

The Deliberative Classroom and the Development of Secondary Students' Conceptual Understanding of Democracy



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Summary

Government policy requires schools to promote the fundamental British values (FBVs), defined as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. One educational response to this policy is to make these concepts the object of study and discussion, rather than seeking to simply ‘promote’ them in some uncritical way. This acknowledges that ideas such as democracy are not in themselves values, rather they are complex and contested concepts. It means little to say we support liberty or toleration unless we are aware what that means, the conditions under which we are willing to limit those principles, and the challenges they pose. These judgements require critical engagement with relevant knowledge and they benefit from discussion through which positions can be tested and refined.

This research builds on the opportunity afforded by the production and dissemination of the *Deliberative Classroom* education resources to address two main research questions:

1. How can we measure the extent to which deliberative talk is taking place in the classroom?
2. How do students engage with and use the concepts and knowledge to explore controversial issues?

As such the research is designed to explore the application of deliberative democracy in the classroom – addressing the extent to which the classroom operates as a deliberative space, and the nature of the deliberation that takes place.

1. Measuring the extent to which deliberative talk is taking place in the classroom

As part of this research an observation tool was developed and trialled. The purpose of the tool is to enable teachers to understand what processes might define the classroom as a deliberative space and to enable colleagues to observe one another and provide feedback as part of their development of a more deliberative approach to teaching. Consultation with a group of experienced educators confirmed that the tool has face validity, that is, it resonates with their understanding of how deliberation takes place in their areas of expertise (Citizenship, English, including teaching English as an Additional Language, RE, and Debating). The tool was tested by 36 respondents who observed a filmed lesson and completed the observation tool individually. Their ratings of the lesson indicated a reasonable level of agreement between them. This tool is now available on the *Deliberative Classroom* website as part of the education resources and is being used in training workshops for teachers. It is also being disseminated to every school in England via the teacher journal *Teaching Citizenship*.

2. Students’ engagement with the FBVs

A series of audio recordings were made in classrooms in four secondary schools, where the *Deliberative Classroom* resources were used to stimulate discussion about the FBVs. An analytical frame was developed that focused on (i) the mechanics of talk and (ii) the ideational function of talk. The analysis has highlighted the variety of strategies students use to promote or hinder the development of deliberation. Particular attention has been paid to the difference between cumulative talk and exploratory talk, where the former tends to avoid

critical discussion in favour of attempting to accept all views, and where the latter engages more explicitly with challenging, exploring and seeking to refine positions collaboratively.

This analysis has highlighted some important issues which have not been explicitly addressed in the education literature. One such insight involves the extent to which students engage in a form of semi-fictionalised imaginative scenario building to explore situations from multiple perspectives, and thus deepen their appreciation of others' views. Whilst some theorists of deliberative democracy are sceptical of such approaches, tending to favour rational exchange over such creativity, this research offers some reasons to believe this may be a useful mechanism for students to build their appreciation of the diverse range of opinions in plural democracies. Building on established ideas in history education, it is argued that such creative talk can lead to a multiplist, and ultimately evaluativist, epistemological stance, in which simplistic notions of political truths can be replaced with more pragmatic understandings of how democracy seeks to arrive at solutions to controversial issues.

The research illustrates that secondary students are capable of approaching the FBVs as concepts which can be studied, discussed and held up to critical scrutiny. The data discussed in this report includes some conversations which address a range of conceptual and practical dimensions, for example, the limits to religious freedom and toleration. Such conversations also demonstrate students' ability to develop cognitive empathy to appreciate why different people adopt different views and to engage in discussion with a view to exploring and understanding the reasons for these differences, rather than rushing to reconcile them. On the other hand, analysis of conversations that failed to achieve such depth indicates that there may be a range of approaches available to teachers, including more explicit expectations about how to engage in such discussions, and opportunities to address knowledge gaps. These practical insights are being used as the basis for teacher workshops and training resources, to promote the *Deliberative Classroom* as an educational response to FBV policy.

Context

The Prevent strategy and schools

From 2003 the UK government has developed policies for schools aiming to eradicate the threat of violent extremism and terrorism, known as the Prevent strategy. This has two dimensions, first a broad duty to promote community cohesion and second a more focused route for reporting individuals suspected of being at risk of extremism (the Channel process). In 2014 the broad aim of community cohesion was intensified with a more specific responsibility to promote the fundamental British values (FBVs), which are defined as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (HMG, 2011). In 2015, The UK Counter-Terrorism and Security Act introduced a new legal duty for teachers to “have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism” (Jerome *et al.*, 2019). This was widely seen as training teachers in how to identify young people at risk of extremism and reporting them for security assessment and, where necessary, specialist intervention. This led to a significant increase in the numbers of young people being reported. It also meant that the grounds for reporting them were no longer restricted to those promoting terrorism, but broadened to those who express vocal opposition to the FBVs (Jerome *et al.*, 2019). Teachers are advised that they should facilitate classroom discussions of controversial issues, including those related to the FBVs and extremism (DfE, 2015), which positions teachers in a potentially difficult situation. On the one hand they are encouraged to engage young people in debates about controversial issues, but on the other hand they are required to monitor the young people’s opinions for signs that they may dissent from the FBVs, which is seen as a risk factor for developing extremist ideas.

In this context, the government has commissioned a number of education projects to help schools deliver the Prevent duty, but some educationalists have expressed concern that there is a lack of clarity between the educational and security focus of such work (Panjwani, 2016). The concern is essentially that teachers are being encouraged to adopt a security-led role for which they are ill-equipped and which may be at odds with their core educational role. The Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT) has been working in this contentious territory since 2015, both to try to clarify what an ‘educational’ response might look like and to seek to influence the shaping and enactment of policy in this area. ACT colleagues were aware of the potential dangers of an excessively security-led response. Therefore, rather than devise a blue-print for implementation they have been working towards clarifying the educational alternatives through working with, and learning from, school-based practitioners developing curriculum based approaches. Whilst it would have been impossible to outline this in advance, in retrospect it is possible to present this work in three phases:

1. *Initial scoping to inform an educational response*

ACT and the Expert Subject Advisory Group (ESAG) for Citizenship met to review the DfE guidance and identified a sense of unease about the duty to ‘promote’ the FBVs, rather than engage in critical discussion. Following a review of the literature on teaching controversial issues, ACT and ESAG published guidance on how to frame the Prevent duty

as a controversial issue in the classroom (ACT, 2016). This established an educational perspective on Prevent.

2. *The Building Resilience project*

www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/act-building-resilience-project

ACT secured a Home Office contract to run a curriculum development project 'Building Resilience', during the spring and summer terms 2016. This project included ten schools, each developing a locally responsive curriculum project to implement the Prevent policy, either through directly exploring terrorism and extremism, or the FBVs. This project was framed around the principles in the ACT / ESAG guidance. It provided a number of case studies and associated resources to illustrate how the principles from the guidance had been implemented. In addition, Middlesex University undertook the evaluation of this project (Jerome & Elwick, 2016) which led to a number of publications, each seeking to clarify lessons learned from the project that might support subsequent programmes and support for schools. Key issues arising from this data included insights into students' views about what they wanted to learn (Jerome and Elwick, 2019a); new theoretical considerations for controversial issues pedagogy (Jerome and Elwick, 2019b); and an exploration of how recent conceptualisations of teacher agency help to account for the variation in the enactment of the Prevent duty (Elwick and Jerome, 2019).

3. *The Deliberative Classroom project*

www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/deliberative-classroom-topical-debating-resources-and-teacher-guidance

The research to date indicated very clearly that there was a risk that the Prevent policy could turn into a narrow project related to restricted forms of cultural identity (Jerome et al., 2019); but that young people felt they needed schools to tackle this area explicitly and consistently to build their knowledge and critical understanding (Jerome and Elwick, 2019a). The evaluation of the 'Building Resilience' project demonstrated some of the strategies that were successful as well as some of the problems that could arise. Working with ACT and a new partner, the English Speaking Union (ESU), the evaluators from Middlesex University sought to embed these lessons learned into a new curriculum development project 'The Deliberative Classroom', which was funded by the DfE.

This British Academy Small Grant was funded to run alongside that development project to explore how well teachers can embed deliberation in their classrooms, and the extent to which deliberation promotes deep understanding of the FBVs for students.

The Deliberative Classroom

The DfE tender documents for this project originally focused on knowledge (primarily historical knowledge) and debates. The proposal submitted by ACT, the ESU and Middlesex re-cast these elements to be more explicit that the FBVs required a wider body of knowledge, drawing on philosophy, politics, social sciences and religious education. It also specified that the activities should not only promote competitive debate formats, but should also explore different forms of deliberative discussion and small group talk. The DfE accepted this proposal and the contract specified the production of a general handbook for teachers plus resources

for 18 activities to engage in topical discussions (to be produced at the rate of three activities per term for two years). Each term one resource pack was planned to bring together three different activities exploring the same FBV related theme.

Term 1: Religious Freedom

- Activity 1: Exploring the nature and limits of religious freedom over time through small group discussion. This functions as a knowledge based introduction to inform students about the historical development of religious persecution and freedom in UK history.
- Activity 2: A deliberative discussion asking students to search for class consensus about the best way for their school to accommodate religious freedom.
- Activity 3: A more traditional classroom debate to consider cases where a restriction on religious freedom is being proposed.

Term 2: Democracy, Protest and Change

- Activity 1: Whole class discussion about the components of democracy, designed to help students build their conceptual model of how we judge a society to be more or less democratic.
- Activity 2: Small group discussions on cases of political action where campaigners have broken the law, followed by a deliberative discussion about the circumstances under which one might try to justify illegal action.
- Activity 3: Small group discussions about case studies where protestors have used violence, leading to a competitive debate in which the class is asked to decide whether one particular case (chosen by students) is justified.

Regrettably, after the first two resource packs had been produced, it became apparent that the DfE was unable to endorse the approach taken in the resources and was nervous about framing political violence as an open-ended issue. Whilst the authors of the resource were wedded to the principles of controversial issues pedagogy, the DfE sponsors felt teachers needed clearer guidance on how to teach that political violence was unequivocally wrong.

At this point it is useful to say something about what this tradition of controversial issues pedagogy entails, given that it proved to be a point of controversy itself. First, by way of definition, controversial issues are the kinds of issues that are not easily settled by facts alone, where there are legitimate alternative opinions, and which are held to be so important that they create conflict or social division (Stradling et al., 1984; Wellington, 1986). This means arguments about controversial issues may be constructed from shared facts but by people who hold different values positions or world views (Oulton et al., 2004). Consequently, such issues often arouse intense emotional responses (Perry, 1999) and this means discussions are not merely a rational exchange of alternative arguments, they are often “complex, dirty and frequently involve an element of guilt on all sides” (Oulton et al., 2004: 493). This emotional dimension also means some groups seek to deny the legitimacy of other positions, and therefore contest whether the issue really is controversial (Claire and Holden, 2007). This in turn means that making the decision that an issue is controversial is itself often controversial (Camicia, 2008), a problem compounded by the fact that issues which are intensely

controversial in some countries (e.g. gay marriage, collective health care) may be less so in others, and that issues become more or less controversial over time (Hess, 2009).

The pedagogic tradition relating to controversial issues contends that the problem of definition is worth grappling with because it makes a significant difference to how teachers approach such issues in their classroom. If one accepts an issue as genuinely controversial then it follows it would be inappropriate for a teacher to promote any particular opinion about that issue, and the main purpose of teaching is to impartially present the range of views, enable students to understand them, and support them to develop their own informed opinions about them (Hand, 2008). A key feature of teaching about controversial issues is to be clear what underlying principles are at stake, or as Hess (2009) puts it, to identify the perennial issues. This means that such teaching is always operating on two levels at least – firstly students are learning about the case in hand, and secondly they are learning through the case about the deeper political issues.

After the production of the first two resource packs the DfE exercised its right to vary the contract and ACT agreed to produce a series of short professional development films instead of the remaining classroom resources. This change of plan inevitably had some knock on implications for the BA funded research project which was now supposed to be running alongside a project which was no longer running and in the next section I revisit the original proposal and note where these changes required some alterations to the methods.

This research

This research sought to capitalise on the opportunity afforded by the production and dissemination of the classroom resources. The researcher planned to observe classrooms where the teachers were using these resources to focus on two main research questions:

1. How can we measure the extent to which deliberative talk is taking place in the classroom?
2. How do students engage with and use the concepts and knowledge to explore controversial issues?

The questions have remained unaltered and the methodology employed is described in more detail in the methodology chapter below, but this section outlines the main ways in which the actual research varied from the proposed research.

1. Measuring deliberative talk

The first question addressed the nature of classroom deliberation and sought to develop and test a measure for assessing the level of deliberation achieved in a classroom. This is not a measure of individual students' achievement, nor a measure for assessing individual contributions, rather it aimed to capture the overall quality of deliberation within the class. This aspect of the work consisted of a literature review pulling together a variety of conceptual and practical frameworks into a practical tool for teachers to use to gauge the level of deliberation in the classroom. This was developed initially by the researcher and refined through a consultation meeting with expert practitioners in oracy – to ensure face-validity. This part of the process happened as planned.

The original plan was for the observation tool to be trialled with colleagues during the data collection phase of the research. The researcher and other teachers would have used the tool to test whether it was reliable in the field, and the extent to which inter-rater reliability could be achieved. In this plan, the tool would have been used independently by two observers in the same classroom, and also used by observers to review video recordings of the same lesson. As the roll-out of the project was ceased prematurely, this was not possible and so this aspect of the trialling was completed only by teachers and student teachers using the tool to observe an edited film of a lesson.

2. Development of knowledge and understanding

The researcher planned to collect data in classes where teachers were using the 'Deliberative Classroom' resources to examine the use of knowledge within the deliberative exchanges, and explore the extent to which understanding emerges from the deliberation. The researcher planned to record whole lessons and transcribe 'deliberative episodes' for analysis. However, given the interruption of the roll-out phase of the project, and the fact that the project was not on-going, it proved more difficult than anticipated to recruit schools. As a result, although recordings of school discussions were made and analysed as planned, the discussions did not all take place in the same kind of classroom context. As originally conceived, it would have been feasible for one researcher and a research assistant to record lessons occurring with the class's regular teacher, however, in order to negotiate access and opportunities for recording, in some schools the activities were run as one-off events, and the researcher was required to facilitate the activities. This led to two unanticipated changes, first an additional researcher was recruited to help with the facilitation and recording tasks, and second some of the activities took place in one-off workshops or debate club activities in schools, rather than in regular timetabled subjects. We planned to make 20 visits to schools to collect data from lessons and we anticipated that some of these would be repeat visits to schools using the resources over time. In the event we attended 14 lessons and workshops in four different schools, and recorded discussions during 11 of those visits, as some students were wary of being recorded and did not give consent. The methodology section below focuses on outlining the methods used, rather than trying to move between the projected and actual methods, and will discuss some of the implications of these methodological issues.

Literature review

This section has two aims: first to clarify the ideas that originally informed the production of resources and design of the research project, and second, to discuss what we know about the implementation of such approaches in schools. The first part outlines some of the principles of deliberative democracy, which provide a powerful way to conceptualise discussions of controversial issues in plural democracies. The second part addresses how these principles can be applied in school.

Deliberative democracy

Deliberative democracy has emerged partly in response to problems with more traditional conceptions of liberal democracy (Dryzek, 2002; Talisse, 2005). Liberalism tends to assume that individuals enter the public sphere with their opinions and preferences fully formed, and that democratic processes are largely required to aggregate those preferences into majority decisions (Cunningham, 2002). This process of aggregation clearly presents problems for those in distinctive minority groups who may find themselves marginalised by majority decisions. Deliberative democracy, by contrast, embraces the idea that opinion formation, and thus the development of preferences, are better seen as processes. These processes are essentially ‘communicative actions’, through which citizens develop a ‘practical rationality’ (Habermas, 1975) and the aims of engaging in such actions are to reach agreement over facts, to develop norms of social interaction, and to improve our understanding of others (Habermas, 1984; 1990). This implies certain rules, for example, such discussions must be inclusive and all opinions must be open to questioning, and this in turn leads Habermas to characterise this approach as a proceduralist conception of politics (Habermas, 1999). Because such procedures are justified on the grounds that they are fair, they are likely to increase the legitimacy of democratic decision-making and, because they are more likely to involve diverse perspectives and draw on information from a wide range of sources, they are also likely to lead to better decisions (Kymlicka, 2002). Barber calls this ‘strong democracy’ because whereas a focus on bargaining and voting tends to “stultify the imagination”, for example by bargainers constantly having to draw red lines to maximise their gains, by contrast this kind of deliberative process “activates imagination by demanding that participants re-examine their values and interests in light of all the inescapable others” (Barber, 2003: 137). On this view, a commitment to proceduralism may still result in a transformatory politics, both because it leads to new positions being developed and because it helps to bond diverse people together in a democratic community.

Theoretical models and justifications of deliberative democracy generally do not purport to describe reality, rather they offer an ideal framework against which we can judge or reflect on our current democratic arrangements. As Dryzek has argued:

The fact that an ideal is unattainable does not preclude its use for evaluative purposes... The precepts of communicative rationality can be used as critical standards to distinguish degrees of departure from the ideal (Dryzek, 1990: 87).

So, what criteria might we identify for defining this normative ideal? Steiner et al. (2004) argue there are six key elements. First, they focus on making deliberation inclusive, by which they mean it is a public process that is open to all citizens on an equal basis. Second,

participants should commit to the truthful expression of their views and not misrepresent themselves or engage in inauthentic rhetoric. This implies some kind of consistency test to check that people say what they mean and act in ways that resonate with their views. Third, people should commit to provide logical justifications for the views they put forward, as Gutmann and Thompson (2002: 156) put it, “citizens owe one another justifications for the mutually binding laws and public policies they collectively make.” Fourth, whilst acknowledging the importance of self-interest, participants should consider their arguments in relation to the common good, demonstrating empathy with others. This might sound like an unlikely aspiration but, as Ackerman and Fishkin (2002: 143) point out, in an election this amounts to asking oneself the question ‘what is good for the country?’ rather than simply ‘what is good for me?’ and many citizens will have experience of this shift of perspective. Fifth, participants should be willing to listen to the views and arguments of others and to treat their views with respect. This constitutes what Annette (2008) has called ‘civic listening’ and enables participants to understand others and build solidarity. Listening to others is also necessary if one is willing to subject one’s own arguments to scrutiny. Sixth, participants should be willing to yield to the force of the better argument, in other words, try to keep a genuinely open mind. But of course if deliberative democracy derives its legitimacy through the process of deliberation then it is difficult to specify in advance what the criteria would be for a ‘better argument’ therefore this leads to a form of pragmatism, in that decisions are always open to revision after further deliberation (Talisie, 2005). Steiner et al (2004) also draw attention to the fact that such deliberations are also context-bound to some extent, so that an argument might carry weight in one cultural context but not in another.

Critics have drawn attention to the impossibility of achieving the principle of equality and inclusion because, in reality, power dynamics and inequality mean that people cannot participate as equals. The extent to which this is so undermines claims to legitimacy (Young, 2000; Biesta, 2009), so this has led academics and practitioners to focus on how they can set up and facilitate deliberative forums, how they recruit participants, and how they seek to avoid ‘enclave thinking’ and ‘widen argument pools’ (Sunstein, 2003). Whilst these practical responses do not eradicate the problem, they seek to reduce it. Similarly, Walter (2008) has pointed out that deliberation rests on being informed, but the knowledge that frames debates is often dependent on experts and, as Foucault has argued, knowledge and power are thus intertwined inseparably. Thompson et al. (2015) have explored this in practice, in a case study of public discussions of off-shore windfarms in Scotland, and argue that the learning phase that generally precedes deliberation was more influential in helping people form or change their opinions than the process of deliberation itself. Similarly, Bryant and Hall’s (2017) review of literature argues that the small group discussions are significant elements of deliberative forums, quite apart from the impact of the broader deliberations that take place across groups. The way that issues are framed and the narratives that are wound around facts to convey meaning to participants are all open to the accusation that they subtly incorporate rhetorical or non-rational elements (Weasel, 2017).

Another challenge is simply that deliberation requires deliberators, with certain dispositions or traits (Kymlicka, 2002; Talisie, 2005) and these cannot be taken for granted. This has led to the development of a whole field of practice around citizens’ juries, deliberative polling,

participatory budgets, and even proposals for a Deliberation Day as a national holiday (Ackerman and Fishkin, 2003), as well as exhortations to recognise a range of civil society institutions as deliberative spaces (Talisie, 2005: Ch.7). Through these mechanisms practitioners have sought both to maximise the extent to which deliberation approximates the principles outlined above and also support citizens to develop the dispositions and traits required. This larger project also has implications for schooling, and in the next section we consider how education for deliberative democracy has been conceptualised.

Education for deliberative democracy

Whilst political theorists often contrast traditional liberal democracy with deliberative democracy, so might educationalists also contrast the strong tradition of competitive debate in schools, with more deliberative forms of talk. The former are associated with formal debate societies and competitions, tend to set up binary positions (for / against the motion) and adopt a winner takes all approach (Jerome and Algarra, 2005). By contrast, deliberation fits into different traditions of exploratory talk (Barnes, 2008), Philosophy for Children (Trickey and Topping, 2007), and dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2017). Whereas debates can close down nuance in favour of exploring binary, polarised opinions, these alternative forms of school-based deliberative talk encourage an exploration of complexity and uncertainty and leave space for children to develop and review their opinions, and embrace a diverse range of opinions.

Peterson (2009) has outlined a model of ‘contestatory deliberative democracy’ in schools to help develop young people’s capacity for civic listening, empathy and reflection, in addition to their skills of argument and presentation. Here the education model seems to derive from the list of attributes required of deliberative democrats. Andersson (2015) takes a slightly broader approach by considering the wider educational benefits of deliberation in the classroom, arguing that it also helps to deepen students’ conceptual understanding and, if managed well, may also enhance students’ interest in formal politics. On this approach it is justified because it increases learning about deliberation (knowledge), through deliberation (skills) and for deliberation (attitudes). There is some evidence that these positive impacts can be secured through effective teaching, for example Andersson’s own research in Sweden found improved skills and more positive attitudes towards deliberation among students on a vocational track, and McDevitt and Kioussis (2006) found long term impacts on attention to the news, engagement in political discussions, willingness to listen to different opinions and a willingness to test out ideas in conversation. Schuitema et al. (2009) taught similar content to some students through deliberative processes, and more directly to others, and reported positive outcomes for the deliberative group – identifying improved abilities to explain and justify their opinions to others.

In these studies there is a remarkable variation in the extent to which students focus on the kinds of contemporary policy issues envisaged by Peterson as the natural object of such deliberation. Andersson’s examples are all drawn from rather mundane examples of personal decisions and do not really connect to social perspectives at all; Samuelson (2016) only refers to one example of genuine deliberation, which actually involves children discussing the way they would like to discuss a topic; Schuitema et al. focus on exploring moral values through a

historical case study of the settlers' westward push in the USA; and McDevitt and Kiouisis root their study in learning about the 2002 US election, but merely collect data about whether students had taken part in a debate or not. As such, their results reflect the well-established finding from international surveys that students' reports of open classroom climates for discussion are associated with higher levels of civic knowledge and engagement (Knowles et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, this literature does raise some salient points about the development of deliberative practice in the classroom, which reflects the concerns raised about deliberation by political theorists. For example, the extent to which deliberation should be driven by the search for consensus has been linked to Mouffe's concept of 'agonistic politics' (2005), which places conflict at the heart of politics and which is therefore sceptical of the tendency in deliberative theory to valorise consensus. Lo (2017) takes this as the starting point for her discussion of deliberative education and argues that teachers should embrace deliberative discussions as opportunities to transform students' understanding of political issues rather than assume they can be resolved. Lo argues that some of the most important political learning will involve the deepening appreciation of the importance of political conflict, and the nature of political decision-making. Ambrosio (2019) picks up this argument and identifies two implications of Lo's discussion for teachers. First, they need to work with students to ensure they are not prematurely discouraged by seemingly intractable problems – the danger of demonstrating how enduring a conflict is, and how unlikely a consensus may be, is that students simply give up on politics as the perpetual exchange of irreconcilable differences. Second, the teacher needs to find a way to re-position political 'enemies' as 'valuable adversaries' (Lo, 2017) and this resonates with Emerson's (2012) discussion of 'political generosity'. Writing in the context of a post-conflict society in Northern Ireland, Emerson describes an education programme which introduces students to ex-combatants from loyalist and republican traditions. She argues that in order to "legitimise the cultural and political identity of those with opposing views," students must develop confidence in their own identity as well as improve their knowledge of the conflict (p.14). Rather than seek a new form of non-sectarian identity, this engages explicitly with the more realistic (and more just) aspiration to find ways to live with the political and cultural differences in Northern Ireland, rather than somehow reconcile them. Here the transformational impact of deliberation is secured through a transformation of one's understanding of the political conflict, rather than a political resolution of it.

This discussion of agonistic politics inevitably leads to consideration of the role of emotions in classroom deliberation. Whilst, as we have seen above, Habermas encourages people to adopt rational rather than emotional arguments in public deliberations, others have begun to explore the inevitable role that emotions play in many political issues (van Stokkom, 2005). But recognising the legitimacy of one's emotions within the formation, expression and exchange of opinions, does not mean this can be readily incorporated into deliberative models (Martin, 2011). Thompson and Hoggett (2001) argue that "the proposal simply to welcome emotions into public deliberative spaces, without any understanding of the nature of those emotions, is somewhat naive at best, and dangerous at worst" (Thompson and Hoggett, 2001: 353). Lo (2017) argues that, because political conflicts (especially when related

to controversial issues where feelings run high) will almost inevitably elicit emotional responses, teachers should find ways to deal with such contributions, rather than discourage them, as might be implied by a strict reading of some of the Habermasian principles of deliberation. This leads Segal et al. (2017) to embrace the 'raucousness' of their classroom and abandon expectations of achieving a calm, rational, deliberative space. Lo argues that this is not just a matter of accepting the inevitable, but also has the benefit of enabling students to experience the discussion as more authentic in representing their views. As such, this may also be more inclusive, enabling everyone to express themselves. Such practical strategies may involve the teacher adopting different roles, assigning students different roles, and developing a range of activities that temporarily focus on investigation or analysis in order to 'cool' the classroom's emotional temperature (ACT, 2015).

A further issue that requires practical teaching responses is the challenge of 'enclave thinking' discussed by Sunstein (2003) and in Thompson et al.'s (2015) empirical study. Clearly the classroom presents a small population for a deliberative discussion, and in many ways the group will often be remarkably similar – even in a diverse school, children will be the same age, have received a similar education, and are likely to come from the same area. Whilst Crocco et al. (2018) do not use 'enclave deliberation' as a term, they do echo these concerns that relatively homogeneous school populations can lead to the emergence of an easy consensus, which marginalises minority voices, reflects social and cultural capital, and reinforces prior opinions. They found very few children changed their opinion in deliberations and suggest that, in such contexts, teachers might be better advised to play down the expectation of arriving at consensus, in order to emphasise the exploration of diverse opinions.

The distinctiveness of deliberative talk in schools

The discussion above has considered some of the issues arising from teachers' attempts to translate the principles of deliberative theory into the classroom context. But the challenges are not just those of translating from the field of politics to education, there is also another challenge of implementing these distinctive forms of talk in an institutional context where other forms of talk are already established. The most common form of talk, as confirmed by Howe and Abedin's (2013) review of four decades of research, is commonly referred to as the I-R-E/F structure, where the teacher initiates (I), a student responds (R), and the teacher then evaluates (E) or provides feedback (F) to the student. It is teacher centred and hierarchically controlled, so that talk largely flows through the teacher and adheres closely to their concerns. It is against this backdrop of consistent findings over decades, that attempts to foster deliberation have to be seen. Deliberative discussion, exploratory discussion, Philosophy for Children and dialogic teaching are all contending with a set of almost automatic assumptions built into the I-R-E/F blueprint. Bickmore and Parker's (2014) research with teachers demonstrates just how powerful this default setting can be, as they reported that even in a project explicitly aiming at creating dialogue in the classroom, with teachers who had chosen to participate, they rarely saw sustained democratic dialogue in action.

Another feature of the literature on classroom talk during the past forty years has been a predominant concern with characterising the nature of the talk itself, i.e. researchers have

often been preoccupied with the dialogue as dialogue, rather than its impact on learning. The relatively few exceptions have tended to focus on the development of knowledge and understanding in science education (Howe and Abedin, 2013). Howe's (2017) own work, and that of O'Connor et al. (2017) in maths, shows that all students benefit (in terms of learning) from classroom discussion, regardless of whether they actually talk or not. This suggests that part of the benefit of such talk derives from seeing and hearing arguments and certain forms of reasoning being played out in public. In addition Howe (2017) argues that small group discussions can be particularly useful for developing a greater 'richness' of student contribution, a finding which echoes the empirical findings of adult citizens' juries (Hall, 2017). The reasons for these results are partly explained by reflecting on learning theories, and Neil Mercer has consistently explored these issues over the past few decades.

In his seminal work, Mercer (1995) describes talk between teachers and students as the 'guided construction of knowledge'. He bases his approach on the work of Vygotsky and Bruner and social constructivism more generally and argues that, through conversations in class, "knowledge is neither accumulated nor discovered by learners, it is shaped by people's communicative actions" (p.19). Teachers essentially use three sets of techniques: they elicit knowledge from students, they respond to students, and they describe significant aspects of shared experience (i.e. locate this experience in the bigger story unfolding - the learning) (p.34). In this sense we need to situate episodes of talk in the "long conversation" of unfolding learning over sequences of activities (p.70). Mercer contends that "discourse... means language as it is used to carry out the social and intellectual life of a community" (p.79), and that a key role for teachers is to help students shift from everyday discourse into academic discourse. This reflects Vygotsky's distinction between everyday and scientific concepts, where the latter have to be consciously taught and acquired outside of normal everyday experience but, once acquired, can be used to transform the way one understands the everyday world (Karpov, 2003). An example from the curriculum might be the concept of rights. Whilst students will gain some level of understanding of what constitutes rights from everyday life and conversations, a deep understanding will draw on political theory and law, and will include understanding about what it means to claim and recognise a right, as well as more prosaic knowledge about human rights instruments (Jerome, 2017; 2018). Building on Vygotsky, Mercer draws attention to how individuals use concepts to develop their own understanding of the world, but also how these concepts form a collective cultural tool.

"The curriculum does not consist simply of subject knowledge of a factual kind, but embodies ways of using language - discourses - which students need to be enabled to understand and use if they are to become educated" (Mercer, 1995: 85).

Teaching about a concept like rights should attend therefore to the acquisition of factual and conceptual knowledge, the development of competence in using that knowledge to interpret different situations, an awareness of one's own political agency in the broader development of rights and opportunities to tackle misconceptions (Jerome et al., 2015).

Reznitskaya and Gregory (2013) have turned to think about how such learning might be related to what they call dialogic talk. They start by using Kuhn's (1991) hierarchically ordered stages of 'epistemological development' to think about how children not only acquire factual

knowledge, but also deepen their understanding of knowledge. Kuhn suggests that younger students might start with an 'absolutist' epistemology, in which knowledge is fixed, generally held by experts, and proven by facts. By contrast, a 'multiplist' view of knowledge grasps that people have different points of view, but succumbs to a form of relativism about knowledge in which there is no way judge those diverse opinions. Finally, an 'evaluativist' perspective recognises this diversity of opinions but also understands these can be subjected to scrutiny using methods of inquiry and rational evaluation to evaluate which judgements might be more defensible than others (Reznitskaya and Gregory, 2013:115). Whilst debates about the nature of knowledge are not going to be resolved here, it is useful to think about how this approach relates to schooling. Traditional methods of teaching may well privilege an absolutist approach, in which the teacher is the fount of all wisdom, and children are required simply to learn the knowledge imparted and accurately reproduce it in tests. But the evaluativist approach is useful to those who want to develop children's awareness of the distinctive perspective of different subject disciplines and to understand the rules that have been established within those disciplines. For example, this tripartite classification has been used by history educators to distinguish between more or less sophisticated responses to historical inquiries (Brush and Saye, 2008). A broad aim of history teachers might be to trouble the notion that history is simply saying what happened in the past, and to help students understand that historical accounts are always partial interpretations. But they do not want to replace that simplistic idea with a relativist model that accepts all possible interpretations as equally valid. Rather they want to induct students into the traditions and norms of the historical community, and to understand how historians build their accounts, how they relate to evidence and existing scholarship, and how one might read them. This is a significant challenge, but clearly resonates with current educational debates about the power of knowledge to transform our understanding of the world (Young, 2013).

Reznitskaya and Gregory argue that dialogic teaching involves the troubling of familiar power relations, not by denying teacher expertise, but by acknowledging everyone is a participant (albeit more or less experienced) within knowledge communities. It also follows that such a teaching approach is best suited to dealing with open or contestable questions. And it should include some level of metacognition so that students can monitor the discussion and their own understanding and consider strategies required for learning (such as asking for clarification, requesting information etc). In reflecting on how dialogue is supposed to turn into learning they focus on the following processes:

- (i) Discussion gives students experience of rational thinking, which they can then internalise. Here they cite Mead's (1962) assertion that individual reasoning is internal argument with a generalised other, and Bakhtin's (1986) commitment that our thought is shaped through struggle with others' thoughts (Reznitskaya and Gregory, 2013: 118).
- (ii) The cumulative experiences of such discussion help students build an 'argument schema' to build a general understanding of how arguments are built, questioned, worked through etc. which fits in with the evaluativist epistemological world view.
- (iii) This contributes to students' more complex understanding of disciplinary knowledge i.e. what it means to understand concepts like rights.

They also make the argument that teachers can sometimes be tempted to multiplist pedagogies by simply accepting all student contributions as valid contributions, rather than facilitating exploration, testing them and evaluating them appropriately - a 'pseudo-enquiry' according to Alexander (2008).

This warning about pseudo-enquiries alerts us to the observation that just because valuable learning can derive from classroom talk, we should not assume that all classroom talk leads to valuable learning. In addition to the possibility that teachers may not be clear about the purposes of such talk, Mercer notes some of the ways in which students might limit the effectiveness of their talk. For example, Barnes and Todd (1978: 73) made the following observations about one small group discussion they observed: "the girls do not advance their understanding... they merely reiterate half-understandings which they already possess." They contended that part of the problem is that the students never fully articulated and explained their positions and therefore they did not make themselves accountable to the group for what they said, which led to a "set of unexamined platitudes." This raises the possibility that students will learn what is expected of them in class discussions and simply perform the role the teacher wants to see. Pace (2015) refers to this as a form of 'ventriloquism' where students try to say what they think the teacher would like to hear.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed some of the reasons why deliberative pedagogies might be particularly useful in relation to education in the context of the Prevent duty. Deliberation offers a model of democracy which starts from the reality of diversity within the polity and seeks ways to build empathy and work towards collective decisions for the common good. Deliberation also provides pedagogies for exploring controversial (and potentially divisive) issues in the classroom. However, there is no reason to assume that introducing deliberation into the classroom will be a straightforward matter as established modes of talk tend to default to hierarchical teacher controlled exchanges, rather than open and inclusive discussion between class members. This means teachers will need to work over time to build up a culture for deliberation in the classroom, and they will also have to exercise judgement about the extent to which students can communicate their emotions, regulate their engagement with others, and develop the criteria for evaluating arguments, rather than simply accepting all opinions as equally valid. This establishes the context for our two research questions focusing on the extent to which the classroom operates as a deliberative space and the nature of the students' talk when they are given opportunities to engage critically with the FBVs. In the next chapter we discuss the methodological tradition in which this project is located and discuss the methods employed to investigate these questions.

Methodology

This section discusses the methodological approach adopted by the research project. The first part situates this project within the broad tradition of researching classroom talk. This broader discussion demonstrates how the ideas used in this project emerged from established practices in education. The second part turns to a more specific outline of the methods devised for this project.

Studying classroom talk

Edwards and Furlong's (1978) classic text 'The Language of Teaching' set the scene for a lot of subsequent work on classroom talk. Because its focus was already quite innovative the book is largely concerned with the nature of talk and turn-taking in general, and less about the relationship between such talk and learning. Their observations about the classrooms where they collected their data still have an air of familiarity:

Teachers usually tell pupils when to talk, what to talk about, when to stop talking, and how well they talked (Edwards and Furlong, 1978: 14).

But they argued that this should come as little surprise because the transmission of knowledge "creates and sustains very unequal communicative rights between teachers and learners" (p.24). They also noted that whole class talk is open to judgement (by teachers and peers) and can therefore be perceived by students as a potentially risky activity. In their study, as well as whole class talk, they were also interested in the nature of small group talk, echoing the Bullock report's (1975) support for small group talk which was more likely to be "tentative, discursive, inexplicit and uncertain of direction" and therefore create an "atmosphere of tolerance, or hesitant formulation and cooperative effort" (cited in Edwards and Furlong, 1978: 27).

When discussing the methodological approach to adopt for analysing the data they collected they outline three distinctive approaches.

1. Systematic approach – coding / quantifying observations of classroom talk.
2. Sociolinguistics – analysing the forms and functions of language.
3. Sociological – analysing contexts and meanings.

Edwards also wrote a later book on methodology with Westgate (1994) which focused much more on the methodology, 'Investigating Classroom Talk'. They introduced a hierarchy of terms for the units of analysis, including the following:

- a. Utterances – short and potentially incomplete contributions to a discussion by a speaker.
- b. Acts – the basic components of talk.
- c. Turns – one complete conversational turn.
- d. Exchanges – a series of contributions and responses between participants in the discussion.

This focus on the different units of analysis from single speakers overcomes the potential problem of treating one person's contribution as a whole unit of analysis, as they put it:

As we hear ourselves say what we think, or what we think we think, we can monitor this objectification of our thoughts, judging its accuracy or adequacy and modifying where necessary (Edwards and Westgate, 1994: 11).

As with Edwards and Furlong (1978), this methodological handbook also seems to be more interested in talk as a general social phenomenon than with any substantive learning that occurs through the use of talk in the classroom.

Mercer and Dawes (2014) provide an historical review of the field and note the gradual development of studies away from documenting the types of talk to accounting for talk in context. They discuss Nystrand's (2006) development of 'event history analysis' which considered talk as 'moves' in the flow of classroom discourse, with antecedents and consequences (cited in Mercer and Dawes, 2014: 437). Mercer and Dawes were interested in periods of lessons when there were sustained student exchanges (which are relatively rare), called 'dialogic spells' and this connects to Alexander's investigations into 'dialogic teaching', which focused on how individual teacher-pupil or pupil-pupil exchanges were 'chained' into coherent lines of enquiry (p. 437). When it comes to categorising these chains, they draw on Scott & Asoko (2006, cited in Mercer and Dawes, 2014), who identified four types of 'communicative approach':

1. Interactive/dialogic – teacher and students consider a range of ideas.
2. Non-interactive/dialogic – teacher reviews different points of view.
3. Interactive/authoritative – teacher focuses on one specific point of view and leads students through a question and answer routine with the aim of establishing and consolidating that point of view.
4. Non-interactive/authoritative – teacher presents a specific point of view.

Importantly, for Mercer and Dawes, all forms of talk may be necessary at different times, however in our research project we are primarily focused on the specific types of talk that arise in small group pupil-pupil interactions, and in the whole class plenary between participants (also including the teacher) and therefore this broad brush approach to categorising classroom talk is not particularly helpful.

In Mercer's earlier work (1995) he outlines three different ways of categorising these chains of talk, which are more useful for thinking about the kinds of talk we are recording:

1. Disputational talk in which participants disagree but maintain individualised decision-making, make few attempts to pool resources or offer constructive criticism of suggestions.
2. Cumulative talk involves partners constructing a common knowledge by accumulation but it lacks criticality. Typically this features repetition, confirmation and elaboration.
3. Exploratory talk involves partners engaging critically but constructively with each other's ideas. Statements are offered for joined consideration and these may be challenged or counter-challenged but positions are justified and alternative hypotheses are offered. In this talk knowledge is made more publicly accountable and reasoning is more visible in the talk.

Mercer also argues that, in order to describe and evaluate the actual talk that goes on in educational activities, we need to use three levels of analysis, where levels means something like 'depth of focus'.

- *Level one: linguistic*

Talk is considered as spoken text. What kind of speech acts the student perform, do they assert, challenge, explain, request? What kind of exchanges take place, how do they build conversations, respond to each other. What topics are discussed?

- *Level two: psychological*

Talk is considered as thought and action. What kinds of ground rules do speakers follow? How do the ways speakers interact, what topics do they discuss, how do the issues they raise reflect their interests and concerns? To what extent is reasoning visibly pursued through the talk? For example, in disputational talk the relationship is competitive, information is flaunted rather than shared. In cumulative talk we observe greater concern with solidarity and trust in the group. But in exploratory talk participants foreground reasoning. The latter two types of talk aim for consensus in different ways but the first type does not.

- *Level three: cultural*

This level addresses the educational outcomes in observed talk and involves consideration of the nature of 'educated' discourse. Whilst some psychologists have suggested educated discourse is unlike everyday discourse because it is disembedded or decontextualized, Mercer focuses instead on the degree to which reasoning is made visible, and knowledge is made accountable, reflecting the ground rules of the relevant discourse community. He stresses there is more involved in educated discourse than simply using talk in an exploratory way. There is also accumulated knowledge, the use of specialized vocabulary and other conventions.

Research strand 1: Implications for studying classroom talk in this research project

If we take a Vygotskian approach, following Mercer (1995), then we can differentiate between everyday and scientific concepts, where the latter is not expected to arise spontaneously from everyday communication, but rather needs to be explicitly tackled through some kind of educational interaction with a more knowledgeable other. On this reading we want students to understand the concepts in a different way than they would in everyday speech. This suggests we analyse the transcripts at two levels, firstly, through what we call the mechanics of talk, and secondly through the ideational function of the talk. This acknowledges the insights from Mercer's discussions but simplifies it into an approach which more closely mirrors the concerns of this project with conceptual learning.

Level one: Mechanics of talk

Here we analyse the text using some of the ideas discussed by Mercer (1995) and Edwards and Westgate (1994). The focus is on the kind of talk developing in each situation. The analysis might focus on the relationships in the group, the extent to which talk is disputational, cumulative or exploratory; the extent to which people give reasons, pay attention to previously stated positions, test their own and others' positions, search for consensus etc. Below we list the codes we developed during the project to analyse the transcripts. This list started with a list of likely codes taken from the literature (a-g) and was expanded as we started to work with our transcripts (i-m).

Utterances

- a. Statement of position – participant states an argument / position.
- b. Justification – participant provides a reason for their position.
- c. Illustration / example – participant provides an example or case.
- d. Challenging – participant poses a direct challenge to a previous utterance.
- e. Agreement – participant shows agreement through affirmation and / or non-critical addition and expansion, for example completing a sentence for a peer.
- f. Consensus seeking / creating new knowledge – participant reviews or revises their position in the light of previous utterances to seek a consensus.
- g. Suggesting solutions – participant proposes an answer from a personal perspective, without apparently drawing together others' views (therefore not explicitly consensus-seeking).
- h. Clarifying meaning – participant asks the group to clarify terms of reference or a position being discussed.
- i. Initiating the talk – participant executes a turn which aims to initiate a fresh round of conversation, and this may include shutting down a previous chain of talk.
- j. Expansive prompts – participant prompts others to think in more depth or more widely about the issue.
- k. Using humour – humour as relevant to the context, as opposed to off-task chatter.
- l. Speculative contribution – participant engages in an imaginative exploration of the scenarios being discussed, sometimes in a playful manner.
- m. Adult prompts – utterances provided by teacher or researcher in order to facilitate or deepen conversation.

For the chains of talk we adapted Mercer's (1995) classification system (his three types of talk are discussed above) and added two other categories to reflect the fact that some of the conversations did veer into off-task conversation and that sometimes the group needed to talk about the way they were talking, or how they were tackling the task.

Chains

1. Pre-disputational: several exchanges are off-task; banter; joking; rather chaotic. For various reasons the task-based conversation may never really get off the ground. (The 'pre' is not necessarily temporal.)
2. Disputational: As with Mercer, these are largely on-task but contributions are largely separate and contributors do not directly engage with one another, build on one another, or question (although they may simply gainsay or attack / dismiss).
3. Cumulative: As with Mercer, these chains largely build on one another, people agree and add details, but largely build up one collective response through group consent.
4. Exploratory: As with Mercer, these chains demonstrate a willingness to question others, reasons are given and explored, positions are reviewed and revised. Nuanced statements may be developed through critical conversation.
5. Meta-talk: Sometimes participants seem to be reflecting on the nature and value of deliberative talk itself, and thus draw deeper lessons from the activity.

Level two: Ideational function of talk

Analysing the mechanics of the talk helped us to gain a better understanding of how the students engaged with the tasks, how their talk developed over time and how it differed between groups. But we were also concerned with the depth of the student's engagement with the core concepts and with their ability to think through the details of the case studies to achieve deeper engagement with the underlying concept (Hess, 2009). Following Mercer we were not interested here in any kind of disembodied abstract philosophical definition, rather we were interested in the extent to which the students were able to make conceptual connections between case studies (from the Deliberative Classroom resources and their own lives) and therefore engage with the underlying concept. We did not start with a definition of what the 'scientific knowledge' is, for example in relation to religious freedom, rather as researchers we drew on our background knowledge of philosophy and social science to notice what was going on in the student talk. This is similar to Maclure's account of how data comes to our notice because it somehow 'glows' or demands our attention (Maclure, 2010: 282). Whilst Maclure acknowledges there is an affective dimension to this, we think it is misleading to imagine that such aspects of data come to be noticed largely through emotional or unconscious processes. We are also aware that we bring our very specific academic concerns to the data in this level of analysis - we wanted to focus on what the students do with knowledge, how they engage with those key ideas (of interest to us), and what makes some responses seem deeper than others. There is a risk here of circularity, in that the researchers identify 'depth' according to some unspecified criteria, and then simply collect examples that reflect their own unconscious starting point. However, there are some methodological parallels to draw on here.

Firstly, in teaching practice, Pollitt (2012) has outlined how 'adaptive comparative judgement' of extended qualitative student work (as opposed to maths problems or factual recall) can achieve remarkably high levels of consistency in assessment. This method requires teachers to compare student work in pairs and decide which is 'better', without using assessment criteria or exam rubrics. Secondly, there is a strong tradition in citizenship and social studies education of using comparative analysis of student work to better understand how their use of ideas develops over time (Ashby et al., 2005; Jerome and Lalor, 2018; Peck and Sears, 2005). This may take the form of a formal phenomenographic study, where the researchers attempt to account for an entire conceptual field by describing levels of increasing depth and sophistication in students' conceptual development, or it may adopt a more flexible approach to generating insights into teaching and learning, where practice is less developed (Rowe, 2005). What we take from this tradition, is that those with some established understanding in the field can draw on that knowledge to notice significant shifts in thinking in the data from students and then subject those to greater scrutiny. Our analysis of the ideational function of the talk focuses on the extent to which students engage with the core ideas through their talk and, perhaps, even develop their understanding through the talk.

In practice, we have adopted a blend of approaches here, and have focused on those extracts from the data that appears to 'glow' because there are particular features that stand out as significant, but we also recognise that such features stand out to us as researchers partly because of what we bring to the analysis and partly through our comparative reading across

the transcripts. What ‘stands out’ can stand out by virtue of what the rest of the data does or does not say, and because of what we are looking for as researchers. In addition, we developed some additional codes for our data to help draw our attention to potentially significant extracts of the transcripts.

We adopted the following codes to identify explicit contributions that added knowledge or sought to expand understanding.

Knowledge

- a. Expanding schemas – participants offered a new way of seeing or framing the issue.
- b. Linking to personal experience – participants used personal anecdote about themselves or others in their lives.
- c. Media as source – participants draw on media sources as anecdotes or case studies.
- d. School subject knowledge – participants draw on formal learning in school.
- e. Talk about rights and FBV – participants explicitly focus on one of the core concepts.

In addition, there is a relatively well-established model of empathy in social studies, particularly in history education, which seemed to us to be potentially useful in our analysis. Given that the role of emotions is fairly controversial in the academic debates about deliberative democracy, we also wanted to build in some scope for accounting for emotional responses. Here we have drawn on the work of history educators (Lee and Ashby, 1987; Lee and Shemilt, 2011) to operationalise the discussion about different epistemologies (see discussion above of Reznitskaya and Gregory, 2013). This literature asserts that one can differentiate between one’s own emotional response to a scenario (this makes me angry), one’s emotional empathy for someone else (I am upset at the plight of others), and one’s cognitive empathy (I can understand why others see the world differently). Here we link this to the development of knowledge and understanding, because the recognition of the ‘other’ is so important in deliberative theory, but also seems to be a capacity children develop over time, and which can be nurtured through lessons.

Affect and empathy

- a. Cognitive empathy – participants demonstrate understanding of other people’s positions and perspectives. This may indicate the beginning of the development of a multiplist perspective.
- b. Emotional empathy – participants seek to understand feelings and / or experience an emotional response to someone else’s situation or experience.
- c. Personal emotional response – participants share their own direct response to the topic or case study being discussed in the classroom.

Finally, whilst we were looking for all of these elements in the transcripts, we were also aware of the limitations established by others. For example, Brice (2002) notes that student discussions in class often function as a form of ‘rough draft talk’ and therefore the researcher should not expect to find fully formed and coherent thoughts throughout their data, rather one should remember that talk may be faltering, tentative, incomplete, occasionally incoherent, and that ideas may be jettisoned as well as being developed. Segal et al.’s (2017)

small case study of a discussion in a single classroom also points out that the release of direct teacher control of the talk is likely to lead (in many classrooms) to conversations which are raucous, unfocused and lacking in academic rigour. But they counsel against perfectionism and warn us not to expect a full Habermasian ideal scenario in every exchange and to recognise that a clash of voices may well entail an element of cacophony. In reality they are arguing that, given we see so little deliberative sustained conversation in schools, we should not be too dismissive of the few (poor) examples we do see. We have engaged with our data in a positive spirit, to see what may be of value, rather than starting with an ideal against which we might expect to find reality sorely lacking.

Generating data

Schools were approached in a variety of ways, including a general email through the Association for Citizenship Teaching, invitations to teachers with whom the researchers had worked on similar projects, and personal approaches to other schools. The intention was to record the classrooms where discussions were taking place, based on the themes in the resource packs (outlined above). This resulted in the following sample.

Thameside Academy

In this comprehensive school the whole of year 8 were included in the teaching activities through participation in a series of 'drop days' in the main hall. Each day a third of the year group met in the hall for three 90 minute workshops on the theme of democracy, protest and change. The students did not have any curriculum preparation for the days and had not studied citizenship previously. The school model for these days involved outside speakers delivering content, with teachers acting as facilitators. This meant the researchers were in the unexpected position of facilitating the workshops and collecting data. To help manage these roles there were three researchers present in each session plus at least one university student recruited to help. Students were very sceptical about allowing themselves to be recorded and so data was only recorded from two small groups for six of the workshops.

Arun Grammar

In this selective school the material on religious freedom was taught by a Religious Education (RE) specialist teacher with year 8 boys. The researchers were able to attend the first lesson where the project was taught, but only collected data during the second lesson. Recorders were placed on every table in the class as all the pupils consented to being involved.

Stour Grammar

In this selective school the material on religious freedom was taught by an RE specialist teacher with year 8 girls. The researchers were able to attend two lessons and collect data in both. The class was organised on 15 small tables making it impossible to have recorders on every table, so five small groups were recorded in the class, plus the whole class discussions.

Avon School

In this comprehensive Church of England school the debate society agreed to participate in the project and so a mixed age group of student volunteers joined a deliberative discussion

on religious freedom in school, with two of the researchers facilitating the session and recording data.

The recordings were transcribed, but in cases where there was a lot of off-task talk, these transcriptions focused only on the sections of the recordings which were relevant to the tasks. In some classes almost all of the talk was on-task, which led to a significant variation in the amount of data from each visit. For example, one single lesson in Arun Grammar led to 11,000 words being transcribed, whereas two days in Thameside Academy produced only 3,000 words in total. Overall, the data set consisted of 34,000 words, which were analysed in Nvivo.

In Nvivo the researchers applied the initial coding system on one transcript each, then met to review each other's work and discuss issues arising. This led to a revised set of codes (those shown above) which were then applied to the whole data set. Two researchers took half of the data each, and then moderated each other's work to ensure greater consistency in the application of these codes. The coding focused initially on utterances, affect and knowledge and then when these codes were completed and moderated, we applied the codes for the chains. These chain codes were then subject to moderation and further discussion between two researchers, to ensure consistency and to highlight problems in the application of the codes. The identification of contrasting chains enabled us to select some examples to explore the different ways in which students engaged with the concepts. In the event, because most schools focused on religious freedom, our analysis has tended to discuss this concept in greater depth.

Research strand 2: Developing a classroom observation tool

In the second strand of the research project we wanted to develop an observation tool that could be used by non-specialist teachers. The focus of the tool is to enable teachers to make judgements about the extent to which the classroom operates as a deliberative space, rather than to assess the individual contributions of participants, for example through marking a speech in a debate. The objective was to create a resource that would help teachers identify the main characteristics of a deliberative classroom, and to differentiate between more or less deliberative classrooms. This approach recognises that affecting change in how teachers manage talk can be a difficult process, where one's theoretical understanding often outstrips practice, as teachers often default to more familiar patterns of talk (Black et al., 2003). This element of the research therefore sought to generate a useful framework for describing the classroom as a deliberative space, and then to explore whether there was any level of agreement between teachers using the tool. In practical terms, high inter-rater reliability would be desirable to use this more widely, but it is not essential as any two colleagues could agree to use the tool as the basis of discussion and improvement planning in their own context, regardless of whether an independent observer would agree with their ratings.

As we have seen above, there are multiple classification systems and research instruments available to researchers studying classroom talk. As an example of the latter, Hennessy et al. (2016) have sought to build on Mercer's work by developing a coding scheme which contains 33 separate categories, which is being further elaborated with sub-headings to enable even finer grained analysis. Their account of the instrument in use demonstrates that it can be a

powerful method for exploring the details of classroom talk, but they also show that even trained researchers often find it difficult to agree on how to code actual examples of talk. Such instruments are unlikely to be of use to non-specialist teachers, as the level of technical knowledge required to use them is likely to make them inaccessible.

Howe (2017) is somewhat sceptical that the different elements of deliberation can be teased apart so readily, and this gives further support to the idea of developing a more broad brush account of the classroom. Furthermore, as we saw in the literature review there is also some research indicating that it is the level of deliberation in the classroom as a whole that is predictive of the educational benefits (see Howe, 2017), and this gives further support to the idea of developing a holistic account of the classroom rather than focusing on the individual contributions. Finally, because deliberation is about the talk that takes place between members of a community, and is characterised by a set of norms and processes it seems more productive to focus on the classroom than to focus on the teacher. The teacher may well undertake to change aspects of their teaching and classroom management as a result of an observation, but framing the observation tool as describing the classroom, leaves open those pedagogic decisions for negotiation, and emphasises how important it is to develop a culture and ethos that supports deliberation. This could conceivably emerge through a collaborative discussion with the class rather than through any conscious changes from the teacher.

For this observation tool we adapted Steiner et al.'s (2004) 'Discourse Quality Index' which was developed to measure individual contributions in parliamentary debates. The index is based on an interpretation of Habermas' theory, and so was more specifically related to deliberative democratic theory than more general approaches to dialogic teaching. It also included just seven categories, making it more user-friendly.

Discourse Quality Index

1. Participation: is the speaker interrupted or not?
2. Level of justification: coding ranges from none – inferior – qualified – sophisticated.
3. Content of justification: coding differentiates between concern with specific groups or with the common good.
4. Respect: coding differentiates between neutrality and positive and negative references to affected groups.
5. Demands: coding differentiates between neutrality and positive and negative references to the demands of other groups.
6. Counterarguments: coding differentiates between ignoring counterarguments, dismissing them, or acknowledging them.
7. Constructive politics: coding focuses on the extent to which participants sit on their positions or seek to make mediating proposals.

(Steiner et al., 2004)

A modified version of this instrument was trialled by the researcher in one school and then presented to an advisory group, recruited to provide expert guidance to the project team. The advisory group provided an opportunity to test for face-validity and members of the

group suggested how some categories could be merged and new ones introduced. This resulted in several changes that were made before the instrument was trialled (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Classroom observation tool

Criteria & Target outcome	1 Poor – 4 Excellent
1. Participation. <i>All members of the class are actively engaged with the discussion. They actively listen, respond and make contributions.</i>	1. Very few participate willingly. 2. Minority participate willingly. 3. Majority participate willingly. 4. All actively participate.
2. Developing informed views. <i>Students routinely offer justifications for their opinions that draw on reasonable interpretation of the facts and account for other perspectives.</i>	1. This rarely happens. 2. Simple assertions / justifications predominate. 3. Most offer well-reasoned justifications. 4. Students routinely offer justifications which reflect their own informed opinions and their knowledge of others' views.
3. Respect towards people affected by the issue being considered. <i>Students show empathy and respect for people affected by the issues being discussed. They challenge stereotypes and examples of prejudice and recognise diversity within groups of people.</i>	1. Disrespectful comments throughout the lesson about people affected, although these may be challenged by others. 2. Mostly a neutral tone adopted, but a lack of empathy / understanding for affected groups. 3. Generally respectful tone towards people being discussed. 4. Inclusive and positive tone throughout.
4. Respect for the position adopted by other participants. <i>Students listen attentively to the range of arguments and reasons offered. Participants can accept and value elements of others' contributions even if they disagree with their overall argument.</i>	1. Some rude or belittling comments to other participants, although these may be challenged by others. 2. Most responses are civil but opposing arguments are largely rejected or dismissed. 3. Generally participants can at least agree to disagree. 4. Most participants engage positively and respectfully with views different from their own.
5. Constructive response to discussion. <i>Participants recognise counter-arguments given during the discussion and respond to them in a constructive manner.</i>	1. Generally people stick to their arguments / views throughout (listen but do not respond). 2. Some respond directly to others, either to explore other views or develop their own views. 3. Most respond directly to others, either to explore other views or develop their own views. 4. The discussion is generally open and exploratory with evaluation, review and development of ideas common.
6. Search for knowledge and understanding. <i>Students are engaged in a collective conversation to achieve clarity and understanding. They value the truth and seek to clarify misconceptions and fill gaps in knowledge.</i>	1. Facts and relevant information are generally used selectively to justify views. 2. Some in the class challenge misconceptions and incorrect / irrelevant information. 3. Most students engage with the information shared during the discussion and use this to develop their views. 4. Generally the discussion builds clarity and deeper understanding of the issues being considered.

Generating data

The observation tool was tested with several groups of trainee teachers at the end of their first period of school experience. Whilst they were not yet qualified, they had gained experience of being observed in the classroom and of observing more experienced colleagues.

- 19 student teachers were on a humanities PGCE.
- 14 student teachers were on a citizenship PGCE.
- 6 people completed the observation on-line, 5 of whom were student teachers and one of whom was a qualified teacher (2-5 years' experience).

The researcher visited two universities and incorporated the observation into a workshop for the 33 PGCE participants. In this workshop students had the project explained to them and the observation tool was used to respond individually to the video (with no discussion). This was followed by an opportunity to discuss the observations with peers, but these discussions were not recorded on the observation sheets. Participants were shown an edited recording of a lesson and asked to complete the observation tool for the lesson they had observed. An important limitation of this aspect of the research is that the lesson being evaluated was unfamiliar to the participants and the film was an incomplete record of the lesson. Data available to the participants was restricted due to the positioning of the cameras in the classroom and the editing, which reduced an hour lesson to 15 minutes. This is an important caveat to the findings reported later.

The numerical data was analysed to calculate the average scores for each element and measures of variance. In addition, observers were asked to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in the lesson. This resulted in a series of short qualitative responses, which are summarised later in the discussion.

Ethics

Ethical approval was given by the Education Ethics Committee at Middlesex University. The processes included gaining institutional consent from the head teacher in each school and then seeking individual consent from the students. In each case a researcher explained the nature of the research to the students and provided information sheets for them to refer to. Students who chose to participate in the research also signed individual consent forms, but the data was transcribed independently and so students are not identified by name and where they use names for their peers, these have been changed in the transcript. Because the activities could all be considered as routine educational activities (all schools have to promote the FBVs) students could not opt out of the activities, but could choose not to allow us to collect any data during those activities. The fact that large numbers of students chose not to participate in Thameside Academy indicates that the process was clear and enabled students to exercise a free choice.

The resources aimed to stimulate discussion of controversial issues and so, where the researchers were involved in facilitating workshops, the teachers in participating schools were

briefed in detail about the content of lessons to ensure that they could prepare in advance and negotiate with the researchers if they were concerned about any aspect of the materials.

For those student teachers who attended a workshop where the observation tool was introduced and trialled, the researcher made it clear that, whilst the workshop required them to use the tool, they were free not to hand in their observation sheet at the end. In the event all participants were happy to hand their form over for the research project. In addition, the on-line form made it clear at the outset that participants should not enter their data if they did not wish to submit their responses to the researchers. All data collected was anonymous.

In the school where the lesson was filmed, the teacher and students gave consent for the filming and release forms were provided before the film was shared more widely with participants.

Analysis of Classroom Talk

In this chapter we present the analysis of our data in the order outlined in the methodology. First we consider some of the utterances most readily associated with aspects of deliberative talk, then we move on to consider the students' engagement with affect and empathy. Then we move on to start considering how the students introduce and use knowledge in their talk. Finally we share some examples of different chains of talk, focusing specifically on cumulative and exploratory talk, as these seem to mark the key distinction between on-task talk and genuinely deliberative talk. We then discuss one extended extract from a discussion of religious freedom to explore the ways in which knowledge and understanding emerge through deliberative talk. The intention here is to provide a sense of how the students engaged with the materials and how we have attempted to analyse the talk that ensued.

1. Utterances

In this section we consider five of the codes which emerged as being of particular interest in relation to the development of deliberative talk. Whilst 'challenging', 'suggesting solutions' and 'consensus-seeking' were predictable codes from the literature on deliberative / exploratory talk, the others emerged through our engagement with the data. 'Expansive prompts' provide a more open strategy for students to explore the issue, and 'speculative contributions' emerged as a potentially significant element of deliberative talk that seemed to us to be associated with a playful and open approach to the conversations – perhaps reflecting the unique context of the classroom-based small group conversation between friends.

1. Challenging
2. Expansive prompts
3. Consensus seeking
4. Suggesting solutions
5. Speculative contributions

1.1 Challenging

A commitment to evaluate contributions is essential to avoiding a slide into relativism, and if all views count equally, then it is difficult to see how politics can offer even temporary solutions to divisive issues. Deliberation therefore requires participants to subject their own views to scrutiny, and to engage critically with the views of others. But this also requires sensitivity, as participants have to recognise the legitimacy of different world-views and perspectives. Challenging others then, requires a careful balance of rigour and sensitivity. It clearly carries with it the risk that attacking or offending someone might curb fruitful exchanges. Given that classrooms can be fractious places at the best of times, we would expect to hear some examples where emotions get the better of participants, or where people fail to engage sensitively with others. Our data does show some examples of this, for example:

“That makes no sense. Shut Up.” (Arun Grammar small group)

But such examples were relatively rare. Even here, this rather stark contribution has a positive effect as it forces the speaker to hone their argument. In this instance the group was

discussing a case study of a gay couple being turned away from a bed and breakfast because the owners felt it contradicted their Christian beliefs. Speaker 1 had just said he felt the same-sex couple should be free to choose where they wanted to stay and they shouldn't be treated differently, but immediately after this challenge the same speaker added, "however it is their home and they may be uncomfortable with them as it goes against their religion." Thus the stark challenge from his peer did appear to have prompted him to re-evaluate his position, or at least to take seriously the opposing perspective. Whilst in theory this kind of utterance might be frowned on, in the reality of close, trusting and playful relationships between friends, such direct language may appear to be merely 'banter' and certainly no-one in this group seemed offended by the challenge.

Sometimes a challenge functions as a kind of generic disruption technique, to throw the onus back on the previous speaker:

"What, how could you?" (Arun Grammar small group)

"No, I don't think so." (Avon School small group)

"You're taking a passive-aggressive point of view. If you are saying it is stupid what gives you that right?" (Avon School small group)

But more often these challenges are quite specifically rooted in the content of the task or case study, and a challenge is often followed by a specific counter-argument. For example, one student (Billy) argued the B&B owners were in the wrong for discriminating in what should be considered a new kind of public space, and another student said:

"I'm against Billy because even if they might be giving it to the public, can't they have their own different rules and regulations on what they think?" (Arun Grammar plenary).

In another lesson a small group was discussing a case study in which Hindus and vegetarians had taken offence at the news that there were beef products in the new £5 notes. After the conversation focused on why this is a problem, one student commented:

"Playing devil's advocate, shouldn't our advancement in society and technology come before religious setbacks?" (Stour Grammar small group).

Here, the challenge is phrased a way that enables the students to make quite a forthright proposition, but it is softened by the phrase 'playing devil's advocate'. This shows a sensitivity to the potentially abrasive nature of a direct challenge to the consensus that was emerging, and represents an attempt to subject the idea to scrutiny, rather than any one person who may have shared that idea. Our data is too limited to draw generalisations about gender, but we note that the first challenge in this section occurred among boys, whilst the second was among girls. This might indicate that some of the aspects of deliberative talk might well reflect gendered norms of behaviour in schools, reflecting previous research on the different ways that boys and girls engage in talk (Myhill, 2002).

1.2 Expansive prompts

This was a code that emerged from our data, rather than being derived from the literature. Sometimes speakers simply invited a peer to contribute, for example:

“Tom, what do you think?” (Arun Grammar small group)

This clearly contributes to the discussion being more inclusive. At other times the prompts worked as a more specific invitation to a speaker to expand their point with further details:

Speaker 1 “It’s not really to do with that”

Speaker 2 “So what’s it to do with then?” (Arun Grammar small group)

And at other times these prompts functioned almost as musings to the group as a whole:

“What are they trying to achieve by not letting the gay people in?” (Arun Grammar small group)

This seems interesting to the extent that such open invitations were clearly aimed at deepening the conversation, but the speaker did not feel personal responsibility for providing the depth. Such contributions signal that participants recognise (possibly unconsciously) the group as a whole may perform functions they personally cannot. In another small group discussion, students were discussing how to define offence and what to do about it, one student said:

“I agree with that but why? You have to question it, why would you do that?”
(Avon School small group).

Here the speaker is urging the group (which has broadly agreed) to push their justification further, to strengthen their argument, and deepen their understanding. In the rest of this conversation, the same speaker takes on an almost Socratic role, questioning peers and pointing out weaknesses in their arguments, pushing them towards clarity. This same speakers next utterances are:

“You can’t implement it.”

“If you can’t disagree with someone you can’t move forwards.”

“If I am eating Halal meat and some guy comes up and says “oh I don’t agree with this you are offending me that you are eating this”, who’s in the right and who’s in the wrong from a secular point of view?”

“Yeah, that’s what I’m saying.”

“Just because you think it’s stupid the person who is offended doesn’t think it’s stupid so you’re blocking out their view just by saying it’s stupid you’re censoring them.”

“These rules are meant to cover every circumstance, right? Not just 80% of circumstances when this may happen it is every circumstance and that example doesn’t cover that circumstance.”

“That’s not the point.”

Here we can see a whole range of strategies being used, but the overwhelming sense of these contributions is that the speaker is genuinely engaged with others’ contributions and responding, sometimes by challenging an individual assertion, and sometimes by prompting the group as a whole to revisit an idea. But the speaker does not feel the need to offer a definitive position themselves. This seems to reinforce the collective nature of such talk as students can perceive the whole group to function as a thinking unit, and students play different roles to look for better thinking.

1.3 Consensus seeking

As we saw in the earlier discussion of deliberative democratic theory, it is often associated with the search for consensus and several of the activities in the resource packs encouraged students along this path. Sometimes a student took it upon themselves to suggest a position that seemed to accommodate diverse previous contributions and several of these comments start with a personal introduction, such as “I think...” or “I feel...” which seems to soften the offered solution to make it more tentative, for the group to consider. For example, in discussing a case study on cults and whether it is an infringement on a person’s religious freedom to stop them joining one, one small group had considered several arguments and wanted to acknowledge people had a right to be protected from harm, but also had a right to choose their religion. One student offered the following suggestion:

“You can’t stop them, but you advise them... I feel advising them not to is like the same as stopping them.” (Stour Grammar small group)

Then they continued in a few turns with:

“[Reading the question] How does this case help you think about limiting religious freedom? I think it does like when it comes to hurting people or manipulating them, then people need to stop it.”

Here we can see how the consensus-seeking suggestion tries to find a way to balance those two principles, which appeared to be in opposition. The speaker does this by invoking the idea of ‘hurt’ but stops short of arguing someone should therefore step in to interfere with the person’s free choice, rather they invoke the compromise position that people can legitimately ‘advise’ the (at-risk) person. This compromise position is further softened by the preface ‘I think’.

In the same group, the same approach can be seen when they turn to a case study about the Church of England, homosexuality and equalities legislation. Another member of the group this time offers a similar kind of solution:

“I think when it gets to the point where it becomes violent, or law-breaking, then rights goes too far.”

These consensus-seeking contributions are often moments where complex issues are brought together. When the debate society at Avon School discussed how their school should deal with religious freedom, a small group has been considering how they can square their regular Christian assemblies with the fact that the school population includes students of other faiths. One student offered the following comment:

“If you actually sit in assembly and pay attention to it you’ll realise that they give the message first before they bring in anything to do with Christianity and then afterwards they bring in that Christian message so I think it’s completely plausible for them to deliver that message without having the religious side attached to it.”
(Avon School small group)

This asserts one solution to how schools might make their assemblies more inclusive, by distinguishing between a general form of moral education (which the speaker supports) and a narrower form of education based on assumptions about a shared religious belief. This enables the next speaker to observe that fundamentally, a “belief in heaven and hell” is likely to have much more impact on a moral lesson, than simply urging children to do the right thing. Here, although the offered consensus position is not automatically taken up, it does open up further lines of exploration for the group.

1.4 Suggesting solutions

Previous research (Jerome and Lalor, 2015) showed that many students, when confronted with a rights-based dilemma, attempted to resolve the dilemma by appeal to what they personally thought was just, and ignored their teacher’s attempts to frame the issue in human rights. In the transcripts we also observed a similar phenomenon, in that students sometimes simply offered practical solutions that seemed to solve the problems in the case studies, whilst bypassing the fundamental conceptual issues, or sidelining their peers’ alternative suggestions. In one case study, a small group was considering what actions might be tolerable from a Christian parent who believed their child had been possessed. One student ignored the invitation to frame this as an issue of conflicting rights and instead offered the pragmatic solution:

“But couldn’t you perform an exorcism without harming them, so they could do that rather than violently doing it” (Arun Grammar small group)

This is interesting for a number of reasons, not least the student’s willingness to offer solutions without detailed knowledge. But it stands out because it seeks to avoid any

engagement with the deeper issues about whether the state can intervene in a matter of theology. In another case study, a student makes a similar point, urging others with religious views that seem to be causing an intractable conflict, simply to rein in their beliefs:

“You can’t change the Bible because that’s what Christianity is based on, but you can change the way you think, like this should be changed and you shouldn’t be discriminated for who you love” (Arun Grammar small group)

Such contributions, it seems to us, fail to acknowledge the legitimacy of a religious adherent’s world-views. As such, a solution which appears on the face of it to be designed to be pragmatic, might actually be criticised for lacking respect for others, and failing to acknowledge the reality of diversity in society.

In another school, where the students were discussing religious diversity in school, and how to manage the possibility of people being offended by others, one student offered the following solution:

“I would say the definition of offence should be determined by a neutral third party or even just an authority figure within the school like an adult” (Avon School small group)

Whilst this indicates a high level of trust in teachers, which should not be surprising in schools, it also represents a similar attempt to bypass the knotty issue of how one defines offence, and whether we have a right not to be offended (or a right to offend). In this case the solution is to avoid a solution and simply trust a third-party to devise their own solution. Whilst such contributions may appear to offer solutions, and may also attract support within the group, in effect they close down deliberation because they prevent any resolution of the underlying issues.

1.5 Speculative contributions

Some students seem to stimulate deeper thinking not by asking an open question or suggesting a position for others to review, but rather they exercised their imagination to explore possible additional scenarios, or factors that might help illustrate their reasoning. At first glance this may appear to be a flight of fancy, or a fictional embellishment of the case study material. But, on reflection, it seems these contributions sometimes also serve the same purpose as a thought experiment. Students elaborate the situation in order to consider what other factors might be relevant to informing a judgement.

As an example, the following extract is taken from a small group discussion in a girls’ school, focusing on the new £5 note, which contained animal products. The members of the group became quite focused on the motivations of David Solomon, the person who invented the new material:

Speaker 1: "I think this is ridiculous and Professor David Solomon who came up with it, I'm sorry, but his response was very petty, he should have been, like, this is how we did it, making use of waste products, I'm sorry if I offended."

Speaker 2: "But David Solomon is probably someone who makes plastics for a living and develops that kind of thing, so it's not his job to make sure it suits everyone."

Speaker 1: "Yes, that's true."

Speaker 2: "Like if the government said we need you to make a plastic that's durable and can go on the outside of plastic notes..."

...

Speaker 2: "I reckon they said to David Solomon, look we want a nice durable plastic can you make one, and he said yeah, sure."

Speaker 1: "Yes, I think David got a bit stupid about it, but..."

Speaker 3: "I just feel weird that my £5 note contains animal fat."

Speaker 2: "And David Solomon probably feels quite upset if he's getting blamed for it."

On one view this conversation is purely speculative about David Solomon's motivations and emotional response, but on another view the students are using the fictionalised elaborations on the case scenario to think through the likely motivations of people involved and thus to expand their understanding of how the situation may have arisen and how it may be viewed by different stakeholders. This ability to shift away from one's own perspective, or from making simplistic assumptions about blame seems to represent quite a powerful shift of understanding, and plays an important part in understanding the ethical and political complexity of these case studies. Such fictional or speculative contributions may therefore play an important part in opening up the thinking of the group to empathetic accounts that accommodate different perspectives. This is clearly important in understanding how these controversial issues are understood by diverse members of society. In a fuller deliberative forum, such as a citizens' jury, such diversity of perspectives might be represented by a range of witnesses, but in this class, where the details in the case study were scant, a similar function was served by imagination.

A more limited example is apparent in the following example, where a group of boys were discussing the rights and wrongs of a group of anti-fascist activists attacking a gallery that was exhibiting far right material:

"The public will have their say in it and they will be like 'we don't like these guys any more, they shut down that guy's business' and all that 'they did this to try and prove this'" (Thameside Academy small group)

This helped them to think through the consequences of taking actions that might appear to be justified from the perspective of the activists, but which might be counterproductive in terms of generating wider support for their cause. Although the reasoning is relatively simple, it does represent an attempt to think oneself into the shoes of another relevant actor, and to use this new perspective to inform one's judgement of an ethical / political dilemma.

In a more extreme example of a thought experiment, one boy offered the following contribution to his group's discussion of religious freedom and possible restrictions:

"Maybe we should allow other people to follow their faith. Someone you disagree with, like Satanists. Maybe they should be allowed to go onto the street, kidnap someone and sacrifice them." (Arun Grammar small group)

Again, whilst no-one interpreted this proposal as a literal suggestion, the following contributions refocused around the issue of when one might be justified in making restrictions.

In some of these examples there is a light-hearted approach, sometimes drawing on humour, to draw in the group to the collective thought-experiment. Students sometimes role-played a conversation between the people they were imagining and sometimes went off on tangents, or teased one another. Again we were struck that this might be a feature that one would expect to see more in deliberative classrooms, than in the more formal deliberative fora developed for adult citizens. Whilst Habermas (1982) is sceptical of the use of humour, others have argued that humour could play a useful part in deliberative discussions (see Steiner et al., 2017). Basu describes humour as contributing "openness, playfulness, and pleasure to epistemological practices" and allowing participants to "temporarily suspend one's cherished beliefs and contemplate the implications without treachery." In this way, we might see humour as playing a useful role in the core processes of deliberation (especially in keeping an open mind and engaging with the other) whilst also acting as a "social lubricant" helping to break the ice and soften the blow of ideas that have the potential to cause offence (Basu, 1999, cited in Steiner et al., 2004: 40-1). Many of these uses of humour imply an appreciation of, and concerns for, the others in the group, and we turn next to consider data related to affect and empathy.

2. Affect and Empathy

As discussed in the literature review and methodology section, these codes were inspired by the literature in history education which links the development of empathy to students' historical thinking (Lee and Shemilt, 2011), and in particular to a form of disciplinary understanding which in many ways operates as a threshold concept (Adler-Kessner et al., 2012). Many history educators argue that, in order to understand the discipline of history, students must come to appreciate that history is concerned with the deliberate construction of an account of the past, and that these accounts are produced with a purpose, written in a context, and through an active interpretation of the evidence (Brush and Saye, 2008). This requires students to move away from a simplistic model of knowledge and to engage with the fact that others see the world differently, ask particular questions of it, and construct varying

accounts. But it also requires them to understand how we might seek to evaluate those accounts and discriminate between plausible work and that which is less worthy of our time and attention. The journey for children in history education in many ways is characterised as a journey away from believing the past is history (they are the same thing), and this is accompanied by a journey from seeing everyone in the past as stupid (because they did inexplicable things) to constructing context-related accounts of people's motivations and world-views.

It seems to us that engagement in deliberative democracy requires a similar shift of perspective, away from simplistic accounts of 'how the world works' or even 'how the world is' and towards a more differentiated understanding of how others see the world. Not only does this development require an epistemological shift, but this is informed by the development of empathy. If we are going to engage in an open, flexible and respectful conversation with others, we have to acknowledge the legitimacy of diverse views, we cannot simply see everyone else as misguided or stupid. But, if we are going to resist the slide into relativism, we also need to find robust ways to engage with one another and scrutinise arguments and opinions. In this section we discuss examples where students demonstrated cognitive empathy, then consider emotional empathy, and finally say something about examples of personal emotional responses in the data.

2.1 Cognitive empathy

This is about understanding other people's perspectives and therefore linked to de-centring one's own view and acknowledging where others are really coming from. This is clearly important for thinking about situations politically, and an essential criteria for deliberative discussion (Steiner et al. 2004).

In Arun Grammar, the boys chose to focus on the case study which invited them to consider whether Christian B&B owners could discriminate against a gay couple by turning them away. We became aware during this lesson that the way the case study was framed (as a matter of religious freedom) tends to emphasise the B&B owners' perspective, and therefore much of the discussion focused on them, but there was also evidence of the boys thinking about how the gay couple might feel. This exchange (already mentioned in section 1.1) considers both perspectives and sets up the scenario as having merit on both sides:

Speaker 1: "It is the same-sex couple's choice, so they should not be treated any differently."

Speaker 2: "That makes no sense. Shut up."

Speaker 1: "However, it is their home and they may be uncomfortable with them as it goes against their religion."

Several groups in this class attempted to strike some sort of balance, but this was difficult because they often seemed to privilege religious belief over other forms of worldview or opinion. It is not clear whether this was related to the way the resources framed the issue, or

whether the context (an RE lesson) influenced them, or if this was simply a position the boys endorsed:

“If they just don’t like gay couples that’s just wrong because it is discriminatory [inaudible] especially if they don’t have a reason for it but if it due to their religious beliefs, then I think that would be OK”

“If they are just because of their religion and they are supporters of that religion then they can’t say ‘I’m going to ditch that religion and not follow it’”

“They might say it is a Christian B&B and their religion means that they don’t want to be, I don’t know how to say it, poisoning their place with homosexuality or whatever”

Here, we can see several of the boys attempting to imagine what the B&B owners might have been thinking and why this should be taken seriously, rather than simply dismissed. In another discussion about the role of religion in school, one student in Avon School showed similar reasoning:

“...but if you go to the root of it and you don’t believe in heaven or hell and you think you are just going to die you can’t really convince someone what they are doing is wrong or what they are doing is right it is just the group belief being told what is right for them. It is different for everyone.”

Here they are trying to explore how religious belief feels for the person with the belief to distinguish it from just an opinion. Later in the same discussion, a student pursued a similar line of reasoning to think about whether it was reasonable to allow someone to define another person’s words as offensive, regardless of their intentions. The group had just considered the argument that this was unreasonable, and one student responded:

“No I don’t think we should be telling people what they can be offended by because if something’s upset someone you can’t trivialise how upset they are by something and you can’t tell someone they are not upset by something when the genuinely are.”

Similarly, in a Stour Grammar small discussion one girl shared the following story about how important it is to understand people who have different views – here the relevant factor is age rather than religion:

“Our grandparents for example were born in a time when being gay was seen as being something bad [Speaker 2: “a crime”]. My grandma, I went to her house and it was this time last year and like there were loads of shows on Pride, and she was like, turn it off I don’t want to watch it, because that’s how they’ve been brought up. It’s nothing, it’s not, they don’t mean to be discriminatory...”

This demonstrates how in practical terms she is already applying the ‘exemption’ from the principle of non-discrimination towards people in her own family – all the more significant as she is a young gay person.

In their discussion of the £5 note the following exchange happens in another Stour Grammar small group:

Speaker 1: “He said the complaints were absolutely stupid, I mean I’m sorry mate, but...”

Speaker 3: “Just be a bit respectful!”

Speaker 1: “I know that’s such an ignorant thing to say.”

Speaker 3: “Just because you think it’s stupid, doesn’t mean you get to say that.”

Speaker 1: “And this like means a lot to some people.”

Speaker 2: “I mean personally I don’t understand vegetarianism, but...”

Here we see a clear distinction between the speaker’s own scepticism about the vegetarian world view, and their understanding that nevertheless it needs to be treated seriously and given due regard.

These extracts illustrate the fine line to be drawn between a complete relativism in which everything goes, and an acknowledgement that some positions might actually be wrong. It seems to go too far to say, as one of the girls quoted above said, “just because you think it’s stupid, doesn’t mean you get to say that.” In fact, deliberative theory would suggest on the contrary that, if one thinks someone’s position actually is stupid, one needs to find a way to challenge this. But, we also need to acknowledge that encouraging a shift away from an absolutist epistemology encourages students not to dismiss other people’s positions as stupid. The question comes back to what criteria we might apply to judge a position as more or less stupid. It seems to us though that the students are not falling entirely into the trap of complete relativism, and this is illustrated by the turn the conversation takes over the Christian B&B. Whilst the boys do indeed defend the B&B owners’ right to discriminate, they do this on the grounds that the B&B should be seen as an extension of their home, and no-one can be obliged to accept everyone in their house. As we moved around the class we asked several groups if their position would change if the B&B owners converted their B&B to a boutique hotel and no longer lived in the house themselves. Each group confirmed that this would entirely change their judgement. It turns out that this scenario, in which the students appear to condone homophobia if it is religiously inspired, actually revolves around the definition of private / public space.

Davies (2006) has written about how young people should be taught about the difference between, on the one hand, a religious person being offended by someone else’s existence

because of their belief, and on the other hand, being from a marginalised community and requiring the protection of the law. Here we note that the students' responses show they are able to engage with the 'other' in ways that give them some insight into their motivations and world-views, and that they are beginning to exercise some discretion in relation to whose position might be more worthy of respect, and when it might be legitimate to override people's own preferences.

2.2 Emotional empathy

By contrast we failed to find any examples of participants experiencing emotional feelings as a result of thinking about others' positions. Often when we use the term 'empathy' in general conversation this implies that we might experience some similar feeling to someone with whom we are empathising. Given that several of the case studies being discussed had obvious victims, in the most extreme case a child who had been killed, one might have expected expressions of empathic emotion from students, who were a similar age. However, this did not appear in any obvious way in the conversations we recorded.

2.3 Personal emotional response

Our data did not include many examples of personal emotional responses. Occasionally students did things like say 'wow' or declare opposition to an idea in strong terms, demonstrating a powerful emotional response. In one instance the strong personal feeling seemed to get in the way of seeing the situation from another perspective, for example in a Stour Grammar small group discussion on polygamy one student said:

"I just think it's weird, like, how could you, as a wife, process the idea that your husband doesn't love you, like just you."

Which was followed later by:

"But that's not really marriage, I don't think that's what marriage is."

Here the students' own aspirations for marriage made it difficult for them to acknowledge any defence of polygamy. Having said that, they also questioned it largely because they saw it as misogynistic, so they did develop other arguments, such as the unfairness towards women and the fact that women cannot generally have several husbands.

Overall we would suggest that the lack of data in these final two categories indicates that, despite some of the concerns noted in the literature about the role of emotion, students were generally able to maintain a rather cool and rational approach to considering the topics and different perspectives. This was the case even where students were discussing aspects of their own school, so it was not merely a result of the case studies being rather removed from their experience.

3. Knowledge

In this section we were looking for explicit contributions that added knowledge or expanded understanding.

3.1 Expanding Schemas

We coded something in this category when there was evidence of the students displaying a new way of seeing or framing the issue. Rowe (2005) has argued that the ability to frame and re-frame problems in multiple ways is a hallmark of political literacy, as it helps one to appreciate the complexities of a problem and think about how others might be affected differentially. For example, the question of where to build a wind turbine can be thought of as a narrow problem of planning permission and land ownership, but could also be seen in terms of the broader collective good, the environment, in terms of noise pollution, or as an aesthetic issue. Different stakeholders may see the problem through different lenses, and so a fuller political understanding will take in all of these perspectives. We saw examples of expanding schemas in all four schools. In Arun Grammar, examples were seen when the students were discussing the case of the Christian B&B owners.

Speaker 4: "I'm not saying this in an offensive way but if you think it's a sin [inaudible] so there's no point."

Speaker 1: "Actually James it's different because it's not what you *know* it's what you *believe*."

Here it can be seen that the boys are beginning to differentiate between what is known and what is believed.

In Stour Grammar, during a lesson on the historical development of religious freedom, the following exchange also shows a shift in thinking.

Teacher: "Did anyone else find anything else surprising?"

Student: "That it was only in 2010 that religious discrimination was illegal."

Teacher: "Why was that a surprise?"

Student: "Because you would have thought that in a forward country that does quite a lot of things differently, or that has laws enforced, you would have thought it was earlier."

The student in the exchange has gained a new way of viewing the country as enshrining religious rights in law much later than they had expected. This is potentially significant as otherwise such assumptions continue to provide the backdrop against which students evaluate others. In the context of the FBVs this is important as the way they are presented promotes the idea that these are fundamental to the British way of life. To discover that some fundamental values (such as religious freedom, toleration and equality) are actually fairly recent developments is an important step to appreciating what role these concepts really play in Britain. At its most extreme such unexamined assumptions can lead people to conflate freedom with modern life, and Butler (2016: 105) discusses how this can be re-cast so that

the notion of 'freedom' is used as an "instrument of bigotry and coercion" and "invoked instrumentally" against others. Butler provides a vivid example in the Netherlands, where immigration officers show pictures of gay men kissing to people applying for immigration, to test whether they accept Dutch freedoms, or find homosexuality offensive. Butler argues that the specific phenomenon of LGBT freedom is used to wage a new cultural assault on Islam. We would argue that the FBVs are open to such misrepresentation and misuse if people do not understand just how contingent they are and this short exchange between the teacher and a student demonstrates that a little historical knowledge may open up new ways of thinking about such issues.

When the debating club were discussing the experience of attending the cathedral for those of other faiths, there was a long discussion, which included this element between two Muslim girls:

Speaker 3: "We don't have to go but the thing is for me, cathedral, going to the cathedral [speaker 2: it's a different thing than participating] yeah going to cathedral isn't the religious part, it's like going up for communion."

Speaker 2: "We still have to, we don't go for communion, we still go for a blessing [both other – yeah] just as a sign of respect rather than just saying we are going to sit here and be a stubborn brat about it [Speaker 3: yeah] and not care about it."

Speaker 3: "I think there is a cultural factor [all : yeah] as it would be negatively looked upon if there was one student in Year 10 that just sat there but the entire school went up."

It could be argued that this is an example of expanding schemas surrounding religion and culture although it could also be indicative of lacking cognitive empathy in understanding the meaning of communion. When elsewhere in the transcript the students discuss how a racist incident should be dealt with at school, the schema shifts from it as an ethical problem to a practical one:

"I also think that it [being offensively racist] is quite big, no one should be allowed to offend but what happens if you do? What happens to you? Like do you just get told off?"

Here consequences are discussed, which could be seen as a different approach to ethics, signifying perhaps a shift from virtue ethics to consequentialist ethics. This contribution also initiates further responses which reframe the discussion from moral judgement to an educational response, thus expanding the ways in which the problem can be considered.

At Thameside Academy there is evidence of shifting schemas when a small group of boys was talking about hacking and whether or not it can be justifiable.

Speaker 1: “But who am I hurting?”

Speaker 4: “If that’s public information you are not really hurting anyone.”

The schema of the difference between public and private is being pushed. As we saw above (section 2.1) this distinction became important for the boys in Arun Grammar when they considered the Christian B&B owners case study.

3.2 Linking to personal experience

In two of the schools students referred to their own personal experience, for example, by introducing a personal anecdote about themselves or others in their lives. In Stour Grammar during a whole class discussion one student shared a racist incident that she had witnessed when the class were talking about the diversity of the county where the school is located. In a small group discussion, another student discussed the example of her mother choosing to be a stay-at-home parent in relation to a discussion on polygamy and gender. In these examples the personal experiences served as additional case studies or examples to help reinforce a point – in the first contribution the speaker wanted to reinforce the idea that the local area could be racist (because it was not very diverse) and in the second contribution the speaker wanted to make a point about how easily outsiders can misinterpret aspects of a relationship.

There were also some more personal experiences, where participants shared an aspect of their own experience of identity negotiation. For example, in a discussion considering same-sex marriage and the church, a student commented:

“My family, I was baptised and did the first year of communion, I chose not to do my confirmation, but my family is religious, but they’re accepting of everyone, including me. I feel more scared to come out to my family who are not religious than the ones that are.”

In Avon School there were similarities in how the students related to their own experiences. During one small group discussion of sexuality one student said:

“With Christianity as I was growing up and like I realised that I’m not straight and I like women but I also like men but if you look at the Bible it’s like ‘you are an awful person’, well not if you look in the Bible if you look in the Bible there are bits that people want to reflect that message that isn’t necessarily what the Bible says.”

This sentiment is picked up on by others who add:

Speaker 3: “Yeah like to me, these are the Christians that have put me off Christianity.”

Speaker 4: “There are times when I have to question my religion it has been because of certain Muslims who like ruin it.”

In two of the three groups in the debating club, the girls in the discussions also talk about their own identities as Muslims in a Christian school, explaining to the others that they attend the cathedral as a sign of respect as mentioned above. In each of these instances it seems the examples serve a common purpose in diversifying a category of people. Christians and Muslims are no longer referred to as a homogeneous group, rather the students’ own experience serve to highlight that there are differences of opinions within each group. Such contributions seem to make a powerful contribution the group’s ability to avoid simplified views of the ‘other’ and thus build the inclusive nature of the deliberation. Given this, we can only note that in our data there were no examples of boys offering comments in a similar vein. With such small numbers it is not possible to comment on whether this might be related to the gender of students, or whether this is merely down to chance.

3.3 Media as source

The media was also drawn upon by the participants as an additional source of anecdotes or case studies. Perhaps surprisingly, given the ubiquity of media and social media, we only saw this in one of the schools. In a small group discussion in Stour Grammar, focusing on polygamy, one pupil reported:

“I watched a TV programme about that once, and he had like three wives, and they didn’t like each other because they were jealous of the other wife, because he went out to dinner with one of the wives, and she was like, but that’s my husband [Speaker 2 – “but that’s weird”] Yes, that is weird, and he had three kids with one of them, and two with the other one, and then the other one was pregnant.”

This then led on to a discussion in which the students discussed how the children would feel in this situation, before the conversation turned to back to the case study on the card, and then another participants introduced a second example from the media:

“I read this thing the other day, it was I went to my best friend’s wedding and I feel in love with her and now we’re in a three-way marriage.”

During this discussion, one of the researchers joined the group and tried to introduce an argument that one might consider polygamy from a different perspective, but as will be seen, the students sidestep the point, and return to the media coverage as evidence of how women actually experience polygamous marriages.

Researcher: “Maybe marriage has a different significance. For us we have this romanticised ideal that marriage is about finding the one and falling in love. If it’s more of a practical arrangement, a way to bring up kids, a way to share resources, to have a bit of predictability.”

Speaker 1: “I feel if I was in that position having a husband with two other wives, I’d just think...”

Speaker 2: “I think even if I was brought up in that religion, I don’t think I would...”

Speaker 1: “I watched a documentary on it, as I’ve said like five times, but the women in it, they said they didn’t really... it wasn’t that, it was like they didn’t really want to say anything about it.”

Speaker 2: “It was like all the women were jealous of the other women [Speaker 1 – “yeah”] when they went out on dates and it was like they were trapped in it.”

In this example the documentary fills a gap – whilst the researcher is providing a general, relatively speculative argument about how marriage might be perceived, the students are keen to return to the concrete example provided by the programme they have watched. This reflects a pragmatic desire to respond to people’s lived experiences, rather than speculate about life in general terms. Interestingly, these examples (and the personal examples discussed above in section 3.2) seem to resonate with the idea of an ethics of care, where moral problems are solved not by the application of abstract concepts, but through a kind of situationist ethics, rooted in the search for the best outcome in any given situation. The debate about whether moral education should strive for the application of abstract principles of justice, or help people reflect on what to do for the best in a specific situation, reflects the larger debates between Kohlberg (and his stages of moral reasoning) and his feminist critics (Kakkori and Huttunen, 2010).

In the whole-class plenary at the end of this lesson, the media is discussed in a different manner, regarding press portrayal of Muslims. The teacher first mentions the press, which is then taken further by a student:

“I feel like in the press they don’t make it clear so it causes more separation between people who are actual Muslims and who actually practice their religion in the correct way, and people just look at them badly when there’s not enough awareness that terrorists aren’t Muslims.”

This engagement with media portrayals of Muslims reflects the earlier efforts students were making to avoid simplistic accounts of what constitutes a religious identity. This also reflects the kinds of concerns evident in an earlier research project (Jerome and Elwick, 2016) where students were very interested in exploring the media portrayals of Muslims and considering the ways in which people’s perceptions may be influenced by those portrayals. Interestingly, whilst students were critical of this aspect of how the media distorted representations, the earlier uses of the media seemed to take the representations of people at face value. Whilst students are happy to acknowledge media representations of Muslims are distorted, they nevertheless accept the portrayal of women in polygamous relationship as an accurate account.

3.4 School subject knowledge

Direct reference to school subject knowledge – formal learning in the classroom – was noted in three of the schools. In Arun Grammar this included reading aloud from the Bible from the BBC Bitesize website and reference to the 2010 Equality Act that they had studied previously in their RE class. At Stour Grammar a student brought in previous knowledge from history:

“Well when it was Tudor times there was conflict between Protestants and Catholics and like the Church of England and there was more of a gap between those before other religions were brought into the equation. So they seemed very different until compared with something else...”

Here her background knowledge helped her to generate some insight into how one might account for the pace of change in the legal framework for religious freedom. And in Avon School the debate society students came from different year groups and therefore had different types of curriculum knowledge to share. Here students shared relevant insights from sociology and law to discuss different ways to think about how to define and deal with offensive speech. In these examples the students all drew on relevant prior learning to expand their discussions, however, these few examples represent all the instances in our data and so the most significant finding here is how rarely students drew on what they had already learned in school.

4. Chains

In this section we turn to consider some of the longer extracts we have identified and in particular attempt to contrast cumulative and exploratory chains of conversation. The first point to make here is that the distinctions between the types of talk are less clear cut in reality than in Mercer’s definition. Inevitably these categories operate as ideal-types and student talk is more varied. The following examples provide some indication of the different ways in which groups structured their conversations and indicate some of the patterns teachers might wish to spot, as each is likely to require different forms of intervention. Inevitably, these chains include some of the utterances we have already referred to, but they often take on a different significance when we engage with them in the context of a sequence of talk.

Example 1: Cumulative small group discussion in Stour Grammar

This first example demonstrates several of the characteristics of cumulative talk but also has several features that demonstrate the value of such talk.

[Turn 1] Speaker 2: “There’s two... there’s polyamorous and polygamous... Polygamous relationships, some are on the basis that people just like more than one person and they’re all OK with that, and then there’s the kind that there’s specifically a man and he feels like he has control as a right to have more than one wife and do with them as he pleases.”

[Turn 2] Speaker 3: “Oh right OK.”

[Turn 3] Speaker 2: “And that’s the one that’s traditional.”

[Turn 4] Speaker 3: "So I appreciate that they should make it illegal for a man to like control and be abusive."

[Turn 5] Speaker 2: "Because it can often lead to abuse."

[Turn 6] Speaker 1: "It can often lead to a man and a woman, like having arranged marriages and stuff."

[Turn 7] Speaker 3: "But that's still just as likely to happen in a normal relationship [Turn 8, Speaker 1: "Yes, I agree"] And I think saying it's illegal isn't necessarily going to stop someone."

[Turn 9] Speaker 2: "I think there are plenty of cases where there are healthy and nice polygamous relationships, where they just generally want to have more than one partner."

[Turn 10] Speaker 3: "If the government is trying to be secular then that is totally not in line with it. So I would understand it if they were trying to stick to one religious group, and they were like well the Church doesn't agree with this so we're not... if everything else is based on secular opinion I just don't understand why..."

[Turn 11] Speaker 2: "I feel like if it wasn't illegal, more of the nice kind would emerge than the horrible one."

[Turn 12] Speaker 1: "And I also feel like the only thing you could say [Turn 13, Speaker 2: "because it's not restricting others"] is that people could say that it's warping children's view on society and relationships and stuff and it could be damaging like that but then, that's just based on our society, like a stereotypical British society..."

[Turn 14] Speaker 2: "Decades ago you could have said the same thing about gay people, you know like when people might have said you can't explain gay people to children, that was their perception of society."

[Turn 15] Speaker 1: "Yes, that is very true."

One can see here some of the classic turns associated with cumulative talk – students agree with one another, continue each other's sentences, and expand and build on ideas that have been offered before. But this still has considerable value as students also introduce useful knowledge to one another, for example, speaker 2 (turn 1) starts with a definition (from their own knowledge) and this is followed up by speaker 3 (turn 4) expanding schemas by introducing the possibility that such relationships can be further differentiated as abusive or non-abusive. There is a suggestion (turns 3 and 6) that this may be associated with traditional marriages, but speaker 3 (turn 7) immediately reasserts the distinction between these

categories to ensure the group does not conflate traditional / abusive marriages. Then further schemas are introduced relating to the law, secularism and the role of the church. Speaker 2 (turn 14) then introduces a parallel example to demonstrate that social norms change over time, which is immediately affirmed by speaker 1. Whilst this may bear the hallmarks of a cumulative conversation, there are certainly several laudable features including this expansion of schemas and the adoption of a multiplist perspective, with the beginnings of some evaluative criteria being developed for distinguishing between cases. Students recognise that norms may develop but clearly reserve the right to judge some examples as being undesirable, where control and abuse are present.

Example 2: Emerging exploratory small group discussion in Stour Grammar

This example is similar in some ways to the first – the conversation rolls on in a fairly consensual and cumulative fashion but there is a little more overt challenge and speaker 2 begins to shift her position through the discussion.

[Turn 1] Speaker 1: “Ok let’s just look at the questions about same sex marriage.”

[Turn 2] Speaker 2: “[Reading] Is it acceptable for religions to hold discriminatory beliefs about same sex marriage? No. That’s my answer, because of human rights to marry, or sexuality, things like that. Everyone has the right to love who they want, love yourselves... umm. [Reading] Can a government ever interfere with a religion’s beliefs? I guess if the beliefs are going to put people in danger...”

[Turn 3] Speaker 1: “Like, the religion will get annoyed, but if it’s against marriage... you know what I mean... the Church will get annoyed if you said you can’t have the right to freedom of religion, but obviously it’s against another fundamental human right to like love who you want.”

[Turn 4] Speaker 2: “Obviously like this is really drastic, but if as part of their religion they had to go against the law in some way, literally if you had to kill people, for example [Turn 5, Speaker 1 – “Obviously not but like...”], just like as an example, because then, surely the government would have the right to...”

[Turn 6] Speaker 1: “If they’re like discriminating against something, then I think the government would be right to veto... imagine if religion was like let’s kill all people of one race, then that’s really drastic and the government would have a right to intervene.”

[Turn 7] Speaker 2: “As for same sex marriage, if they want to make people who want to have same sex marriages suffer, then government would have the right to step in.”

[Turn 8] Speaker 1: “And like kick people out of their religion...”

[Turn 9] Speaker 2: “But then I don’t feel like they can really do much, like if the religion says we just don’t believe in same sex marriage then, if that’s all they’re doing, it’s not the government’s right to.”

[Turn 10] Speaker 1: “But I think...”

[Turn 11] Speaker 2: “But then deeply I think... I don’t know...”

[Turn 12] Speaker 1: “I think they have the right to interfere if the religion is saying discriminatory things, or like takes action, if they start preaching...”

[Turn 13] Speaker 1: “[Reading question] I don’t really understand that...”

In this extract it feels like speaker 2 is engaging in a more exploratory process than speaker 1. She is exploring where the line might be drawn that would justify outside intrusion into religious beliefs, and appears to arrive at a slightly firmer sense (by turn 9) that there is little room for such intrusion, save perhaps for the extreme thought experiment proposed at turn 4. It is speaker 2 who frames the problem and poses an initial position (turn 2), pursues the thought experiment to test out the proposal (turn 4) and then returns to the original scenario (turn 7) to draw conclusions (turn 9). Speaker 3 has withdrawn entirely from this exchange and speaker 2 seems to adopt a more interventionist stance, although she also gives the impression of slightly struggling to keep up with speaker 1’s line of thought. Speaker 1 adopts some of the speech patterns associated with cumulative talk, but seems to draw different conclusions from the utterances she is ostensibly building on. This is most marked at turn 8 where she assumes the argument is supporting the position that the government can “kick people out of their religion” just before speaker 1 asserts her contrasting conclusion that “it’s not the government’s right to.”

The other remarkable issue about this extract is that the whole thing seems to splutter into a dead end. There are two key issues raised in the conversation that would need to be pursued in order to reach some kind of deeper understanding. The first is the core issue about the relationship between government and other institutions, such as religion, in civil society. The second returns to the perennial issue at the heart of liberalism of what constitutes sufficient ‘harm’ to justify restricting freedom. Both are raised, but neither are really pursued, and so the conversation seems to run out of energy.

Example 3: Cumulative small group discussion in Stour Grammar

In this example, on the same topic as the previous one, the students conform more to the definition of a cumulative conversation but also demonstrate some valuable strategies for thinking through the ethical dilemma. The students in this group also stuck more diligently to the actual scenario on the case study. Whereas the group in example 2 extracted the general idea of gay marriage and the Church, this group focused on the scenario which was actually about the Church discriminating (legally) against a vicar who married his male partner, by refusing to appoint him to a position as hospital chaplain.

[Turn 1] Speaker 1: "I think this is where it gets hard because there's a lot of conflict within Christianity about this because in a lot Christianity it's very accepting. If you look at Robert his mum is [senior figure in the church] and he's one of the most openly gay people, and he's religious..."

[Turn 2] Speaker 2: "My family, I was baptised and did the first year of communion, I chose not to do my confirmation, but my family is religious, but they're accepting of everyone, including me. I feel more scared to come out to my family who are not religious than the ones that are."

[Turn 3] Speaker 1: "So religious organisations can choose not to recognise same sex marriage..."

[Turn 4] Speaker 2: "They can pretend it doesn't exist but it will still be there "

[Turn 5] Speaker 1: "[Reads case study details] I can kind of see what they mean, because if that specific Church, like not the Church as a whole, feels like it's bad to be gay, although personally I don't agree that's suitable in any case...[indistinct exchange] it's really hard because truthfully I feel the Bishop is a bit ignorant, but if they're sharing these beliefs then he doesn't, surely if the vicar is openly gay he'd want to go [indistinct exchange] somewhere where he was accepted."

[Turn 6] Speaker 2: "He tried to go to the NHS which is less of a religious standpoint, so he did try to get away from the Church specifically [Turn 7, Speaker 1 – "Aaah"] which is them thinking, you'd rather these people didn't have a religious person to look up to than them be gay."

[Turn 8] Speaker 1: "In the scheme of things, whether they agree with homosexuality or not, I think you have to look at your priorities... [indistinct] there's all this like controversy, I'm not stereotyping vicars at all, but there's a lot of people in the media publicising abuse going on which I don't think is a whole, but surely it does occur and stuff, and you need to look at priorities. I know we all have our faults, and I'm not saying this is a fault, but in the eyes of this church..."

In this exchange, although the students continue to build on one another's utterances, they are layering up information and developing a deeper analysis. This also seems to be much better informed than example 2, with more examples being used, a clearer sense of the differences within Christianity, and a broader contextual sense about the moral issues confronting the church. Speaker 1 (turn 8) takes a distinctive position by suggesting that a church mired in controversy about sexual misconduct might adopt a slightly more accepting approach to gay marriages and this stands out as being fairly insightful when contrasted with turn 8 in example 2, where the student suggests the government should intervene over church membership.

Example 4: Exploratory small group discussion in Avon School

In this exchange the students explore questions about the extent to which their (Church of England) school should adapt its practices to be less overtly Christian and more flexible in how it deals with religion. The discussion includes some exploration of practical issues of pedagogy and some sustained attempts to empathise with people with a strong faith.

[Turn 1] Speaker 2: "What I also mean is say for example it is a non-faith school they don't need to particularly promote any particular religion and atheism doesn't say like everyone is going to die and burn so could they necessarily give that message with the positive values that are behind the Bible or Qur'an or whatever there's going to be a message that's being delivered that even a common person can say 'oh that's a good value message' without tying yourself to a religion you can see the good it is trying to get to is it possible to give that message without."

[Turn 2] Speaker 1: "No I don't think so."

[Turn 3] Speaker 3: "No if you look at it this way, the title that we do our assemblies on they talk about it from a non-religious perspective it is standard, a norm innit to show respect, to show love, to show that you are caring."

[Turn 4] Speaker 1: "I agree with you to an extent."

[Turn 5] Speaker 3: "If you actually sit in assembly and pay attention to it you'll realise that they give the message first before they bring in anything to do with Christianity and then afterwards they bring in that Christian message so I think it's completely plausible for them to deliver that message without having the religious side attached to it."

[Turn 6] Teacher: "What do you think?"

[Turn 7] Speaker 1: "I agree with what they're saying but if you go to the root of it and you don't believe in heaven or hell and you think you are just going to die you can't really convince someone what they are doing is wrong or what they are doing is right it is just the group belief being told what is right for them. It is different for everyone."

[Turn 8] Speaker 3: "I think you can influence them and like try and help them to broaden their thinking but you can't, obviously you can't convince them or impose it but you definitely can have that influence."

[Turn 9] Speaker 2: "You're not telling them that if they show respect they are going to have a good death or something, it's a norm of society innit to show respect."

[Turn 10] Speaker 1: "I agree with that but why, you have to question it, why would you do that?"

[talking over each other about questioning it]

Here we can see more overt challenges (turn 2) and a more sustained difference of opinion between speakers 1 and 3, with speaker 2 chipping in towards the end. Whilst the conversation does not come close to achieving any kind of resolution, the discussion does seem to demonstrate cognitive empathy, with speaker 1 adamantly pursuing the idea that moral education harnessed to a fundamental notion of religious belief, sin and salvation is much more powerful to the believer, than a kind of secular alternative. In pursuing this point it seems the conversation takes seriously the religious beliefs of the other, and also starts to highlight some of the relative problems associated with secularism in schools.

Example 5: Exploratory small group discussion in Arun Grammar

In this extract we can see some of the characteristics of exploratory talk but the tone is much lighter and more playful, and as a consequence, the level of engagement seems more superficial. Nevertheless, the exchanges open up some interesting ideas to inform the subsequent discussion.

[Turn 1] Speaker 3: "For example, for example it can be treated as a religion because some LGBT people, not only are they LGBT but they express it so much and they show it in a way that is unnecessary. If you choose to be LGBT it shouldn't be a thing you show off to other people [inaudible]"

[Turn 2] Speaker 1: "But that's not religious. Religion isn't something you show off to other people either."

[Turn 3] Speaker 2: "I do. I'm Christian. Haha. Not really."

[Turn 4] Speaker 4: "Just joking."

[Turn 5] Speaker 3: "John, I think all relations are fair. Unlike you, you're not fair. You're mean."

[They joke around]

[Turn 6] Speaker 4: "I'm not saying this in an offensive way but if you think it's a sin [inaudible] so there's no point."

[Turn 7] Speaker 1: "Actually James it's different because it's not what you know it's what you believe."

It is possible to read this exchange first as a slight distraction from the task at hand, and secondly as vaguely homophobic – there is certainly evidence in the opening turns of the boys playing with the stereotype of the flamboyant homosexual. However, speaker 3 starts by trying out the proposition that being gay and being religious are similar and there is a potentially serious point here, in that both are protected characteristics in the Equalities Act, and therefore both are legally equivalent rights. However, because of the way he phrases it, focusing on the less relevant issues of choice and showing off, this is challenged first by an argument against (turn 2) and then by joking around. Speaker 1 (turn 7) returns to the more serious point at the end, and tries to focus on the distinction between knowing something and believing something. This is obviously an important distinction to bear in mind in deliberative discussions, where arguments have to appeal to wider standards of rationality, rather than assume a shared religious perspective.

Example 6: Exploratory talk in Arun Grammar whole class plenary

The next extract is from the same class where the previous exchange was recorded. It illustrates a pattern that we saw in all of the classes. Whilst the small group discussions were very varied and were often truncated, disjointed, slightly off-task and inconclusive, once the whole class plenary began, the exchanges were generally much more extended, focused and exploratory.

Speaker 1: "People are entitled to voice their opinion but sometimes this falls over the line abusing other people's religious beliefs. One example of this is when a Christian couple denied a place at a B&B due to customers having a sexual drive to the same sex. This resulted in court appearance. There's a line there if for example you own a B&B, it is your home and so you should be able to have an opinion to control the sort of people you let into your home whereas if you own a hotel it is different because it's not somewhere where you live so it's different."

Teacher: "So your personal and professional are two different places? [Speaker 1: "yeah"] So personal shouldn't be allowed, professional should be? OK so who's got an argument that could respond to one of the arguments that Speaker 1 said? Go on Speaker 2."

Speaker 2: "I have an argument that argues against the B&B. I get that your B&B is your home, but you have now created another public space, it is now open to the public. Now you're denying homosexuals but you're allowing heterosexuals. I think since it's your space, but you have given it to the public so you have forfeited your space and I think you really should allow for the entirety of the public."

Teacher: "OK, that's sparked ideas for everybody. [Speaker 3]?"

Speaker 3: "I'm against [Speaker 2] because even though they might be giving it to the public, can't they have their own different rules and regulations on what they think. I'm sure there are quite a few places that allow homosexuals but there's that one place that doesn't allow it you can't be like saying 'oh you are a

bad place now' because you're not allowing it. It's their rules and regulations. I'm sure not all B&Bs disallow this kind of thing and I'm sure they can go to a different one but you can't be taking someone to court just because they didn't let you stay in the B&B and they might say it is a Christian B&B and their religion means that they don't want to be, I don't know how to say it, poisoning their place with homosexuality or whatever."

Here the whole conversation is focused on the core distinction of public / private actions, and so the B&B becomes an important site precisely because some of the boys (e.g. speaker 2) perceive it to be a public space whilst others believe it should be seen as a private space. There is also evidence of cognitive empathy here, with the boys acknowledging how seriously a Christian might feel about hosting 'sinners' in their home. Whilst we were slightly surprised at the turn of this conversation in the class, on investigation their focus does seem to be remarkably similar to the issues debated in the legal case (BBC, 2013). Whilst the B&B owners lost their case, and the B&B was deemed to be a public service, their response was to register their home as a charity, offering services only to Christians, which allows them to exclude guests on the basis of their own interpretation of Christian values (www.chymorvah.org/the-charity).

5. Talk about rights and the fundamental British values

The examples above demonstrate that many of the student discussions focused on different aspects of the FBVs and that they were able (albeit to differing degrees) to engage in critical discussion of the concepts. In this final section of the chapter, we focus on just one discussion to illustrate the value of these discussions. Students in Avon School had a long discussion about the nature of offence and the limitations on free speech in their plenary and one of the pivotal moments comes when someone says this:

"Then it comes down to what's more important – your right to say what you want or someone else's right to feel comfortable in their own environment? What's more important there? I think it is more important that people around you feel safe and comfortable and happy rather than you just being able to say whatever you want all the time."

This comes after students have been discussing at length how one can determine whether something was offensive. Their discussion ranged across:

- Whether it mattered that someone was offended by what you said, i.e. does it matter that you cause offence? Do people have a right not to be offended that sits in tension with one's right to free speech?
- How might one properly determine offence? Is it always down to the person who claims to be offended? (And what are the pros and cons of this position?) Do we also need to take into account of the motivations of the person who caused offence? (And how exactly would one determine that?) And should we defer to some third party, such as a teacher, to determine if there was genuine offence? (And how would they judge it, without succumbing to their own views?)

- If someone has been offended, what kind of response would be acceptable / appropriate? What could the offended person do in response, and what kind of response should they expect? Should the offender expect to be punished or educated?
- Is this an issue for regulation (legal / formal rules) or merely an issue of social norms and politeness (involving informal negotiations)?

As such, the issues raised mirror those being discussed in the political and academic worlds. Winston's (2012) book 'A Right to Offend' starts by stating that the right to freedom of expression is the paramount legacy of the Enlightenment, without which other rights cannot be guaranteed; that the only justification for restricting it is related to the extent to which it causes harm; and that "rising western sensitivities" (p. xiv) have expanded the notion of harm to include 'offence'; and in turn this must be resisted because it has an inevitable 'chilling effect' on free expression (pp. xiii-xiv). This might be considered a classic liberal defence of the right to freedom of speech, which Winston argues also amounts to the "right to offend" (p. xiv).

In the context of this debate it seems that this particular quotation stands out as being a particularly significant contribution. It pulls together the tensions that have underpinned the various positions and poses them in stark contrast, then asserts a resolution. The resolution acknowledges that the right to freedom of speech is not simply cancelled out by someone being offended, but the speaker couches their judgement in terms of what one should do for the best, rather than what one can do. This seems to adopt a more pragmatic approach than establishing the right principle, and instead seeks to think through what the reasonable implementation of that principle might be, given that real people may well be offended and, whilst that might fall short of 'harm' that is still a real issue to acknowledge.

This discussion mirrors Lynn Davies's argument which concludes that schools should provide opportunities for:

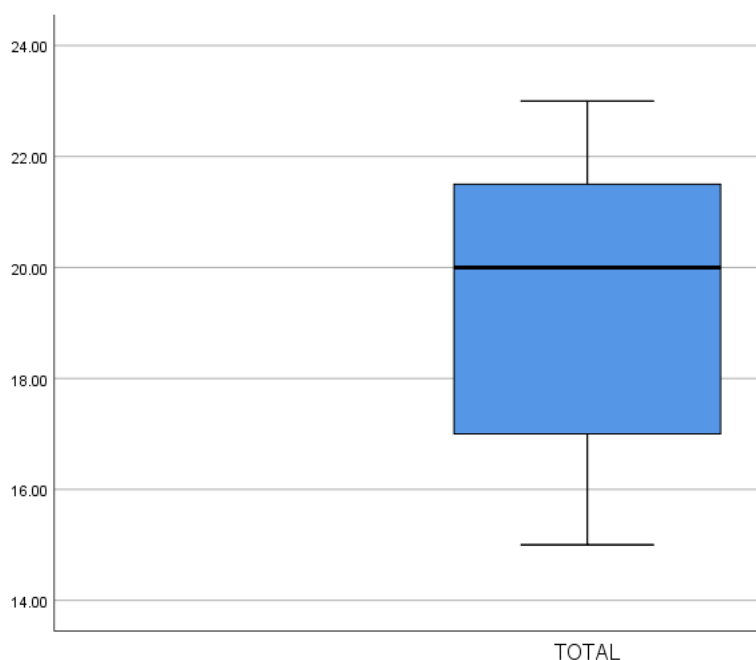
"Understanding and discussing the nature of offence and when it is legitimate to be offended; this will require analysis of rights and of motives, whether using the right to free speech just for the sake of offending or to try to point out injustice or wrong." (Davies, 2008: 149)

She called this working towards an understanding of 'critical (dis)respect' (p. 182). Whilst the students did not draw on any of the philosophical principles or explicitly couch their reasoning in interpretations of human rights, nevertheless, their discussion does seem to demonstrate their ability to open up the matter for detailed and critical exploration.

Developing an Observation Tool: The Classroom as a Deliberative Space

The observation data reported here is based on 36 complete observation forms (3 were excluded as they were only partially completed). The observation tool included six aspects of the classroom, each rated on a scale of 1-4. This yields a maximum score of 24 with a minimum score of 6.

Total score	Frequency
15	2
16	2
17	6
18	0
19	5
20	7
21	5
22	4
23	5



Overall 72% of participants rated the lesson on average between 3-4 on the 4-point scale and the remaining 28% rated the lesson between 2.5-2.9. This indicates a relatively good agreement between observers that the lesson scored highly on the scale, but there is also some significant variation (as is evident in the graphs in appendix 1). Cronbach's Alpha was calculated across the 36 participants as 0.878 which is relatively high as a measure of degree of agreement between the raters. Similarly, the test for intraclass correlation in SPSS yielded a result of 0.851, which is relatively high. However, the results for the 95% confidence interval showed a significant variation between the upper bound (0.975) and lower bound (0.626). This rather reinforces the initial observation that there was a rather broad agreement that the lesson observed scored fairly high on the deliberative classroom scale, but with some significant variation.

This leaves open the question of whether the observation tool is useful for classroom observations. Certainly, it does not function as a reliable measure of a single phenomenon (deliberation) but that would be unexpected given that (a) the observation schedule was not developed to do that and (b) we do not necessarily expect all the criteria to be occurring together. This data provides some positive reasons to believe that the observation tool could be useful in leading colleagues to focus on relevant classroom characteristics and to highlight areas of relative strength and weakness. For this, it might be enough to know that the observation schedule does not lead to entirely random results, and does open up a productive conversation about next steps for developing classroom deliberation.

In the two university based workshops where this tool was trialled, the student teachers were asked first to complete the observation individually and then to talk to their peers about possible next steps in developing the classroom as a deliberative space. The conversations that ensued tended to focus on (a) the extent to which the class discussion included all students and (b) the extent to which students were able to focus on building informed opinions. This seems to us be entirely reasonable reflections of the limitations of the lesson. The first problem was a result of using an edited video, and observers certainly did not see sufficient evidence that all students were included. The second problem reflected the limitations of the lesson which was filmed the first lesson back after half term. This means that the students had not been taught about the topic beforehand, and so they had limited background knowledge to draw on. In turn this led them to focus more on their opinions and arguments, rather than using relevant case studies and background legal knowledge. The fact that both key targets for further development resonated as perfectly plausible lends some further credibility to the idea that the observation tool might be of practical use in schools.

Whilst we acknowledge that this element of the research project was relatively limited by the practical restrictions already mentioned, we are also optimistic that this is worth exploring further with teachers in subsequent training workshops.

Conclusions

This research addressed two main research questions:

1. How can we measure the extent to which deliberative talk is taking place in the classroom?
2. How do students engage with and use the concepts and knowledge to explore controversial issues?

In this section we summarise the outcomes of the research and indicate some next steps for each.

1. Measuring the extent to which deliberative talk is taking place in the classroom

As part of this research an observation tool was developed and trialled. The purpose of the tool is to enable teachers to understand what processes might define the classroom as a deliberative space and to enable colleagues to observe one another and provide feedback as part of their development of a more deliberative approach to teaching. Consultation with a group of experienced educators confirmed that the tool has face validity, that is, it resonates with their understanding of how deliberation takes place in their areas of expertise (Citizenship, English, including teaching English as an Additional Language, RE, and Debating). The tool was tested by 36 respondents who observed a filmed lesson and completed the observation tool individually. Their ratings of the lesson indicated a reasonable level of agreement between them.

This tool is now available on the *Deliberative Classroom* website as part of the education resources and is being used in training workshops for teachers. It is also being disseminated to every school in England via the teacher journal *Teaching Citizenship*. It provides teachers with a potentially useful additional resource, supplementing an existing range of assessment rubrics for individual students or speech acts. Further research could trial the tool across a range of lessons to test the extent to which teachers can use it to discriminate between different classes.

2. Students' engagement with the FBVs

A series of audio recordings were made in classrooms in four secondary schools, where the *Deliberative Classroom* resources were used to stimulate discussion about the FBVs. An analytical frame was developed that focused on (i) the mechanics of talk and (ii) the ideational function of talk. The analysis has highlighted the variety of strategies students use to promote or hinder the development of deliberation. Particular attention has been paid to the difference between cumulative talk and exploratory talk, where the former tends to avoid critical discussion in favour of attempting to accept all views, and where the latter engages more explicitly with challenging, exploring and seeking to refine positions collaboratively.

This analysis has highlighted some important issues which have not been explicitly addressed in the education literature. One such insight involves the extent to which students engage in a form of semi-fictionalised imaginative scenario building to explore situations from multiple perspectives, and thus deepen their appreciation of others' views. Whilst some theorists of deliberative democracy are sceptical of such approaches, tending to favour rational exchange

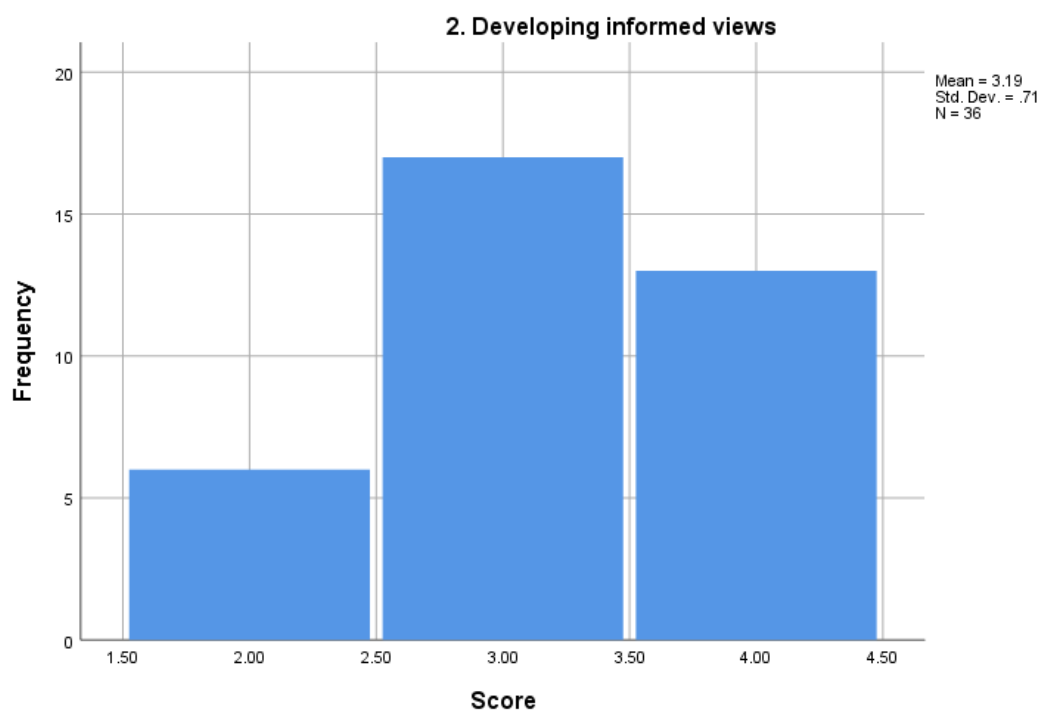
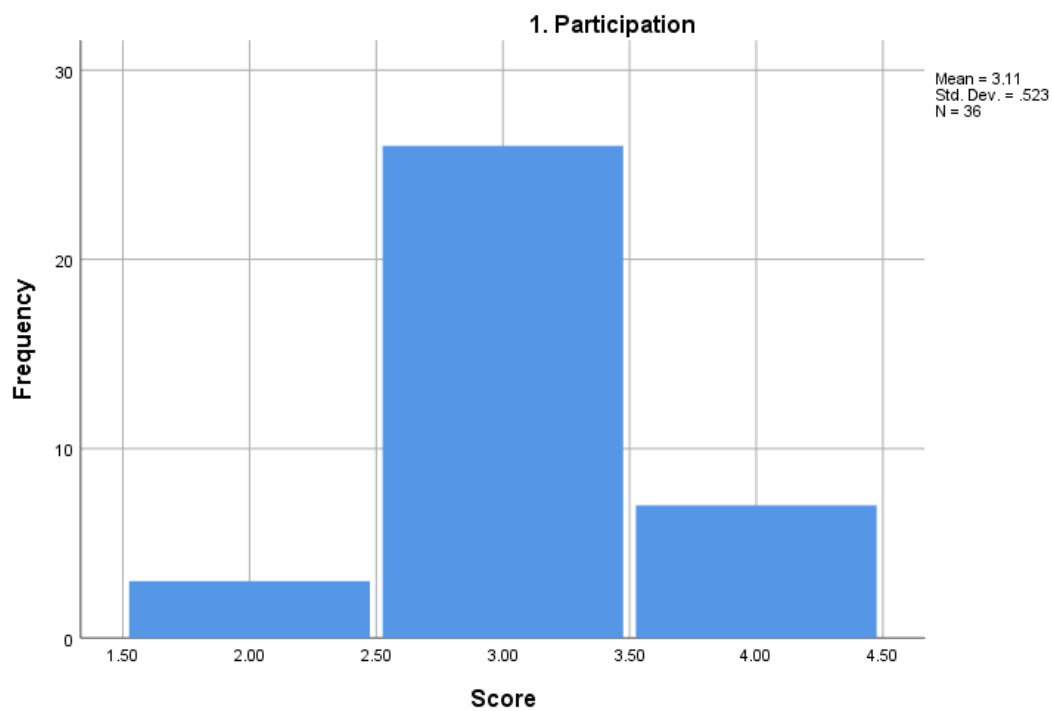
over such creativity, this research offers some reasons to believe this may be a useful mechanism for students to build their appreciation of the diverse range of opinions in plural democracies. Building on established ideas in history education, it is argued that such creative talk can lead to a multiplist, and ultimately evaluativist, epistemological stance, in which simplistic notions of political truths can be replaced with more pragmatic understandings of how democracy seeks to arrive at solutions to controversial issues.

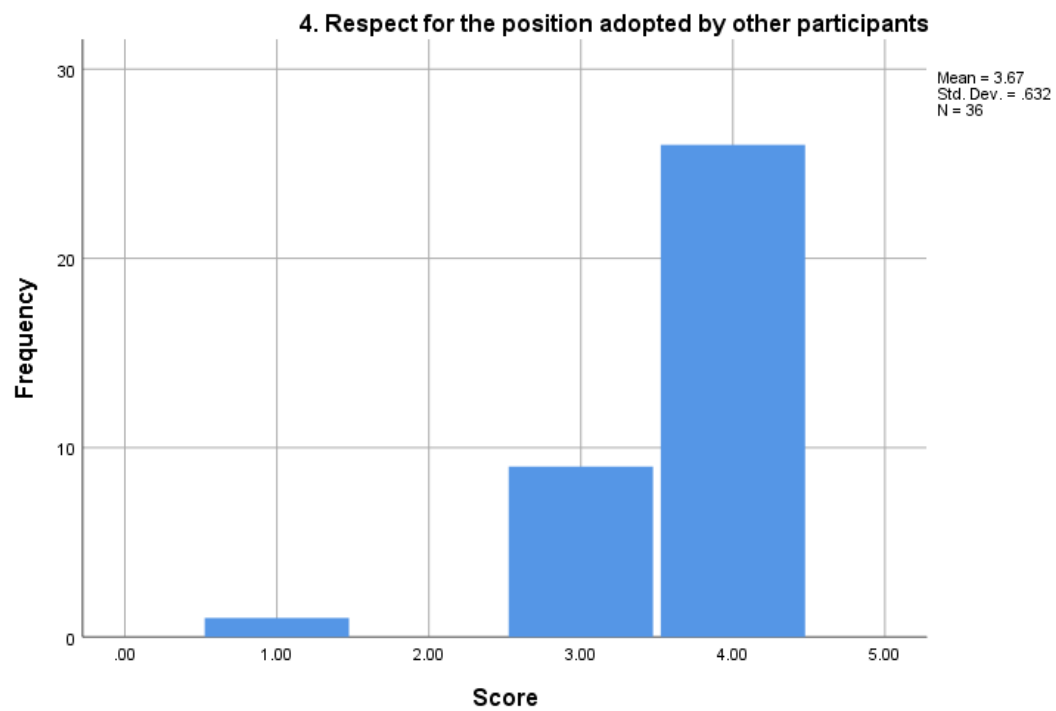
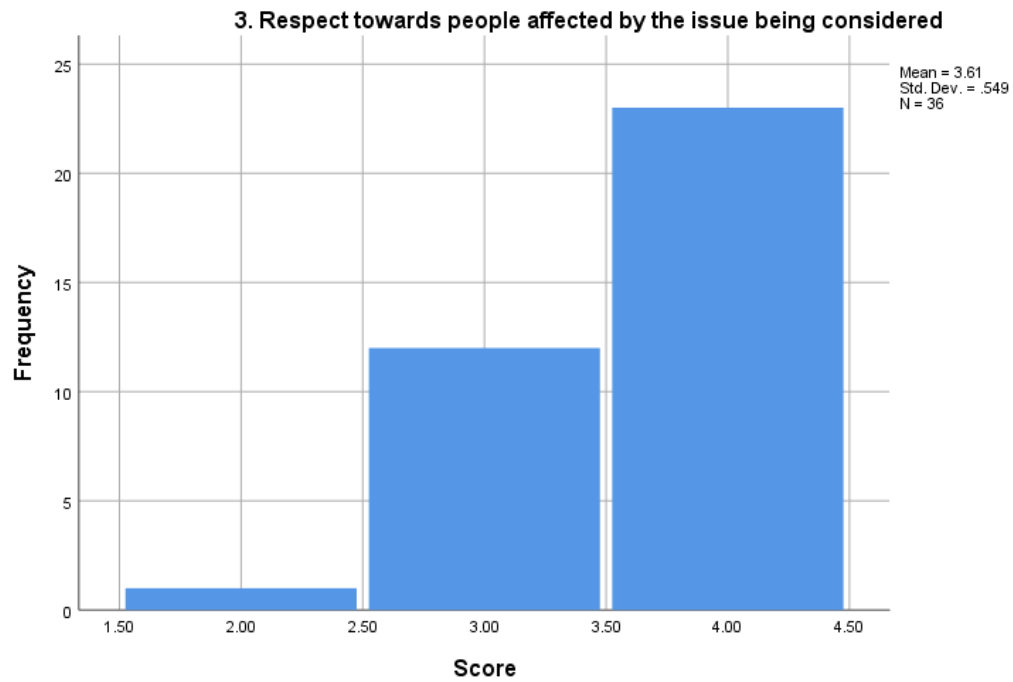
The research illustrates that secondary students are capable of approaching the FBVs as concepts which can be studied, discussed and held up to critical scrutiny. The data discussed in this report includes some conversations which address a range of conceptual and practical dimensions, for example, the limits to religious freedom and toleration. Such conversations also demonstrate students' ability to develop cognitive empathy to appreciate why different people adopt different views and to engage in discussion with a view to exploring and understanding the reasons for these differences, rather than rushing to reconcile them. On the other hand, analysis of conversations that failed to achieve such depth indicates that there may be a range of approaches available to teachers, including more explicit expectations about how to engage in such discussions, and opportunities to address knowledge gaps. These practical insights are being used as the basis for teacher workshops and training resources, to promote the *Deliberative Classroom* as an educational response to FBV policy.

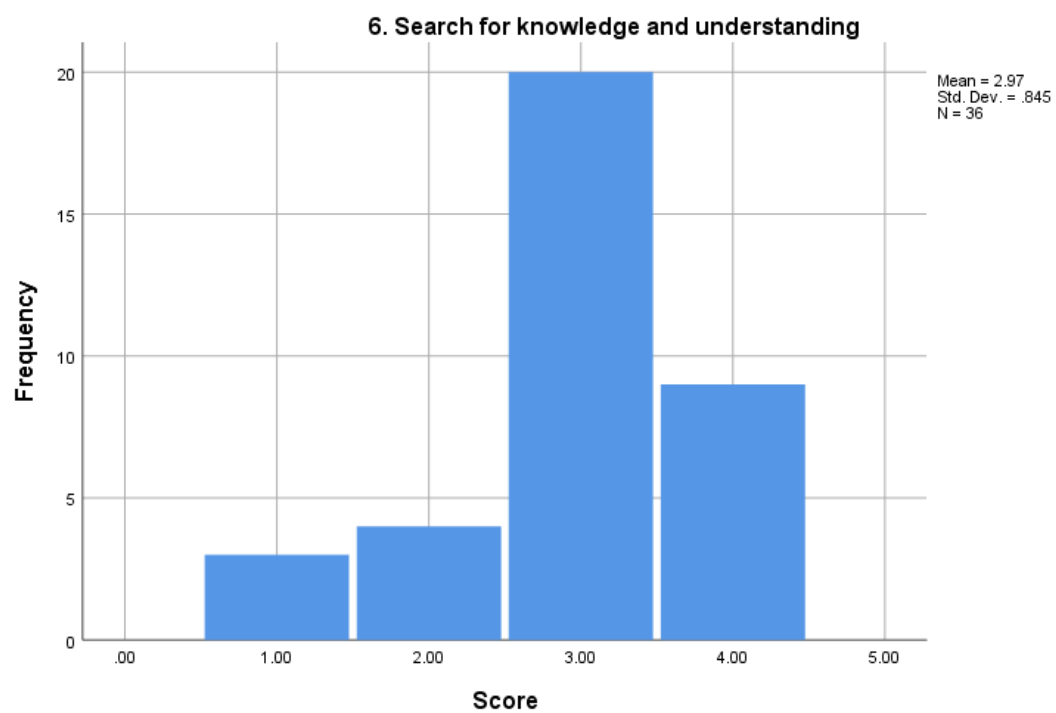
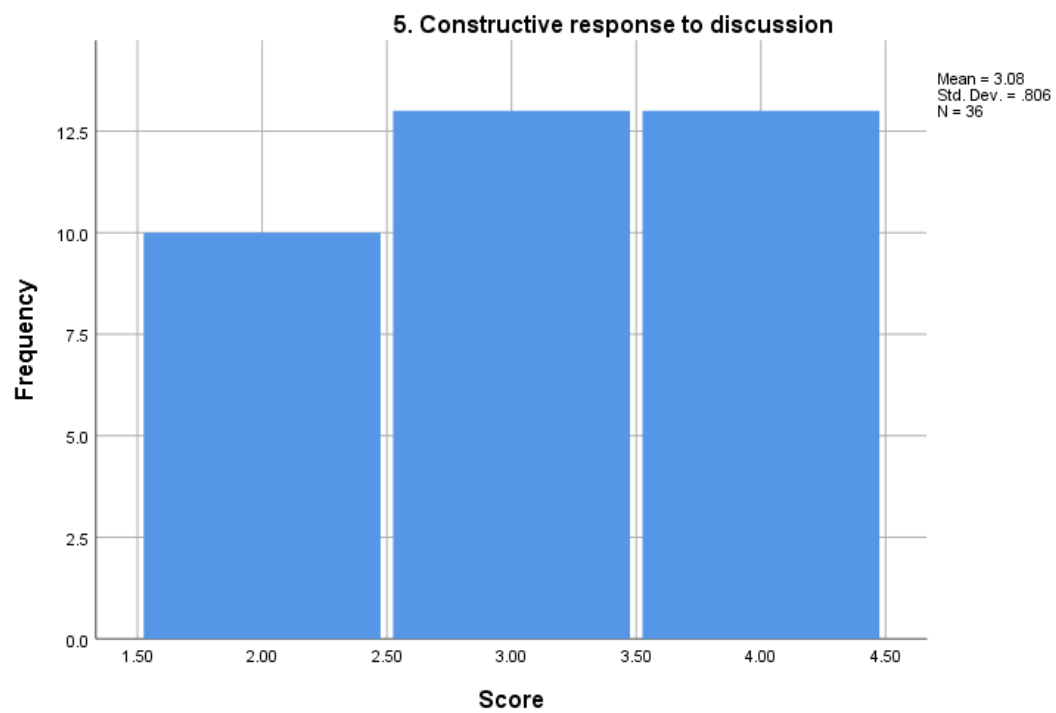
The practical limitations of this project meant that researchers were not able to visit classes over an extended scheme of work or study unit. At most, classes engaged with materials over three lessons. Further research would ideally span a longer period of time in which knowledge could be built and consolidated more thoroughly. This would increase the opportunities for students to draw on deeper resources of pre-existing knowledge to inform their discussions. Such an extended project could also gather data on the kind of teacher interventions which this project has speculatively suggested. A second possible strand of research would involve the adoption of the processes used in adult deliberative fora, such as citizens' juries. In these projects, there is a more explicit phase of knowledge building and opportunities for participants to engage with experts (and potentially diverse voices) to deliberately build their understanding.

Appendix

The following charts illustrate the degree of agreement between observers for each of the six measures in the classroom observation tool.







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