

Online deliberation as preamble to large-scale facilitated engagement events

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Abstract

Increasingly, facilitated face-to-face public engagement events are convened to consider and prioritise public policy options. But often there is insufficient time available for participants to adequately enumerate evaluative criteria and deliberate deeply. An online deliberation phase in advance of a face-to-face assembly may be helpful. Such a hybrid process was implemented in the recent Australian Citizens' Parliament project. In learning from that case, it is suggested that protracted online deliberation in advance of a face-to-face assembly can introduce participants to deliberative ideals and help them acknowledge and categorise the diverse interests and moral positions of the public in the context of the engagement. This generates the evaluative criteria that participants can apply to the deliberative prioritisation of options in the assembly.

Introduction

Most recent endeavours to explore the design and implementation of online platforms for public deliberation have focused on standalone systems that serve as substitutes for face-to-face public engagement.¹ The logistic benefits of online dialogue have been demonstrated, especially in virtually convening at relatively low cost people who are geographically dispersed and who can only commit time to the engagement over a protracted period in short bursts. As knowledge and experience of online deliberation platforms spread, so surely will acceptance of them.

However, organisations such as the National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation² and the International Association for Public Participation³ are increasing their membership of facilitators, consultants and other practitioners with growing expertise who promote face-to-face engagements between citizens and governing bodies. With justification or otherwise, many practitioners and advocates for democratic improvement discount online endeavours believing that power is influenced by direct contact and personal dialogue. For example, in recommending that American citizens be empowered to participate in community self-governance through initiatives like “community summits”, the Knight Commission posits that “[a]s powerful as the Internet is for facilitating human connection, face-to-face contact remains the foundation of community building.”⁴

Rather than viewing online deliberation as a competing approach, this paper addresses the question of *how online deliberation can be integrated as a complimentary preamble to face-to-face deliberative engagement*. Such hybrid implementations may even help popularise online deliberation.

To provide a context for discussion, this paper begins with a description of a large-scale deliberative event that was convened recently in Australia, with an online phase feeding into a face-to-face assembly phase of the process. The author was a member of the organising team for this event and has concluded qualitative analysis of the event record based primarily on online texts and transcribed audio recordings of all table conversations. The paper concludes with suggestions about how the overall process could be designed optimally to take advantage of the strengths of each interactive phase.

Case example

The **Australian Citizens' Parliament**⁵ (CP) was a project convened jointly by a publicly-funded multi-university team of researchers and an activist civil-society organisation.⁶ The ambitious idea was to gather citizens to propose and deliberate on ways *to strengthen the political system of Australia*. The event was convened to study some innovations in large-scale public engagement and to demonstrate its potential for informing government policy.

Compelling and attractive invitations were sent to over 9600 Australian citizens who were randomly-selected from the electoral roll and evenly distributed across all lower-house federal parliamentary electorates. The organisers received 2763 applications to participate, a response that exceeded expectations by seven-fold.⁷ From that phenomenal pool, 150 citizens were randomly selected to participate in the face-to-face event, one from each electorate and stratified by gender, age, educational level and aboriginality to match the census distribution.

In the lead-up to many large-scale facilitated engagement processes, focus groups and expert panels are tapped to create an initial slate of options from which to select recommendations.⁸ The process designers for the CP wished to avoid framing the content, leaving it to the participants themselves to generate the content. With this extraordinary ambition in a 3½-day face-to-face event, the organisers looked to jump-start the process.

Most of the selected citizens first attended one of fifteen regional face-to-face meetings where they were introduced to the project and to the ideals of a deliberative approach. They immediately began conversations about the kinds of problems inherent in the Australian political system. They were also introduced to the project's online deliberation platform. The early intention was to have just the 150 representative participants work online. But with such a massive application response, the decision was taken to invite *all* of the respondents into the online activity.

There was no doubt by the organisers that *the online platform would be used to generate preliminary proposals* for strengthening Australia's democratic system, which would feed into the face-to-face assembly that followed. Personal contact and confidence in the developer led to the selection of the CivicEvolution⁹ platform for online deliberation, which presents a modern interface and interaction techniques in a configurable design.¹⁰ While the facility for both active online dialogue and the collaborative authoring of competent texts were seen as important, the structural design of CivicEvolution emphasised dialogue. This platform offered many extensions to the threaded forums that are typically used for online dialogue. Individual participants could propose problems that should be addressed, then had to attract a team of three or more other participants to begin work. Each team had to progress through five steps of proposal development: define the problem; explore the options; analyse the pros and cons; propose a solution; submit the proposal.¹¹ In each step, some guiding questions helped focus the team's attention on the task at hand. For example, amongst other advice the "define" step asked team members to consider who is affected by the problem, while the "analyse" step suggested evaluating not only the new options, but the existing situation. The ensuing comment contributions could be endorsed by other team-members and then elevated into "key points". Participants could optionally take on helpful roles like researcher and summariser. The online activity was monitored but there were few facilitative interventions, as the structure was intended to keep participants on track. Final reports were automatically generated from key points after collaborative editing in the final step. While challenging for some, these and other features constituted a platform that most participants lauded for its innovation and usability.

The online platform was open for approximately eight weeks at the end of 2008. Of all the applicants, only 543 chose to log in, including 127 selected¹² Citizen Parliamentarians. But uptake had to be encouraged by email. Forty teams reached the threshold size (4) to proceed. Participants were encouraged to engage with more than one proposal team. Only 157 participants in total made a contribution, of which 72 were Citizen Parliamentarians. After the online deliberation was closed, a preference vote was completed by all participants to result in 11 preliminary proposals for input to the face-to-face assembly. These included proposals for a bill of rights and responsibilities, to extend and fix the term of federal government, to remove the state level of government, to reduce the power of political parties, and to empower citizens in political participation. Most of the prescriptive texts accompanying these proposals stretched to three pages, but a few individuals demonstrated their commitment to proposals with lengthy reports. The organising team prepared one-page summaries of these proposals for presentation to the assembly and the media.

In early 2009, the Citizens' Parliament assembled for 3½ days at Old Parliament House in Canberra, Australia's original legislative assembly building that now houses a public museum.¹³ At the opening of the event, the 150 selected citizens sat in the seats of past generations of elected representatives. Although the event was not convened by the Government, participants were welcomed by a senior Government Minister who said that the outcomes "would be taken seriously"—some participants were very hopeful while others were ambivalent about their potential influence.¹⁴ To begin proceedings, several of the online proposals were formally introduced by participants who had championed them online. Most of the ensuing work was done over three days at 23 tables of 6 or 7 participants in the stately Member's Dining Room. Two eminent Australians lent gravitas to the event by co-chairing it. Two experienced facilitators led the process forward from the stage. The process design had many similarities to the AmericaSpeaks 21st Century Town Meeting format,¹⁵ with laptops on each table transmitting agreed text to a group of qualitative analysts working behind the scenes, referred to as the Theme Team.¹⁶ Participants were impressed that aggregated and categorised results were displayed back onto large screens in the room within thirty minutes of the completion of participant exercises. These were generally the results of brainstorming episodes at tables, or discussions to generate one or more responses to a particular question. All tables worked in parallel on the agenda tasks, sometimes addressing distinct proposals.

After opening the online deliberation beyond the representative sample, it was necessary for the selected 150 participants to review the preliminary proposals further. The online participants had been told repeatedly that their proposals were tentative. But most were very annoyed when the preliminary list expanded quickly to 51 proposals that covered a vast territory of options, some of which had been culled at the end of the online phase. It also became apparent to many participants that it was going to be difficult to gain a full understanding of all the ideas and evaluate their merits in such a short time. Some online deliberators felt that all their extensively detailed work in the lead-up had been for nought. Several online deliberators remained resolute

in their desire to push their proposals through, attempting to dominate table discussions, testing the patience of others and challenging the skills of even the most capable table facilitators.

The assembly heard from a panel of academic experts, political commentators and public officers who spoke about the proposals. Participants were surprised to learn about the unintended consequences of some of them, and the institutional barriers that precluded the chances of some getting up. This led many participants to suggest changes to some proposals, or to drop them altogether. For example, an initial proposal for Australia to revert back to first-past-the-post voting was replaced by a proposal to switch from mandatory to optional preferential voting (i.e. to not have to include all candidates in the ranking), to achieve the same straightforward goal of not having to vote for despised candidates at all.

To prioritise the proposals, the agenda set the participants first to consider the positive values of a healthy democratic system. This was done quickly, with each table concluding a short conversation by entering their top democratic ideals. These were aggregated by the Theme Team, who presented nine value categories¹⁷. The participants then preference-voted¹⁸ to decide which values were most important in aggregate. The top value identified in the room, by a wide margin, was “freedom”, while “transparency” took second place. While aspects and examples of each were presented, neither were dissected further to reveal their contradictory aspects. For example, freedom translates to rights for individual and market autonomy for those on the political right, and rights of assembly and equality for those on the political left. Conflating these may have created a false perception of consensus amongst participants. Furthermore, while an emphasis on freedom might be expected in an American context, it is a surprising call in Australia where freedom does not feature broadly in public discourse¹⁹ or research about Australian public dispositions regarding political matters, beyond the stories of new migrants.²⁰

The determination of public values at the CP was not presented as a contest, but only the two value designations of freedom and transparency were carried forward in the agenda. This design decision was taken largely for expediency due to lack of time. The participants had to keep those in mind while deliberating and then preference-voting on the final proposals. Many of the proposals that came from the online deliberation did indeed make it through to the final short list, albeit in edited form. At the completion of the CP, three of the top six proposals involved public engagement.²¹ Importantly during one plenary session the distorting potential of the organisers' advocacy of deliberative democracy was raised, but many participants expressed the view with loud support that they would not let that impact their judgement. So it was the need for public engagement, as many experienced for the first time in the Citizens' Parliament, that emerged as the most salient interest of participants. The Report of the Citizens' Parliament was formally presented on the final morning to a Member of Parliament acting as Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Discussion

One of the common problems expressed by evaluators and participants at face-to-face deliberative events, even when conducted over several days, is that more time should have been allocated to deliberate more deeply.²² With the best of intentions to jump-start the deliberative process and make more time available, the organisers of the CP integrated an online platform to get the proposal generation underway early.

It became apparent that many people either misunderstood the project's remit, or ignored it in their overwhelming desire for the Government to address local or personal issues (e.g. increasing aged pension funding and rules). Many of the online proposals began as solutions dressed up as problems. Their titles and short descriptions expressed normative aims with phrases such as “we should ...”. Participants who attended the regional meetings were counselled to avoid this, but the situation persisted. Moreover, it was common to hear participants refer to “we”, not realising that there were other participants who would not agree with the collective vision that was expressed. The qualitative record and survey results indicate a wide range of quite incompatible perspectives were in the room, yet many participants expressed the over-optimistic view that “everyone held similar opinions”. The process did not press them to explore their differences, nor their perceptions of the differences that co-exist in the general public. The tendency of task groups to presume common values and jump to conclusions, for a variety of reasons including the absence of adequate facilitative intervention, is well-documented in the small group communication literature.²³

Duplicating online the proposal-generation objective of the assembly phase had unintended consequences, perhaps indicative of the lack of deliberation about it by the organisers. First,

because the online deliberators were not a statistically representative group (they self-selected from amongst self-selecting applicants, even though the original invitations were randomised), their output could not be accepted in the demographically representative assembly as the last word on the proposals with which to proceed. Crowd-sourcing can be worthwhile, but when citizens are set to make recommendations for government take-up that affect everyone, the statistically representative demands of deliberative democracy should not be overlooked.²⁴ Second, the online participants who invested hours and days authoring the preliminary proposals entered the assembly with strategic rather than deliberative mindsets. They had taken ownership of particular solutions and were determined to see them through. A few paid little interest to anything else. The online phase had converted these participants from unaligned "common good" shareholders into partisan *stakeholders*.²⁵

Rather than letting the online participants get deeply involved in proposal generation, it may have been sufficient just to have them generate a slate of topics. The initial proposals could come from a variety of sources, including online crowd-sourcing from the general public and background articles by experts, as is prepared for National Issues Forums.²⁶ Getting experts to frame the proposals would have reduced the noise of populist or off-topic options, but the organisers feared that this would be seen as reducing the exercise to a mere consultation.²⁷ Instead, the broad remit of the CP demanded that expertise grow out of proceedings, through the collaborative work of the participants.

Perhaps the same 150 selected participants should have taken part in both the online and assembly phases, with nobody else. It isn't known whether the half of them who participated online could have generated a representatively broad list of initial proposals on their own. Only a few of them made substantial contributions online. Many participants commented that they didn't know enough about Australia's political system to confidently make suggestions for improvement. The qualitative evidence about their performance in the assembly indicates that most of the Citizens' Parliamentarians came ready to listen and learn and to express their views on friendly rather than combative terms. It was inevitably necessary for them to rely on the experts on the stage and among their lot for descriptive input. The deliberative task was then left to the participants to judge the proposals and their attributes based on their own experiences and expectations, of people they knew and of others amongst the public with whom they could empathise. It is this ideal of generous public moral judgement that lies at the heart of many theories of deliberative democracy.²⁸

Public engagements can be categorised according to the type of outputs they are designed to generate. On the one hand, there are processes, typically small-scale like citizens' jury or consensus conferences²⁹, through which participants produce a particular recommendation about an issue. Such processes generally demand that participants seek a degree of common ground agreement through deliberative means. Much of the political theory about deliberative democracy and the rational exchange of reasons deals with those more demanding types of processes. On the other hand, in a larger-scale "visioning" process like the Citizens' Parliament, participants prioritise a range of possible policy options with much lower demand for consensus. The deliberative challenge for participants is in comparing the value or importance of disparate ideas in a meaningful way, which may refer to private, community or administrative interests. But before that can be achieved, individuals need to share the criteria that they will apply in their evaluation of options. Relevant conflicts and differences have to be explored through protracted and concerted dialogue. During table conversations at the CP assembly, such intense dialogue only occurred when individuals expressed extreme views (such as vilifying refugees). It was a rare occurrence that contrasting nuances of participants' conceptions of democracy were acknowledged. The construction of the two main attributes of a healthy democracy went too quickly, and the manner in which they could weigh the proposals went largely undisclosed.

Conclusion: an alternative

Political philosopher Michael Sandel implores us to abandon objectified market-mimicking aggregative methods of public choice-making. Instead, he suggests that we should deliberately acknowledge and relate the disparate moral dimensions that shape what a good future might feel like.³⁰ Jane Mansbridge and others go further to suggest a relaxing of the ideal of deliberation that emphasises the common good.³¹ They recommend processes in which participants do not shy away from exploring their self-interests that account for the differences in public preferences. For the most part, these self-interests emanate from the taken-for granted beliefs and values of individuals that tacitly underscore reasoning in deliberation.

With this in mind, the online phase of the Citizens' Parliament could have provided an opportunity for participants to explore the meaning of democracy and their individual expectations of a government. The purpose would not be to coercively alter their beliefs, but for participants to appreciate that others come to their understandings in quite different ways, using different vocabularies under different ethical frameworks. Moderation might be necessary to encourage participants to consider minority standpoints.³² Some participants might believe they know what is “good for us”, not realising that goodness means different things to different folks and a unanimous “public will” is a chimera. The challenge for government to form unitary policy in the face of such diversity becomes apparent. Participants might also not realise that issues can be framed in the media or by stakeholders in ways that constrain consideration and judgement.³³ They might not recognise the complexity of rhetoric. So some moderated exercises might be useful to help participants apply logic and learn to deliberate more effectively. They could also approach meta-consensus: a growing understanding about the conditions around which a deliberative agreement could be forged.³⁴

That may sound academic, but in dialogue it can follow from simple open questions directed at participants in the context of the overall remit, such as “what’s important to you?”, “what do you care about?”, “how do our needs compare?” and “how should minority interests be treated?” amongst many other critical-thinking queries. This would be an open-ended rather than goal-centred exploration, not about decision-making but rather about laying out a tolerant and respectful conversational landscape on which subsequent decision-making could proceed more easily. It would take considerable time for participants to name and categorise the relevant moral dimensions that would construct the evaluative criteria³⁵ necessary for the ensuing face-to-face assembly. No consensus agreement is required about the criteria, as individual participants can accept and adapt them as they wish. The categories would help characterise the reception by the public of the policy options from which the assembly makes its recommendation. Importantly, they would help to identify the unintended consequences (e.g. victims) of certain policy options.

A protracted online phase appears well suited to help open participants to each other's interests and to public values. Participants can come and go from online dialogue as they feel comfortable, especially when the topic is emotive. They can do so from their own homes, interspersed with discussion with their families and friends. In the absence of well-developed critical thinking skills by participants, moderation may be crucial to seed the conversation, keep it on track and free of conflict. By carefully moderating the dominance of particular participant standpoints, mutually acceptable patterns of deliberative interaction can be established.³⁶

What might online deliberation to explore moral positions look like? The design could be approached similarly to a computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL)³⁷ platform. Blending synchronous and asynchronous access modes, the structure could be scripted through steps of exploration that are appropriate to the context. It may not be beneficial to silo participants into online teams except for short productive periods as with buzz groups.³⁸ The online deliberation platform could help participants safely step back and reflect on how their worldviews sit alongside others. It could provide the safe environment to find the words to articulate tacit understandings. This is the design challenge for researchers and software developers.

Other face-to-face engagement formats such as citizens juries or consensus panels could also benefit from an online preamble to present evaluative criteria on which instrumental policy deliberation should be founded. The suggested alternative takes advantage of the time offered by the online phase for participants, with the help of moderation, to carefully reveal and unpack tacit values and beliefs, and also to get used to the deliberative ideals. This sets up the ensuing face-to-face meeting to quickly drill into the overall value of proposals in a meaningful way through collaborative table work.

Online deliberation can be started well in advance of the face-to-face event into which it feeds. From the safe comfort of their own homes, participants can ease their way into a new way of having a conversation and gain trust in one another across difference. They arrive at the face-to-face gathering with introductions complete, friendships formed, mindful of an array of personal and public interests, and ready to get down to the challenging work of policy recommendation.³⁹

Notes

- ¹ For examples, see Todd Davies & Seeta Peña Gangadharan (Eds) (2009). *Online Deliberation: Design, Research, and Practice*. Center for the Study of Language and Information, University of Chicago Press.
- ² NCDD, www.thataway.org (accessed 05 May 2010).
- ³ IAP2, www.iap2.org (accessed 05 May 2010).
- ⁴ Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy, *Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age* (Washington DC: The Aspen Institute, 2009). p. 59.
- ⁵ www.citizensparliament.org.au (accessed 05 May 2010). A summary of the event is available: www.newdemocracy.com.au/ndf/docs/cp_project/newDemocracy_Citizens_Parliament_Handbook.pdf (accessed 05 May 2010).
- ⁶ New Democracy Foundation, www.newdemocracy.com.au (accessed 05 May 2010)
- ⁷ Many participants believed that the project was run by the Government itself and thus held official status, due to symbolism on the invitation that included a "seal" picturing the venue, Old Parliament House in Canberra (now a museum), and former political figures acting as chairs.
- ⁸ National Issues Forums (www.nifi.org) develops multi-perspective Issues Books for distribution; AmericaSpeaks assigns the role of option development to its government or NGO client and provides consultancy service to support that effort. www.americaspeaks.org.
- ⁹ Brian Sullivan, Civic Evolution, civicevolution.org
- ¹⁰ Technically, the approach is referred to as AJAX, where a single screen page adjusts to user interaction by expanding and contracting sections without refreshing. The internal organisation of the platform could be customised.
- ¹¹ These steps are consistent with the pragmatic problem solving approach suggested a century ago by Dewey, John. (1910/2009). *How We Think*. BiblioBazaar LLC, p. 72.
- ¹² This figure includes some who dropped out before the main event, and also some who were selected later to replace late withdrawals.
- ¹³ Museum of Australian Democracy, moadoph.gov.au
- ¹⁴ The qualitative record shows wide variation in attitude towards their potential influence. Some took it all very seriously, while for others it was less important, attending just for the adventure of it. The vast majority contributed actively and with commitment to the assembly. Unfortunately, the event occurred on the Black Saturday weekend of terrible bushfires in Victoria, Australia which distracted from media and political interest in the assembly.
- ¹⁵ See the AmericaSpeaks website for further details www.americaspeaks.org.
- ¹⁶ The Theme Team consisted of eight political science faculty and postgraduate students, aided by process experts and technicians.
- ¹⁷ Freedom, transparency, guaranteed education for all, justice and fairness in government, inclusiveness, access for all to the political system, access to information, diverse media, active citizenship.
- ¹⁸ Each participant was given a virtual \$100 budget to allocate across the options of their choice, with a maximum spend on any individual item of \$30. The end result was an aggregate score for each option.
- ¹⁹ See John Dryzek & Valerie Braithwaite (2000), *On the Prospects for Democratic Deliberation: Values Analysis Applied to Australian Politics*, *Political Psychology*, vol 21, No. 2.
- ²⁰ See also the work of the Democratic Audit of Australia. democraticaudit.org.au (accessed 05 May 2010).
- ²¹ Empowering citizens to participate in politics through education; empowering citizens to participate in politics through education; youth engagement in politics. Other top proposals were harmonising laws between states, open and accessible government.
- ²² For example, see *A Deliberative Future? An Independent Evaluation of the GM Nation*. www.pgeconomics.co.uk/pdf/gm_future_top_copy_12_feb_04.pdf (accessed 05 May 2010). Also Abelson, Julia, Pierre-Gerlier Forest, John Eyles, Patricia Smith, Elisabeth Martin, and Francois-Pierre Gauvin (2003). *Deliberations about deliberative methods: issues in the design and evaluation of public participation processes*. *Social Science & Medicine* 57, no. 2 (July): 239-251. Also L. Carson (2006), "Improving Public Deliberative Practice: A Comparative Analysis of Two Italian Citizens Jury Projects in 2006," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 2, no. 1.
- ²³ See Beatrice Shultz (1999). *Improving Group Communication Performance: An overview of diagnosis and intervention*. In Lawrence Frey (Ed.) *The Handbook of Group Communication Theory and Research*. Sage. pp. 371-394.
- ²⁴ See for example Lyn Carson & Brian Martin (2002), *Random selection of citizens for technological decision-making*. *Science and Public Policy*, vol 29, no. 2, pp 105-113. Also, Fishkin, James, and

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- Robert Luskin. (2005). Experimenting with a Democratic Ideal: Deliberative Polling and Public Opinion. *Acta Politica* 40, no. 3: 284.
- ²⁵ C. M Hendriks, J. S Dryzek, and C. Hunold, "Turning up the heat: partisanship in deliberative innovation," *Political Studies* 55, no. 2 (2007): 362–383.
- ²⁶ See note 8
- ²⁷ The International Association for Public Participation offers a spectrum of public participation, with more empowering options available beyond consultation.
- ²⁸ See for example John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative democracy and beyond* (Oxford University Press, 2002). Also Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and democracy* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2002).
- ²⁹ See many examples of deliberative formats in J. Gastil and P. Levine (Eds) (2005), *Handbook of Deliberative Democracy: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the 21st Century*, San Francisco, Jossey Bass.
- ³⁰ Michael Sandel, "A New Politics of the Common Good," *The Reith Lectures 2009*, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b001b6bt (accessed 05 May 2010).
- ³¹ Jane Mansbridge (with others) (2010). The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 64-100.
- ³² Iris Marion Young makes this point that participants in public deliberation have a responsibility to include minority perspectives in their considerations. See note 28.
- ³³ See A. Simon and M. Xenos, "Media framing and effective public deliberation," *Political Communication* 17, no. 4 (2000): 363–376.
- ³⁴ John Dryzek & Simon Niemeyer (2006). Reconciling Pluralism and Consensus as Political Ideals. *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 50, no. 3, pp. 634-649.
- ³⁵ The need for participants to initially ascertain evaluative criteria is taken up by M. Button and K. Mattson, "Deliberative democracy in practice: Challenges and prospects for civic deliberation," *Polity* 31, no. 4 (1999): 609–637.
- ³⁶ John Gastil and James P. Dillard, "Increasing Political Sophistication Through Public Deliberation.," *Political Communication* 16, no. 1 (January 1999): 3-23.
- ³⁷ For an overview of CSCL, see Stahl, G., Koschmann, T., & Suthers, D. (2006). Computer-supported collaborative learning: An historical perspective. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), *Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences* (pp. 409-426). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Available at http://GerryStahl.net/cscl/CSCL_English.pdf (accessed 05 May 2010).
- ³⁸ Buzz group: a meeting divides into subgroups who briefly generate ideas that are subsequently reviewed in plenary.
- ³⁹ The author thanks two anonymous reviewers for their helpful questions and comments on an earlier draft of this paper.