines 40-64) represents not simply self-disclosure but a dialogic response to the participant's emerging reflections and her temporary difficult in pinning down what she wants to say—a co-construction of understanding that challenges binary distinctions between interviewer objectivity and subjective engagement.

The interviewer's turn beginning "Don't worry, I mean it make me think" (line 40) shifts the discourse from conventional question-answer format into reciprocal narrative exchange. This shift matters because it signals that both participants are engaged in genuine exploration rather than
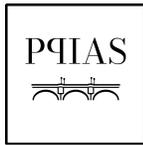
enacting fixed roles of knowledge-seeker and knowledge-holder. The interviewer's detailed account of her Filipino household, her parents' multilingualism, and their strategies for negotiating Canadian society offers a parallel experience that invites comparison, contrast, and deeper articulation from the participant.

Crucially, this sharing doesn't impose the interviewer's interpretation but creates what Edge (2002) called "external internal dialogue"—the interviewer's narrative becomes material for the participant's internal reflection, as evidenced by her response: "It was very similar" (line 65), followed by elaborated thinking about language expectations and educational aspirations. The interpersonal exchange has enriched both participants' intrapersonal understanding.

The concept of co-construction has been helpful for me in demonstrating how "interview talk is inevitably a co-construction between the interviewer and interviewee" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). This inevitably creates opportunities for dialogic reflection as researchers recognize their active role in shaping interview interactions. This aligns with the author's statement about how engaging with Eljee's research prompted internal reflection on interviewing practices.

My own dialogic reflection

At this point, I would like to share with you (the reader) that reading this text and talking to Eljee shifted my own thinking in a significant way. In short, this extract raised important questions about the relationship between empathy and disclosure in research relationships for me. Traditional methodological training often presents these as tensions to be managed: how much should researchers disclose without biasing participants? How can empathy be expressed while maintaining analytic distance? Yet from a dialogic perspective, these apparent dilemmas can become productive opportunities. The researcher's disclosure doesn't contaminate the data but enables deeper dialogue; empathy doesn't compromise objectivity but enriches understanding through genuine engagement with multiple perspectives.

In other words, engagement with Eljee opened up further dialogic processes for me. In order to explain this, I need to go back to the initial, albeit tentative arguments in Mann (2011) where I outlined several 'discourse dilemmas' (2011, p. 18). In the same article, I put forward the notion of 'parameters of sensitivity' (2011, p. 18). In retrospect, this seems flawed in many respects, but I want to concentrate on one flaw here, in order to establish and illustrate this dialogic process. I want to look particularly at reflexive treatments of empathy, rapport, and disclosure, including ethical perspectives.

Returning to Eljee's vignette. In Eljee's move below (line 40), her decision to disclose at that point in the interview is clearly motivated out of her empathetic understanding and her appreciation that 'P' is perhaps struggling and potentially feeling uncomfortable:

```
38  P:  … I'm trying even to think why that would be. (.)
39      I'm sorry I'm not sure-
40  I:  Don't worry, I mean it make me think (.) like
41      yeah finding that balance between being- growing
42      up in a Filipino household…
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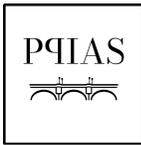
Therefore, this moment led me to appreciate that an empathetic appreciation of the difficulty that an interviewer is experiencing might well prompt disclosure (almost certainly unplanned but constructed in the moment). I think in the original formulation (in 'parameters of sensitivity'), I had been focused on something like the contrast between focus on the interviewee (empathy and understanding) and focus on the interviewer (disclosure of experiences and beliefs), but I do not now think it is necessarily helpful to see them as straightforward ends of a cline at all. As Eljee's example shows, their relationship is more subtle and nuanced than that. Disclosure could, in one interview, be simply a lack of concentration on the role of being an interviewer and getting carried away with a desire to share your own narratives and experiences. However, in another (as in Eljee's data above), it might be motivated by a desire to support the interviewee and give them space and support.

## Predictive Models and the Challenge of Genuine Listening

Returning to Daniel Yon's work discussed in the previous section, we can deepen our understanding of why the intrapersonal-interpersonal relationship matters so profoundly for dialogic reflection. Yon's position that it is very difficult for us to take into account what others are saying because we're always filtering through our predictive models has significant implications for interview practice and reflective dialogue more broadly.

Crucially, Yon considers that the same filtering applies to how we "listen" to ourselves—our internal dialogue is similarly mediated through predictive models that can distort what we actually think we're thinking. This suggests that both intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of reflection face the same fundamental challenge: how to create distance from our predictive models sufficiently to allow genuine surprise, learning, and transformation.

One response to this challenge lies precisely in the interplay between internal and external dialogue. When we articulate our thinking to another person, their response may disrupt our predictive models in ways that pure internal reflection can not. The participant's hesitation—"I'm I'm sorry I'm not sure-" (lines 38-39)—signals a moment where her predictive models prove insufficient for the question posed. This uncertainty is productive: it creates space for new thinking to emerge.

Similarly, the interviewer's extended narrative (lines 40-64) wasn't scripted or planned but emerged responsively in the moment, suggesting that the dialogue itself generated thinking that exceeded what either participant could have produced alone. This aligns with what Bohm (1996) described as dialogue's capacity to create "thinking together"—not consensus, but a collective pool of meaning where new understanding can emerge.

Yet the interviewer's later reflexive analysis demonstrates that this interpersonal exchange also catalyzed ongoing intrapersonal work. Her attempt to articulate what was happening methodologically required sustained internal dialogue with the transcript, with theoretical frameworks, and with her own emerging understanding. The interpersonal created conditions for intrapersonal; the intrapersonal deepened comprehension of the interpersonal.
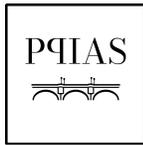
Conclusion: Integration Rather Than Separation

Returning to our opening question: What is the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of reflection? The evidence suggests not separation but integration. The interview example demonstrates that these dimensions don't exist independently but constitute a unified dialogic process where internal and external conversations continuously inform and transform each other.

The voices we encounter in interpersonal dialogue—whether in interviews, collaborative reflection sessions, podcast conversations, or digital exchanges—become part of our internal dialogic repertoire. They populate our consciousness, to use Bakhtin's term, providing resources for ongoing internal reflection. Conversely, our internal processing shapes how we engage externally—what questions we ask, what experiences we share, what connections we make.

In Yon's terms, both intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection involve the brain's predictive modeling processes, with their attendant uncertainties and potential distortions. Yet the interplay between internal and external dialogue may offer our best hope for disrupting limiting predictive models. When we articulate our thinking to others, we create distance from our own thoughts, enabling new perspectives. When others respond, they introduce elements our models didn't predict. When we subsequently reflect internally on these exchanges, we can examine our assumptions more clearly than immediate experience typically allows. Perhaps that is why the kind of interactive engine that Levinson proposes is innate and part of our evolutionary make-up.

The key insight is that genuine dialogic reflection requires both dimensions working together. Pure internal reflection risks becoming circular, reinforcing existing models without sufficient disruption. Pure interpersonal exchange without subsequent internal processing may remain superficial, generating talk but not transformation. Together, however, these dimensions create conditions where thinking can develop, understanding can deepen, and practice can evolve.

This integration aligns with what Rogers (1961) recognized: that growth occurs through the interplay of internal experiencing and external relationship. In dialogic reflection, we don't choose between self and other, between internal and interpersonal. We recognize that understanding emerges in the space between—in the continuous, reciprocal conversation across the permeable boundary that both separates and connects individual consciousness with collaborative dialogue.

Dialogue Five: Can we develop more dialogic approaches to research representation that invite genuine response and continued reflection?

This final question brings us full circle, asking whether we can represent research itself in ways that embody the dialogic principles explored throughout this article. If dialogic reflection operates through multiple voices, temporal layers, and ongoing questioning, shouldn't our academic writing reflect these same qualities? This question challenges us to examine the often-unquestioned conventions of academic discourse and consider how representation itself might become a dialogic practice. It also asks whether team reflection processes should be made more transparent in a reflexive manner.
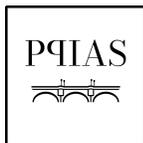
The argument of this section proceeds through three interconnected claims. First, that conventional academic writing operates monologically, presenting singular authoritative voices that often foreclose dialogue. Second, that theoretical and methodological resources now exist for genuinely polyphonic representation that honours multiple voices without subordinating them to authorial interpretation. Third, that implementing dialogic representation requires attention to specific practices—transcript sharing, accountability structures, team reflexivity, digital affordances, and ethical considerations—that together create conditions for research to invite genuine response rather than passive reception.

Beyond Monologic Discourse

Academic writing can embrace varying degrees of dialogic representation, moving beyond monologic scholarly discourse to incorporate multiple voices, perspectives, and genres. This dialogic approach is open to including the voices and data of others and various forms and genres of writing. Such representation challenges traditional academic boundaries by weaving together participant narratives, alternative textual forms, vignettes, and diverse epistemological frameworks (Mann, 2016; Walsh & Walsh, 2017).

Adopting this approach might help democratise knowledge production by including marginalised voices alongside conventional academic writing. By embracing dialogic forms, scholars can create more authentic representations of complex social realities, fostering deeper understanding and more equitable research practices that take into account the full spectrum of human experience and knowledge systems. This is not merely a stylistic choice but an epistemological commitment—recognising that how we write shapes what can be known and who can participate in knowledge creation.

The Theoretical Shift: From Individual to Polyphonic Collaboration

Like Julian Edge, my work in reflective practice with teachers and reflexivity with qualitative researchers has used "dialogic reflection" as part of a specific exploration of both reflective practice and reflexivity. The reflexive process opens up to a dialogic conversation-with-self where the teacher or researcher can examine their own practice and development from multiple perspectives. Edge uses the terms "intermental work and intramental work" to make clear that dialogue happens both between people and within individuals as they reflect on their practice. More polyphonic representation might allow the opening of the polyphonic aspects of the 'self' but also the greater inclusion and examination of other voices. Edge's book, *The reflexive teacher educator in TESOL: Roots and wings,* demonstrates how autobiographical narratives and dialogic interactions between the 'Speaker' (subject I) and 'Understander' (object me) can move writing beyond traditional monologic approaches in teacher education.

However, compared with Edge's work, which is essentially an individual reflective enterprise, contemporary developments have pushed toward genuinely collaborative dialogic practices. This evolution matters because it reflects a deeper shift in how we understand knowledge creation. Brandist et al. (2020) explore Bakhtinian dialogic pedagogies and introduce a new paradigm of dialogic polyphonic research. This approach involves allowing space for many voices to be heard together, rather than just a monologic authorial voice or just the voices of a few elite
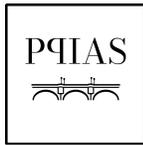
individuals. Polyphony respects the independence of voices and other ideological worlds—this is different from a cherry-picking approach where voices are supporting actors for predetermined conclusions.

The distinction is crucial: in monologic research, participant voices serve to illustrate the researcher's argument. In polyphonic research, multiple voices maintain their integrity and independence, with meaning emerging from their interaction and dialogue rather than being predetermined by authorial interpretation. This represents not just a different writing style but a fundamentally different epistemology—one that sees knowledge as inherently multiple, contested, and emerging through dialogue rather than as a singular truth to be discovered and reported.

This shift marks a movement from what Bracher (1999) terms a "romantic ontology"—premised on the existence of stable, unified truths awaiting discovery by the researcher—toward a more postmodern ontology that embraces multiplicity, provisionality, and the co-construction of meaning (Kvale, 1996; Lyotard, 1984). Where romantic epistemology positions the researcher as discoverer of pre-existing truths, postmodern approaches recognize knowledge as inherently perspectival and dialogically constituted (Gergen & Gergen, 2000). The polyphonic text thus enacts this ontological commitment: rather than resolving multiple voices into a single authoritative interpretation, it preserves their distinctiveness and the productive tensions and dialogue between them, acknowledging that "reality" itself is not singular but multiple, not fixed but negotiated (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Collaborative Workshops as Dialogic Practice

Bronwyn Davies has developed collaborative workshops that exemplify dialogic academic representation through shared storytelling and collective analysis, where each participant tells a remembered story and is "questioned by the listeners who sometimes needed more details in order to fully enter the story," creating genuine dialogue rather than individual narrative presentation. This method "works not as a strict method to be followed; instead, it could be interpreted as a set of emergent possibilities," with "emergent listening that might begin with what is known, but is open to creatively evolving into something new." Like CD, it tries to maintain a focus on listening and reflection.

Davies's approach demonstrates that dialogic representation need not sacrifice rigour or depth. Rather, by making space for multiple voices and emergent understanding, such approaches can achieve forms of insight unavailable through traditional monologic reporting. The questioning by listeners, the need for sufficient detail to "fully enter the story," the openness to creative evolution—these features create conditions for collaborative meaning-making that honour both individual experience and collective understanding.

Recent Methodological Developments

Recent methodological developments have advanced dialogic and polyphonic approaches to research representation. Kristensen (2020) demonstrates how dialogic frameworks can address tensions and contradictions in organizational research, while Roy and Uekusa (2020) show how collaborative autoethnography enables reflexive dialogue during challenging circumstances. Noel,
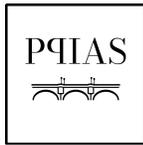
Minematsu, and Bosca (2023) extend this through collective autoethnography's co-constructed narratives, emphasizing democratic participation and shared meaning-making across multiple voices. Karsten (2024) takes polyphony in academic writing seriously by attending to the social and psycholinguistic processes of addressing and being addressed, revealing how writers interiorize and position multiple voices. These contributions collectively strengthen the theoretical and methodological foundations for genuinely polyphonic research practices.

Reimagining Research Dissemination

Research representation has traditionally operated through unidirectional channels, where findings flow from researchers to audiences without meaningful dialogue or reciprocal engagement. In many cases, the research report is simply 'dumbed down' producing a jargon-free, less theory-laden version. Such documents may be useful to reach a wider readership, but they do not embrace a dialogic spirit. However, the principles of dialogic reflection offer a transformative framework for reconceptualising how research is disseminated, moving beyond transmissive, static presentations towards dynamic, participatory encounters that embrace multiple perspectives and support genuine understanding.

The current paradigm of research dissemination often fails to capture the collaborative essence of knowledge creation. As Skukauskaite (2012) argues, "Reflexivity in research and making transparent the decisions in transcribing provides the basis for warranting research claims in ways that are accountable both to the research participants and to the research community." This accountability extends beyond methodological transparency to encompass genuine dialogue with those who have contributed to and are affected by the research.

The traditional approach treats participants as data sources rather than ongoing collaborators in meaning-making. Adler and Adler (2002) advocate for "taking research accounts back to the field," recognising that representation should not mark the end of researcher-participant relationships but rather open new spaces for dialogue and validation (at least a form of member-checking). This perspective challenges the conventional view of dissemination as a final, authoritative statement and instead positions it as an invitation for continued conversation.

This reimagining has practical implications. Rather than viewing publication as the endpoint, researchers might conceive of it as one moment in an ongoing dialogue—with subsequent discussions, responses, and revisions continuing to develop understanding. Participants become not just sources of data but collaborators in interpretation, with their responses to initial representations shaping how findings are subsequently understood and communicated. The research process thus becomes genuinely iterative, with representation itself generating further dialogue and reflection.

Core Practices for Dialogic Representation

Moving from theoretical commitment to practical implementation requires attention to specific practices that operationalise dialogic principles. Three interconnected practices prove particularly important: transcript sharing, accountability structures that resist cherry-picking, and team reflexivity.

1. Transcript Sharing as Dialogic Practice

The sharing of interview transcripts exemplifies how representation can become dialogic rather than extractive. Mero-Jaffe (2011) demonstrates that offering transcripts to participants can be "empowering for the interviewee and can show the interviewee respect," potentially rebalancing "the balance of power between the interviewer and interviewee." This practice transforms participants from passive subjects into active collaborators who can respond to, critique, and extend their contributions.

However, dialogic representation requires careful navigation of participant responses. Mann (2016) reports one interviewee who objected to the "tidying up" of transcripts, feeling that cleaned-up versions misrepresented their actual speaking patterns and made their statements appear more definitive than intended. In addition, children have expressed embarrassment at the "fractured and disfluent look of the transcript," and this reveals tensions between authenticity and dignity in representation. These diverse responses underscore the need for flexible, responsive approaches to representation that can accommodate multiple participant perspectives. There is no single "correct" approach to representation; rather, dialogic practice requires ongoing negotiation about what forms of representation value and recognise participants' contributions while serving research purposes. The tensions here mirror broader dialogic principles: meaning emerges through interaction, understanding develops through multiple perspectives, and predetermined solutions often prove inadequate to the complexity of actual human engagement.

The transcript-sharing example illuminates a deeper point about dialogic representation: when we invite participants into the representational process, we must be prepared for their responses to challenge our assumptions about what "good" representation looks like. The researcher who tidied transcripts presumably intended to respect—making participants sound more articulate. Yet the participant experienced this as misrepresentation. The children's embarrassment at disfluent transcripts wasn't naïve; it recognised that written representation creates particular impressions that differ from embodied speech. These are genuine dialogic tensions to navigate rather than problems with singular solutions.

2. Challenging Cherry-Picking Through Dialogic Accountability

Dialogic representation offers a powerful antidote to what Morse (2010) terms "cherry picking" in research reporting. When researchers engage in ongoing dialogue with participants about how their contributions are being used, they create natural checks against selective interpretation. As Ushioda (2014) warns, researchers must guard against using "a few choice snippets to support a particular claim" without considering their representativeness across the full dataset.

The temptation toward cherry-picking reflects deeper epistemological assumptions—that the researcher's interpretation holds primacy, that data exist to support arguments, that coherent narratives matter more than contradictory evidence. Dialogic accountability challenges these assumptions by positioning participants as active voices rather than passive data sources. When
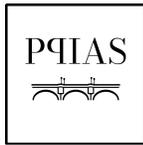
participants see how their words are being used, they can question interpretations, offer alternative readings, and identify where their meanings have been distorted or oversimplified.

The process of collaborative coding serves as a particularly powerful site for dialogic reflection. As teams negotiate shared meanings and articulate their reasoning behind code assignments, they make visible "the often hidden processes of meaning-making in qualitative analysis." As Schippers et al. (2015) suggest, teams that "take time to reflect are more likely to develop new and improved ways of working." This collaborative reflexivity creates transparency about interpretive choices while distributing authority for meaning-making across multiple participants.

Collaborative coding exemplifies how dialogic processes can enhance rather than compromise analytic rigour. Multiple perspectives on the same data don't produce confusion but rather a richer understanding of meaning's complexity. When coders discuss disagreements, they articulate previously tacit assumptions, consider alternative interpretations, and develop more nuanced analyses than individual coding typically produces. The dialogue itself becomes part of the analytic process, with understanding emerging through collaborative engagement rather than individual interpretation.

3. Team Reflexivity as Dialogic Practice

The dialogic principles discussed above find practical expression in team reflexivity—a collective process through which research teams engage in critical self-examination and continuous adaptation. As West (2000) defines it, team reflexivity involves "overtly reflecting upon and communicating about team objectives, strategies, and processes." This practice is essential for cultivating shared understandings of research questions and subjects (Siltanen et al., 2008), identifying individual and collective assumptions (Brookfield, 2000), and building relationships by addressing identity tensions (Lingard et al., 2007). It also allows the team to reflect on the ways in which they co-construct methodology, analysis, and understanding.

The dialogic nature of team reflexivity is evident in the way it embraces diverse perspectives and voices within the team (Akkerman et al., 2006; Lingard et al., 2007). This aligns with a Bakhtinian dialogical approach, which emphasises the collaborative and co-constructed nature of action and identity (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2004). Schlesinger et al. (2015) describe teamwork as involving both front and back stage pivotal moments, which are "productive spaces in which the team was made" and help "transform the implicit into the explicit" (p. 81). Through these interactions, teams forge an "interpretive us" with common perspectives while still valuing individual contributions (Siltanen et al., 2008; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017).

Barry et al. (1999) argue that team reflexivity requires both individual and group reflexivity, with a dialogue between the two. Interactionally, there is a back and forth between the individual and the group so that a self exists within "webs of interlocution" (p. 36) and self-understanding requires a language of interpretation acquired through exchanges with others, especially significant others (Taylor, 1989). This perspective moves beyond the individual focus of traditional reflexivity, as seen in Giddens' (1991) "reflexive project of the self," towards a more collaborative
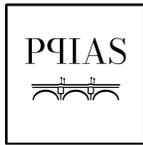
and dialogic understanding of reflexivity. Similarly, Russell and Kelly (2002) emphasise the reflexive value of conducting research in the context of a team, examining the role of reflexivity at each step of the research endeavour: formulating the question, gathering information, analysing data, collaborating with other researchers, and returning the fruits of the research to participants.

Importantly, team reflexivity through dialogic reflection allows for the explicit negotiation of tensions in member identity (Berger, 2015; Lingard et al., 2007). Rather than seeking to overcome diversity, it values otherness and treats diverse viewpoints as opportunities for understanding (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Pillow, 2003). This approach is congruent with social constructionism and sociocultural linguistic theory, which view identity as emergent, fluid, and constructed through interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Harré & Davies, 1990). As Benwell and Stokoe (2006) argue, identity is seen as "fluid, fragmented, multiple, and constructed through interaction" rather than a fixed, whole, and discoverable entity.

The effectiveness of team reflexivity in enhancing collaborative research is supported by empirical evidence. Hoegl and Parboteeah (2006) demonstrate that team reflexivity is positively related to team effectiveness, while Schippers et al. (2018) argue that teams that take time to reflect are more likely to develop new and improved ways of working. This reflective approach not only improves the quality of research but also enhances team morale and job satisfaction (Barry et al., 1999; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Edge (2011) argued that the fundamental question for reflexivity is double-edged: we need to account for how we influence the research and how the research influences us. In this context, regular group meetings serve as vital spaces for teams to negotiate individual and collective influences on the research, providing structured opportunities for team members to engage in reflexive practices, examining their assumptions, methodologies, and interpretations collectively.

Team reflexivity thus offers a structured means of operationalising the dialogic principles central to this article. It creates space for the kind of polyphonic engagement that Brandist et al. (2020) advocate, where multiple voices and perspectives contribute to shared understanding rather than supporting a single authorial position. For teacher educators and applied linguists engaged in collaborative research, team reflexivity provides both a methodology and a model—demonstrating how dialogic reflection can be enacted collectively while simultaneously improving the quality and authenticity of knowledge production. By fostering a culture of open dialogue and collective reflection, research teams can enhance the rigour, credibility, and ethical integrity of their work, contributing to more collaborative, inclusive, and ethically grounded research practices.

Enabling Conditions: Digital Platforms and Alternative Forms

1. Digital Platforms and Multimodal Representation

Digital platforms offer particular promise for dialogic representation, enabling researchers to provide layered access to data, invite participant responses, and facilitate ongoing community engagement. Rather than treating journal articles or reports as final products, researchers might conceive of them as starting points for sustained dialogue with multiple stakeholders. In our digital world, we need to account for more multimodal and digital elements in our representation. Digital
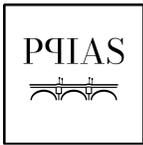
affordances enable forms of dialogic representation unavailable in traditional print media. Hyperlinked documents can provide access to full transcripts while presenting summarised analyses, allowing readers to engage with data directly rather than solely through researcher interpretation.

Comment functions enable participants and readers to respond to representations, creating ongoing dialogue that enriches understanding over time. Multimedia formats can incorporate audio, video, and visual elements that capture aspects of experience difficult to represent in text alone.

However, digital representation raises new ethical questions. Who has access to digital platforms? How do we ensure participant privacy while enabling dialogue? What happens when online comments become critical or hostile? How do we preserve digital representations over time when platforms and technologies change? These questions don't have simple answers but require ongoing dialogic negotiation between researchers, participants, and communities.

The connection to our earlier discussion of digital environments (Dialogue Three) becomes apparent: the same affordances that support dialogic reflection—temporal threading, multimodal expression, collaborative archiving—can also support dialogic representation. A podcast discussing research findings invites different engagement than a journal article; a video showing actual interaction communicates differently than transcript excerpts; a collaboratively-authored blog allows multiple voices to contribute ongoing perspectives. The medium itself shapes possibilities for dialogue.

2. Alternative Forms of Representation

The use of poetry to explore concepts raises important questions about academic representation. The "monkey on the shoulder" that questions the appropriateness or quality of poetic expression in academic work reflects broader tensions about how we legitimately represent knowledge. Postmodern and autoethnographic approaches suggest that different forms of representation—including poetry, narrative, and creative expression—can capture aspects of experience that traditional academic prose might miss.

The embodied, experiential quality of dialogic reflection may indeed require forms of representation that mirror its dynamic, processual nature. When we represent dialogue through conventional academic prose, we inevitably flatten it—removing the pauses, overlaps, hesitations, and embodied dimensions that constitute actual interaction. Poetry, with its attention to rhythm, sound, and multiple meanings, might better capture dialogue's texture. Narrative can convey temporal unfolding and emotional resonance that analysis abstracts away. Visual representations like concept maps or drawings might show relationships that linear prose obscures.

However, alternative forms face gatekeeping challenges. Journals may reject poetic or creative representations as "not rigourous." Academic communities may question whether such work counts for promotion and tenure. Students attempting alternative representations may face criticism that they're avoiding "proper" academic writing. These institutional resistances reflect
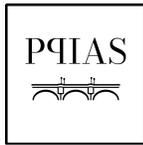
deeper assumptions about what counts as legitimate knowledge and who has the authority to determine appropriate representational forms.

The dialogic response involves neither abandoning traditional forms nor uncritically embracing alternatives, but rather maintaining dialogue about what different representational modes enable and constrain. When might poetry illuminate what prose obscures? What do we gain and lose through narrative versus analysis? How can visual, textual, and performative modes work together dialogically? These questions keep representation open to continued exploration rather than settling into new orthodoxies.

Ethical Implications

The shift toward dialogic representation carries important ethical implications. Participants sometimes object to anonymity, wanting their real names used so they can claim ownership of their contributions. As Wodak (2007) reports, a former interviewee felt "hurt and angry" that his name hadn't been used, explaining that "he wanted people to know that he had been able to cope with his crisis, and he was proud that his voice was being heard and read."

This challenges assumptions about what participants want from research representation and suggests the need for more nuanced consent processes that explore preferences for attribution and ongoing involvement. Traditional research ethics emphasise protecting participants through anonymity, assuming that being identified in research represents risk. Yet for some participants, anonymity erases their contribution, denying them recognition for sharing their experiences and insights. The dialogic response isn't to abandon anonymity but to negotiate its use in conversation with participants themselves.

Beyond attribution, ethical dialogic representation requires ongoing attention to power dynamics. Who decides how voices are represented? Whose interpretations take priority when participants and researchers disagree? How do we handle situations where participants want their contributions represented in ways that might harm others or reinforce problematic assumptions? These questions resist formulaic answers, requiring case-by-case navigation guided by dialogic principles: engagement rather than avoidance, multiple perspectives rather than singular authority, ongoing conversation rather than one-time decisions.

The ethical dimension extends to academic audiences as well. When we represent research dialogically, we invite readers into an ongoing conversation rather than presenting them with finished conclusions. This requires readers willing to engage actively rather than passively consume findings. It asks academic communities to value provisional, exploratory writing alongside definitive claims. It challenges publication systems built around static, final texts rather than evolving, dialogic documents. These systemic tensions won't be resolved easily, but naming them creates space for dialogue about how academic knowledge production might better reflect the values we espouse.

Moving Forward: Practical Considerations

Implementing dialogic representation faces practical challenges, including time constraints, publication pressures, and institutional expectations. However, the potential benefits—enhanced validity, stronger community relationships, more ethical practice, and richer learning opportunities—justify the additional investment required.

Researchers might establish regular "representation meetings" where team members collectively review how participant voices are being portrayed and consider alternative approaches. They might experiment with staged dissemination approaches that begin with participant communities before moving to academic audiences, allowing for dialogic refinement of representations based on community input while still meeting academic publication requirements.

Other practical strategies include layered representation, providing multiple levels of access to findings—from brief summaries to detailed transcripts—allowing different audiences to engage at appropriate depth; responsive revision, building mechanisms for ongoing revision based on participant and community feedback, treating publications as living documents rather than fixed texts; collaborative writing, inviting participants to co-author representations, sharing authority for how experiences and findings are portrayed; multiple genres, disseminating findings through various forms—academic articles, community presentations, creative works, digital media—each offering different dialogic possibilities; and reflexive commentary, including explicit discussion of representational choices, uncertainties, and limitations, inviting readers into the interpretive process rather than presenting interpretations as given.

These strategies require additional time and effort, but they also create richer, more ethical, more impactful research. The question isn't whether we can afford dialogic representation but whether we can afford to continue representing research in ways that contradict our espoused values of dialogue, collaboration, and democratic knowledge production.

Ten Ways Research Might Be More Dialogic in Its Representation

1. Taking into account the above, here are ten ways in which research might be more dialogic in its representation:
2. *Present Multiple, Unresolved Interpretations***:** Rather than offering a single authoritative reading of data, present several plausible interpretations and invite readers to engage with the tensions between them, acknowledging that meaning-making is inherently plural.
3. *Include Extended Participant Voices Without Immediate Analysis***:** Allow substantial blocks of participant discourse to stand without immediate researcher commentary, giving readers space to form their own initial responses before encountering the researcher's interpretation. This is a more process-driven or task based approach.
4. *Make Visible the Researcher's Reflexive Journey***:** Document your own evolving understanding and interpretations throughout the research process, including uncertainties, revised interpretations, and moments of surprise, rather than presenting only polished final insights. In short, allow more space for reflexivity (see Mann, 2016).
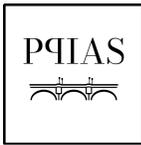
5. *Incorporate Explicit Invitations for Reader Response*: Pose genuine questions to readers at key moments in the text, creating spaces where their own experiences and interpretations are explicitly solicited rather than assumed to be a passive reception.
6. *Use Responsive Formatting and Design*: Employ marginal spaces, footnotes, or alternative text pathways that allow for multiple reading trajectories, enabling readers to engage with the text in non-linear, personally meaningful ways.
7. *Include Participant Commentary on Researcher Interpretations*: Share moments where participants responded to your emerging analysis, showing how meaning was negotiated between researcher and researched rather than unilaterally determined.
8. *Present Findings as Provisional and Context-Bound*: Frame insights explicitly as situated within specific contexts and moments, resisting universalizing claims and instead inviting readers to consider applicability to their own contexts through active reflection.
9. *Create Dialogic Opening and Closing Moves*: Begin with genuine questions or uncertainties (rather than objectives that predetermine findings) and conclude with open invitations for further dialogue rather than definitive conclusions.
10. *Use First-Person Reflexive Positioning*: Maintain researcher presence as an engaged, responsive participant in knowledge construction rather than adopting a distanced, third-person omniscient stance that implies objective authority.
11. *Establish Digital or Social Platforms for Ongoing Response*: Provide genuine mechanisms (beyond symbolic gestures) for readers to contribute their own interpretations, counternarratives, or extensions of the research, treating publication as the beginning rather than the end of dialogue.

Towards Dialogic Representation

This question has argued that dialogic representation is both possible and necessary. Conventional academic writing operates monologically—presenting singular authoritative voices that foreclose dialogue and contradict the very principles we espouse when conducting research. Yet theoretical resources now exist for genuinely polyphonic representation, and specific practices can operationalise these commitments: transcript sharing that transforms participants into collaborators, accountability structures that resist cherry-picking, team reflexivity that distributes interpretive authority, and digital platforms that enable ongoing response.

The challenges are real—time constraints, publication pressures, and institutional scepticism. But the question isn't whether we can afford dialogic representation; it's whether we can afford to represent research in ways that contradict our espoused values. Publication should mark not the endpoint of inquiry but an invitation for continued conversation.

Dialogic representation requires researchers to embrace vulnerability, welcome challenge, and view their work as part of larger conversations rather than definitive statements. The invitation stands: to develop representational practices worthy of the dialogic commitments that bring us to this work in the first place.
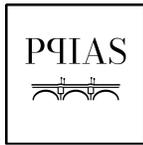
Conclusion: Living the Questions

Dialogic reflection, whether inner or outer, intrapersonal or interpersonal, involves what Rilke called "living the questions." Rather than seeking definitive answers, it emphasizes ongoing questioning, wondering, and exploration of possibilities. This approach recognizes that understanding is always provisional, relational, and open to revision through continued dialogue—with ourselves, with others, and with the complex world we inhabit together.

Throughout this article, we have explored five interconnected questions that explore the scope and nature of dialogic reflection: its origins and fundamentals, possibilities for deliberate design, digital environments' role in supporting reflection, relationships between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions, and approaches to research representation that invite genuine response. Each question has opened onto others, demonstrating the recursive, non-linear nature of dialogic enquiry itself. The journey through these questions reveals several overarching insights:

- *Dialogue as fundamental to knowing*: From Bakhtin's heteroglossia to Freire's problem-posing education, from Cooperative Development to collaborative coding, the evidence consistently shows that understanding emerges through dialogue rather than individual cognition alone. We think with and through others' voices, whether those voices are physically present in conversation or have been internalized through previous dialogues.
- *Structure as invitation*: Across contexts—from Cooperative Development's conversational moves to the Paris IAS reverse seminar format to methodological frameworks for transcript sharing—we've seen that structure can support rather than constrain dialogic engagement. The key lies in designing structures that invite participation while remaining open to emergence, that provide scaffolding while maintaining flexibility.
- *Temporal complexity*: Dialogic reflection unfolds across multiple temporal moments, with conversations continuing internally long after interpersonal exchanges conclude. The podcast episodes demonstrate how past experience becomes present resource, and how—through post-episode exchanges, narrative, the researcher's subsequent analysis of interview transcripts—all demonstrate that dialogue creates threads through time that remain available for ongoing engagement.
- *Digital affordances and constraints*: Technology offers distinctive possibilities for dialogic reflection—temporal threading, multimodal expression, collaborative archiving, networked conversation—while also introducing new challenges around access, authenticity, and the nature of presence. Digital environments don't replace face-to-face dialogue but create qualitatively different dialogic possibilities.
- *Integration of inner and outer*: The interpersonal-intrapersonal relationship isn't one of separation but integration, with internal and external dialogues continuously informing and transforming each other. Both dimensions involve the brain's predictive modelling processes, and their interaction may offer the best possibility for disrupting limiting models and enabling genuine learning.
- *Representation as ongoing dialogue*: Rather than viewing representation as the endpoint of research, dialogic approaches reconceptualise it as an invitation for continued
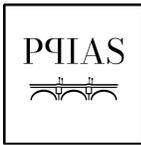
conversation. Polyphonic writing, collaborative analysis, transcript sharing, alternative genres, and digital dissemination all offer ways to honour multiple voices and maintain the openness that characterizes genuine dialogic reflection.

The movement from individual dialogic reflection towards polyphonic collaboration represents both methodological advancement and epistemological shift—recognising knowledge as emerging through interaction rather than residing in individual minds, and professional development as fundamentally collaborative rather than purely individual enterprise. The spirit of dialogic reflection calls for fundamental changes in how research is represented and disseminated. Rather than treating representation as the final stage of research, we must reconceptualise it as an ongoing dialogue that honours participant contributions, serves community needs, and advances collective understanding.

Yet dialogic reflection also requires acknowledging limitations and tensions. Not all structures successfully foster dialogue; power imbalances can persist despite dialogic intentions; time and resource constraints constrain possibilities; institutional systems often reward monologic rather than dialogic work. Segal's (2024) questioning of whether collective reflection actually improves practice reminds us that dialogic approaches aren't panaceas. They require genuine commitment, appropriate implementation, and realistic expectations about what dialogue can and can not accomplish.

Perhaps most importantly, dialogic reflection requires embracing uncertainty. Yon's work on the brain's predictive models and the fundamental uncertainty of self-knowledge suggests that we can never be entirely sure our understanding is accurate. This doesn't render reflection pointless but rather emphasises its ongoing nature—we reflect not to achieve perfect knowledge but to continuously refine and revise our understanding in light of new perspectives and experiences.

In these uncertain and changeable times, Yon's insight becomes particularly relevant: we should make our perspectives and predictions more flexible when the world seems volatile and unstable. Dialogic reflection offers precisely this flexibility—through engagement with multiple voices, through temporal layers that enable return and revision, through collaborative meaning-making that distributes authority, through representation that invites response rather than claiming finality.

By embracing dialogic representation, researchers can create more ethical, impactful, and meaningful connections between their work and the communities they serve. The goal is not simply to communicate findings but to foster ongoing relationships that support continued learning and positive change. This shift requires researchers to embrace vulnerability, welcome challenge, and view their work as part of larger conversations rather than definitive statements—essentially, to practice what we preach about dialogic reflection in how we represent and share our scholarly work.

The structure of this article itself attempts a dialogic representation—organizing around questions rather than answers, weaving together theoretical frameworks with empirical examples, incorporating multiple voices and perspectives, acknowledging tensions and limitations rather than
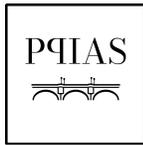
presenting seamless conclusions. Whether it succeeds is not for me alone to judge, but emerges through your engagement as a reader. What questions does it raise for you? Where do you find yourself agreeing, disagreeing, wanting to extend or revise the ideas presented? What connections do you make to your own practice and experience?

These questions aren't rhetorical flourishes but genuine invitations for continued dialogue. Dialogic reflection succeeds not when readers accept the author's conclusions but when they enter into their own reflective questioning, bringing their perspectives into productive tension with what they've encountered. Understanding emerges not from this article alone but from the dialogue it generates—in your internal reflection, in conversations with colleagues, in how you approach your own reflective practice.

Rilke wrote: "Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves." Dialogic reflection embodies this patience, this love of questions. It resists premature closure, maintains openness to multiple perspectives, and recognises that the questions we live with shape us as much as any answers we reach. In professional development, research practice, teaching, therapy, and countless other domains, dialogic reflection offers not a technique to be mastered but a stance to be inhabited—one characterised by curiosity rather than certainty, collaboration rather than competition, emergence rather than predetermination.

The five questions structuring this article remain open, inviting continued exploration:

1. *What are the origins and fundamentals of dialogic reflection?* We've traced theoretical roots in Bakhtin, Freire, Buber, and others, but new theoretical resources continue emerging, and contextual applications continue revealing new dimensions of dialogic practice.
2. *Can dialogic processes be deliberately designed or structured?* We've examined frameworks from Cooperative Development to reverse seminars to deliberative polling, but each context requires adaptation, and the tension between structure and emergence remains productively unresolved.
3. *How might digital environments support dialogic reflection?* We've explored e-portfolios, podcasting, AI interaction, and multimodal representation, but technology evolves rapidly, and digital possibilities continue expanding in ways we can not fully anticipate.
4. *What is the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of reflection?* We've established their interpenetration through interview examples and neuroscientific insights, but the complexity of this relationship invites ongoing investigation.
5. *Can we develop more dialogic approaches to research representation?* We've identified principles and practices from polyphonic writing to collaborative coding to transcript sharing, but institutional and practical constraints require continued experimentation with forms that honour dialogic values while meeting academic expectations.

Each answer opens further questions, each resolution reveals new tensions, and each understanding generates further dialogue. This isn't failure but the very nature of dialogic inquiry—understanding that emerges through questioning, knowledge that remains open to
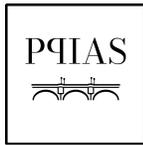
revision, practice that continues developing through engagement with multiple perspectives and changing contexts. There is as much focus on process as on product.

In closing, I return to the collaborative spirit that has infused this work. This article emerged through dialogue—with theoretical frameworks that have shaped my thinking over decades, with colleagues whose voices populate my consciousness, with research participants whose experiences have challenged and refined my understanding, with the Paris Institute for Advanced Study community whose commitment to collaborative inquiry has been both inspiration and practical support. The ideas presented here aren't mine alone but emerge from these dialogues, and they will continue developing through your engagement with them.

Dialogic reflection isn't a destination but a journey—one characterised by openness rather than closure, questions rather than answers, collaboration rather than isolation. It requires courage to remain uncertain, generosity to engage genuinely with perspectives different from our own, and humility to recognise that understanding always exceeds individual grasp. Yet it also offers profound rewards: richer understanding, stronger relationships, more ethical practice, and the ongoing vitality that comes from genuine intellectual and professional engagement. The invitation stands: to live these questions, to engage dialogically with the ideas and practices explored here, and to continue developing dialogic reflection as an expanding field of practice that serves the complex, collaborative, uncertain work of making meaning together in our rapidly changing world.

Acknowledgements

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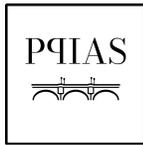
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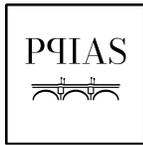
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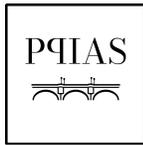
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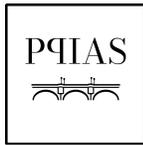
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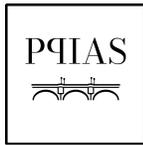
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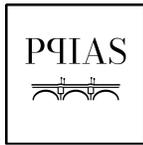
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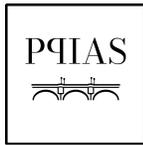
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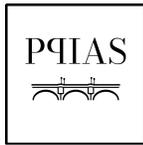
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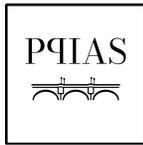
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