

# Approaches to Learning

## IBCC

Setting out the ATL course.

I've attached samples of handouts and webpages as appendices. This is a work in progress but you can see that by working on one section at a time, it becomes much simpler in designing your course.

While it is recommended that skills are embedded in other areas of the IBCC, and most probably are, the forming of a discreet ATL course is important. By breaking the course up into 4 distinct skills components, then utilising the questions and suggestions as a "way in" to the course, you can pretty much design the course to be what you want and like.

Resources are plenty out there. Just doing a quick search for instance on 'handouts and values', I was presented with dozens of worksheets of which I've attached one as appendix 1. Or, for creative thinking, activities such as in appendix 6 (found on one of the recommended websites).

Therefore, with some planning and attention to the parts of each skills component you can fairly easily and comprehensively design 25 hour units (x4) that should be both interesting and accessible to the students. If the total time provided for ATL is lessened or increased, just adjust the hour length for each unit.

Make sure that whatever you do is applicable to the students. Ease them into each section, provide stimulus material, lots of discussions, group work, student centered work, invite speakers, do field trips, make it real for them, wrap the theoretical around a hands-on approach. With a little care in the design, this can be a fascinating, energetic, lively, in-depth, experiential course for the students.

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## Introduction

The approaches to learning strand is designed to introduce students to life skills and to help students operate in a variety of contexts, now and in the future.

The development of many of these skills should be part of a discreet “Approaches to learning” course, however, the school may find that it can incorporate or embed some skills into other areas of the school’s programme, for example, within the community and service programme or within aspects of the career-related course.

Given the IBCC is a career-related/vocational initiative, **the emphasis is on skills development for the workplace**, knowing that these skills are transferable skills and can be applied in a range of situations.

The approaches to learning course should not only **develop skills, but also attitudes**. In the context of the IBCC, the term “attitudes” refers to dispositions or attributes. These are the **values that underpin the behaviour of people**. The approaches to learning course **aims to develop personal qualities and values as exemplified in the learner profile**. Other attributes that should be encouraged by the course include **responsibility, perseverance, resilience, self-esteem and honesty**.

While many of the skills in the course can be taught in a classroom environment, other skills and attitudes cannot be taught in a didactic sense and so require students to be involved in activities outside the classroom that foster their development.

The school has **designed its own unique approaches to learning course based on the framework and teaching ideas presented in the IBCC ATL Guide**. The school understands that it is **very important**, when designing the course, to **emphasise current events and issues as much as possible** as this will provide relevance and context for students.

This guide provides an outline of the topics that should be taught as part of an approaches to learning course (see the “Approaches to learning” section of this guide). Details of the topics are provided in the form of curriculum questions that could be explored in the course (see the “Detail of skills” section).

Some possible pedagogical approaches are found in the sections titled “Teaching resources and strategies” which appear below the curriculum questions relating to each topic.

The school **has significant flexibility over deciding the structure of the course**. This will depend on many factors including **how much can be, or is already, embedded into other areas of the students’ programme**. However, while flexibility in design is encouraged, **intercultural awareness, ethical thinking and critical thinking must be focal-points in the course**.

## Aims:

The aims of the approaches to learning strand are for the student to develop:

- good intellectual habits
- practical problem-solving skills

- self-awareness and an appreciation of identity, individual strengths and individual limitations
- an appreciation of ethical issues relating to his or her personal, social and work experience
- an awareness of his or her own perspective as one of many perspectives, and one that has been shaped by contingent cultural factors
- intercultural awareness
- the skill of communicating clearly and coherently
- personal and interpersonal skills for the workplace and beyond
- the skills of reflection and critical thinking in personal, social and professional situations
- an understanding that many questions, issues or problems do not always have simple right or wrong answers.

An ignorance of other cultures can, and does, lead to negative consequences including the development of stereotypes, offence and conflict. It is, therefore, vitally important that intercultural learning becomes a focus in the approaches to learning course.

When designing approaches to learning, schools must not treat intercultural awareness in a narrow and reductive way in the details of the course. **Intercultural learning must hold pride of place in the IBCC curriculum.**

An interculturally responsive curriculum:

- connects to each student's cultural background
- values the contributions and perspectives of every person in the classroom
- identifies those aspects of the group's culture that are important to its members
- is effective in both mono-cultural and multicultural classrooms
- helps students make connections between local and global identities
- encourages active engagement in promoting intercultural connections.

We want to empower people, to raise their awareness about exploitation, manipulation, prejudice and abuse, and move them to act upon this awareness. In other words, we want to provoke a transformational response.



## Approaches to learning model

At the heart of the model is the learner: the person. The learner uses a range of skills to make sense of the world around us. These skills are strategies or tools that are used to help explain the totality of our experiences in the different contexts of everyday life. Crucial to the model is the ability of the learner to reflect on the effectiveness of the skills used.

The learner, in this case the student, must be the focus of this strand of the core, and so is at the centre of the model. **The learner should be challenged with questions such as: Who am I? What can I be certain of? What are my values? What are my prejudices? What are my strengths and weaknesses?**

Learning is about change. It involves acquiring new knowledge, developing new skills and recognizing more about oneself and others.

Learning involves active participation by the learner. It is not a passive process. Listening, reflecting, questioning and communicating are just some of the examples of strategies adopted by the lifelong learner.

It is generally recognized that learners differ in how they learn and so students should, at this stage, be introduced to different ways of learning (as opposed to cognitive abilities and the capacity to learn).

## Teaching resources and strategies

Students could complete a values inventory that identifies their social and political views and places them in a context. This can then be used to generate a discussion about what values are, where they come from and the notion of absolute and relative values. (see appendix 1)

Students could be exposed to various theories of learning, including: learning styles, multiple

intelligences and left brain/right brain.

The website [http://www.funderstanding.com/learning\\_styles.cfm](http://www.funderstanding.com/learning_styles.cfm) gives a very good introduction to a number of theories on learning that students might find interesting. It would allow for comparison and discussion. (see appendix 2)

The website <http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm> provides a number of activities that students might enjoy, including finding their dominant learning style. (see appendix 3)

## Outline of skills

### Thinking – 25 hours

- 1. Ethical thinking**
  - Personal and professional values
  - Different cultural values
  - Universal values
  - The ethical dimension
- 2. Critical thinking**
  - Characteristics of the critical thinker
  - Aspects of critical thinking
  - Critical thinking skills
- 3. Creative thinking**
  - Comparison with critical thinking
- 4. Problem solving**
  - The problem-solving process
- 5. Lateral thinking**
  - Parallel thinking, concept mapping and brainstorming

### Intercultural understanding – 25 hours

- 1. Your culture**
  - Your cultural profile
  - Your cultural characteristics
- 2. Other cultures**
  - Cultural differences
  - Impacts on culture
- 3. Language and culture**
  - Language and communication
  - Language use
  - Language profile
- 4. Intercultural engagement**
  - Cultural interaction
  - Cultural perspectives
  - Cultural intelligence

### Communication – 25 hours

- 1. Interpersonal communication skills**
  - Group dynamics
  - Listening attentively
  - Non-verbal cues

- Empathy
  - Conflict resolution
  - Leading others
- 2. Formal writing skills**
    - Research
    - Writing essays and reports
  - 3. Presentation skills**
    - Appropriate use of ICT
    - Speaking to an audience
  - 4. Numeracy skills**
    - Manipulating numbers
    - Applying basic mathematical techniques to a variety of practical situations
  - 5. IT skills**
    - When and how to use information technology

## **Personal development - 25 hours**

- 1. Emotional intelligence**
  - Emotional Quotient (EQ) compared to the Intelligence Quotient (IQ)
- 2. Domains of emotional intelligence**
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-management
  - Social awareness
  - Relationships management
- 3. Process skills**
  - Change management
  - Organizational skills
  - Time management
  - Commitment
  - Decision-making
  - Self-appraisal



## Thinking

### 1. Ethical thinking

- Personal and professional values
- Different cultural values
- Universal values
- The ethical dimension

### 2. Critical thinking

- Characteristics of the critical thinker
- Aspects of critical thinking
- Critical thinking skills

### 3. Creative thinking

- Comparison with critical thinking

### 4. Problem solving

- The problem-solving process

### 5. Lateral thinking

- Parallel thinking, concept mapping and brainstorming

## Ethical thinking

Questions to consider could include:

1. What is the relationship between ethical behaviour and values?
2. What are values?
3. What determines an individual's personal values?
4. In what ways do personal values differ from professional values?
5. Why is an awareness of cultural values so important?
6. Is it possible to have a set of universal values that applies to all people?
7. Would you speak up when someone says something you find offensive?
8. Is it considered stealing if you take soap and shampoo from a hotel?
9. Is there any situation that justifies reading someone else's private journal?
10. Do you agree that governments are justified in raising taxes to support the less well-off members of society?
11. What are some examples of issues with an ethical dimension?
12. What is intellectual property?
13. Do you agree that succeeding through academic dishonesty is failing?
14. Is freedom universal?
15. How can ethics be taught without being "moralistic"?
16. Could having an ethical viewpoint be considered cultural insensitivity in certain circumstances?

## Teaching resources and strategies

As the focus of the reflective project is on an ethical dilemma associated with a specific issue, teachers should use this section of the approaches to learning course to introduce students to the idea of exploring issues from an ethical perspective.

The following websites may be of assistance.

- <http://www.goodworkproject.org/>
- <http://www.gurusoftware.com/GuruNet/Personal/Topics/values.htm>
- <http://www.culturalvalues.org>

- [http://www.hent.org/world/rss/files/ethics\\_values.htm](http://www.hent.org/world/rss/files/ethics_values.htm)

Students could be divided into groups and asked to develop a presentation that looks at both sides of an issue with an ethical dilemma. Appropriate feedback, with the reflective project in mind, would be critical to the success of this strategy.

A good and accessible introductory book on ethics is *How good people make tough decisions* by Rush Kidder.

## Critical thinking

Questions to consider could include:

1. What does it mean to be a critical thinker?
2. Why is critical thinking sometimes called convergent thinking?
3. In what sense is critical thinking a generic skill for life?
4. Being curious, systematic, analytical, open-minded, fair-minded, sceptical and flexible are all attributes of the critical thinker; why are each of them important?
5. Why is it important to be critical of information sources?
6. What is an argument and what kinds of argument exist?
7. Does all verbal and written communication involve argument?
8. What is the distinction between deductive and inductive reasoning?
9. What are the common fallacies in reasoning?
10. What are sophisms?
11. What constitutes someone's perspective?
12. Why is it important to recognize ethnocentrism and stereotypes?
13. Is there a difference between personal bias and confirmation bias?
14. How do ambiguities, emotive content, false implications and nomenclature distort reasoned argument?

## Teaching resources and strategies

Most schools will emphasize this aspect of the strand, and this is to be encouraged because the development of critical thinking skills in our students should be given high priority in the provision of the core.

The Foundation for Critical Thinking (<http://www.criticalthinking.org>) is a valuable resource in the field of critical thinking. (see appendix 4)

Teachers may wish to take an issues approach to this section of the core. The website <http://www.osdemethodology.org.uk/osdemethodology.html> (see appendix 5) is a good site that encourages people to engage critically when exploring global issues and perspectives.

Alternatively, teachers may take a themes-based approach, such as exploring the role of the critical thinker in each of the contexts outlined in the approaches to learning diagram (see figure 3), that is the environment, communities, the workplace and technology.

Another approach to this section of the core is to take a theoretical approach by following the suggested structure in the boxes in the section "Outline of skills".

This aspect of the course lends itself to data response work, where students are given information (for example, in the form of statistics, graphs, a newspaper article an editorial, and so on) relating to a social issue.

Questions are then considered:

- What does the information suggest?
- Can we trust the information?
- What counts as reliable information?
- Can we trust the source?
- can statistics and graphs be manipulated?

Socratic questioning can also be used. A question is asked as a stimulus to reasoning and analysis of the reasoning. The questions will be on pertinent issues relating to the students' experience and should require high order thinking. For example, should law enforcement officers react the same way to different cultural and ethnic communities? This question is designed to explore ideas related to the limits of tolerance of different cultural perspectives and equality before the law.

Texts can be used to help navigate through some of the concepts involved in critical thinking skills. In fact, texts can, and should, be used to expose students to some of the broader issues explored in the approaches to learning course.

Choose texts that are:

- simple: they are easy to understand
- readable: students will enjoy the stories
- profound: they allow us to discuss many realities of our world
- current: they explore topics that are still relevant today.

Some possible texts to consider as part of the approaches to learning course could include some of the following.

- *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *Double Helix* by Nancy Parker
- *Does my Head Look Big in This?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah
- *The Thing around your Neck* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood
- *The Constant Gardener* by John le Carré
- *Malka* by Mirjam Pressler
- *Exodus* by Julie Bertagna
- *After the First Death* by Robert Cormier
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
- *Pride of Baghdad (a graphic novel)* by Brian K. Vaughan

## Creative thinking

Questions to consider could include:

1. What does it mean to be a creative thinker?
2. How is creative thinking different from critical thinking?
3. Why is creative thinking called divergent thinking?
4. What are some of the attitudes that hinder or promote creativity?

## Teaching resources and strategies

The following websites provide a number of creative ideas. (see appendix 6)

- <http://www.virtualsalt.com/crebook2.htm>
- <http://www.brainstorming.co.uk/tutorials/creativethinkingcontents.html>
- [http://www.ahapuzzles.com/creative\\_thinking\\_1.htm](http://www.ahapuzzles.com/creative_thinking_1.htm)

## Problem solving

Questions to consider could include:

1. What do I see as the problem from the scenario given?
2. What are the possible solutions?
3. Which solution is best?
4. How will the solution be implemented?
5. What have I learned?

## Teaching resources and strategies

The following websites provide a number of fun activities that will encourage students to think laterally and logically.

- <http://www.widerdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html>
- <http://www.pedagonet.com/brain/brainers.html>
- <http://www.theproblemsite.com/>

Teachers could also take a case study approach to this area of the course.

The following websites are three among many that can be used to help design problem-based learning (PBL) scenarios that will enhance problem-solving skills in students.

- <http://capewest.ca/pbl.html>
- <http://www.usc.edu/hsc/dental/ccmb/usc-csp/mainpgscen.html>
- [http://www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/docs/pdf/p20040422\\_pals.pdf](http://www.psychology.heacademy.ac.uk/docs/pdf/p20040422_pals.pdf)

Software is available to help design PBL scenarios, for example, <http://www.sblinteractive.org/>.

Students are required to use creative thinking to come up with a potential solution to a problem based scenario. In each case, students use the problem-solving steps below to come up with a possible solution.

1. Identify the problem.
2. Generate possible solutions.
3. Evaluate possible solutions.
4. Select the best solution.

## Lateral thinking

Questions to consider could include:

1. What is lateral thinking?
2. What do de Bono's six thinking hats represent?
3. What are the benefits of using the "six hats" technique?
4. What is meant when we say the brain works associatively as well as linearly?
5. What is mind mapping?
6. Who benefits most from mind mapping?
7. Is brainstorming fundamentally an individual activity or a group activity?
8. Is brainstorming an uninhibited forum for people to offer their views or does it follow a predetermined structure based on a set of rules?

## Teaching resources and strategies

The *Six Thinking Hats Lessons for Schools* CD-ROM is a resource produced for schools and has some excellent activities and applications. Students should be encouraged to create and draw their own mind maps as well as using mind mapping software, such as MindManager, Inspiration or FreeMind.

## Intercultural understanding

### 1. Your culture

- Your cultural profile
- Your cultural characteristics

### 2. Other cultures

- Cultural differences
- Impacts on culture

### 3. Language and culture

- Language and communication
- Language use
- Language profile

### 4. Intercultural engagement

- Cultural interaction
- Cultural perspectives
- Cultural intelligence

## Your culture

Questions to consider could include:

1. What is culture?
2. Why do you think culture is important?
3. Can you belong to more than one culture?
4. Do you know what culture you belong to?
5. In terms of culture and cultural influences, how would you describe yourself?
6. What are three customs that reflect your culture?
7. What are some of the positive and negative aspects of your culture?
8. How are families structured in your culture?
9. What traditions are important in your culture?
10. What languages are spoken in your culture?
11. Who has the power in your culture and how do they get it?
12. Who are your cultural heroes and why?

## Teaching resources and strategies

The website <http://www.scribd.com/doc/18110466/Questions-to-Ask-About-Culture> is a valuable resource. It provides a range of questions that each student could respond to in terms of his or her culture.

## Other cultures

Questions to consider could include:

1. Why were/are the following body decorations/images used in certain cultures: tattoos; corseted waistbands; foot binding; black teeth; shaved heads?
2. What is the role and importance of the following factors in the cultures of three different nations: food, clothing, traditions, animals and the natural world?
3. How are geography and culture linked?
4. What is colonialism and how has it impacted on the culture of other nations?
5. How does religion help determine the cultural perspectives of different people?
6. Why is it so important for some countries to honour their indigenous culture?
7. How are metaphors used in different cultures?

### Teaching resources and strategies

A snapshot of different cultures around the world can be found on:

[www.buzzle.com/articles/different-cultures-of-the-world.html](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/different-cultures-of-the-world.html)

The website

[http://peacebuilding.caritas.org/index.php/Questions\\_Exploring\\_Cultures\\_Approach\\_to\\_Negotiation](http://peacebuilding.caritas.org/index.php/Questions_Exploring_Cultures_Approach_to_Negotiation) is an interesting exercise in comparing attitudes of people in different cultures.

The greatest resource that a teacher has at his or her disposal with respect to “other cultures” is the students themselves. Let them tell their stories.

### Language and culture

Questions to consider could include:

1. Do animals use language to communicate
2. In what ways do humans communicate? Consider the diversity of sounds in human language (for example, clicks, tonal languages), and the diversity of written symbols (for example, sign language, braille and morse).
3. What are the origins of your mother tongue and two other languages?
4. Are new languages “born”?
5. Why do languages die?
6. Where is your language on the language tree?
7. What are some examples of non-verbal communication that differ between cultures?
8. Why do people alter the way they use their language depending on the circumstances?
9. What is political correctness?
10. How can language be used in negative ways, for example, to stereotype, to bully, to gossip and to manipulate?
11. Why are nouns male, female or gender-neutral in different languages?
12. What is a language profile and what are the characteristics of your own personal language profile?
13. What languages do you use?
14. What can you do and not do with your languages?
15. What is the relationship between personal language use (idiolect) and personal identity?
16. Why is learning another language considered so important?
17. Why is multilingualism preferred to bilingualism as a strategy in language teaching today?

### Teaching resources/strategies

An excellent glossary of terms used in this topic can be found on

<http://anthro.palomar.edu/language/>

Teachers may want to use clips/films and other recordings to support the delivery of this section of the course.

Consider showing wildlife documentaries or clips from popular films dealing with certain issues to enable students to see semiotic systems in action. Ask students to reflect on their own semiotics expressed through dress. You may also wish to consider transcripts that use written symbols and discuss the relevance.

A host of free articles (they tend to have an academic focus) on language and communication can be found on <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/02715309>.

Schools are encouraged to subscribe to the journal *Language and Intercultural Communication*.

There are four issues per year and it is published by Routledge.  
More details can be found on <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/1470-8477>.

Students could watch and read transcripts of political manifestos and persuasive speeches to analyse the linguistic tools that are employed to persuade audiences. Students can critically examine the media— <http://www.medialit.org>, is a good reference for this.

A good source for political correctness is *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories: A Collection of Modern Tales for Our Life and Times*, by James Finn Gardner.

The work of Lakoff and Johnson is interesting on the use of metaphors in language.

Ask students to consider what influences have had an impact on the personal language that they speak today. How has their language been influenced by culture, surroundings and society? The Council of Europe have good guidelines that might help available at [www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portflio/?m=/main\\_pages/levels.html](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portflio/?m=/main_pages/levels.html)

Students should be able to identify how they adapt their personal language and style depending on the situation and audience. Perhaps students could make recordings throughout a day of their conversations (with permission) and they can identify certain characteristics depending on who they are talking to (for example, friends, family, strangers, teachers).

### Intercultural engagement

Questions to consider could include:

1. What do you understand by the phrase “a multicultural society”?
2. Would you ever consider dating someone from another culture?
3. What are some of the stereotypes that you have been taught about other cultural groups?  
Do you think these are valid and accepted by people in the other cultural groups?
4. What is the danger of the “single story” about a culture?
5. Are cultural boundaries being eroded as a result of greater access to the internet?
6. What is popular culture?
7. Can you give examples where cultures collide and the problems that arise?
8. What are “third culture kids” and what problems do they face?
9. A number of factors influence what we see (or want to see) and how we interpret events; what are some of these cultural factors?
10. In what ways do different cultures have different perspectives on the following concepts:
11. gender, academic honesty, child labour, human rights, death, family?
12. What is “culture shock” and what is Schumann’s theory of acculturation?
13. How can culture shock be minimized?
14. In what ways can the cultural background of a person affect their values, beliefs and behaviour?
15. In what sense is cultural intelligence different to cultural awareness?
16. Howard Gardner coined the term “multiple intelligences”. What are his categories of multiple
17. intelligences and who would be some famous people closely aligned with each of the categories?
18. Identify three of Gardner’s multiple intelligences that you believe are important elements of cultural intelligence. Why did you choose these three?
19. What are some traits that make someone culturally intelligent?
20. What are the dangers of ‘ethnocentrism’ and “ethnorelativism” as extremes of our views on cultural differences?

21. What are the behavioural dos and don'ts when travelling to certain countries?
22. How could the following concepts differ from culture to culture: assertiveness; motivation; freedom; protocol; emotions; silence?
23. Should we place a limit on tolerance of other cultures?

### Teaching resources and strategies

It is crucial that students actively communicate and work with students from different cultures throughout this section of the course.

A nice introduction to the topic of cultural aspects of communication is for students to view a short video on young men from Sudan travelling to the United States to start a new life

<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/movies/god-grew-tired/cultural-differencesggtu.html>.

A fantastic website with lots of excellent resources is <http://www.communicationandculture.co.uk/>.

While it is designed to support a UK course on communication and culture, it has a lot of material that can be used in your approaches to learning course.

The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity by Michael J. Bennett available at <http://www.library.wisc.edu/EDVRC/docs/public/pdfs/SEEDReadings/intCulSens.pdf> is a possible theoretical starting point to discussions in this area.

Type the phrase “intercultural communication lesson plans” into a search engine such as Google and a huge range of sites and activities can be accessed.

With regards to developing intercultural awareness, a cross-cultural training handbook, by Kohls and Knight (Intercultural Press) has some really good ideas for class work on intercultural awareness.

Expose students to language stereotypes in popular culture such as in the film “Shrek”.

Many students are caught between cultures. Let the student body hear about their experiences.

The issues associated with different cultural perspectives can be explored via literature and film, for example, the poems of Moniza Alvi, the novel *The Ancestor Game* by Alex Miller and the movie *Lost in Translation*.

Other good learning activities could include the following:

- Cultural assimilators—students are confronted with a culturally complex issue that is then viewed from different cultural perspectives. Students are then asked to respond to the different perspectives.
- Cultural capsules—descriptions (these could be written, oral or visual) of differences in cultures, with a set of a questions designed to promote discussion.
- Role play—students are asked to perform a role play of an intercultural situation from the perspective of their own culture or another culture.
- Simulation games—designed to simulate “culture shock” where students experience cross-cultural problems arising from new and unfamiliar situations.
- Guest speakers—people from different cultures are invited into the classroom to talk about their intercultural experiences.

An interesting website to explore is [www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2) It is essentially a forum to discuss all



sorts of issues affecting people living in our global world. A good article on culture shock is found on [www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A2848359](http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A2848359).

The website:

[http://www.1000ventures.com/business\\_guide/crosscuttings/cultural\\_intelligence.html](http://www.1000ventures.com/business_guide/crosscuttings/cultural_intelligence.html)

provides good resources in this area, as does

[http://classroomissues.suite101.com/article.cfm/cultural\\_values\\_in\\_the\\_multicultural\\_classroom](http://classroomissues.suite101.com/article.cfm/cultural_values_in_the_multicultural_classroom).

It is important that students from different cultural backgrounds are grouped together when undertaking activities. They should be asked to reflect on the experience.

Cooperative projects could be planned and organized between IBCC students from different countries.

## Communication

### 1. Interpersonal communication skills

- Group dynamics
- Listening attentively
- Non-verbal cues
- Empathy
- Conflict resolution
- Leading others

### 2. Formal writing skills

- Research
- Writing essays and reports

### 3. Presentation skills

- Appropriate use of ICT
- Speaking to an audience

### 4. Numeracy skills

- Manipulating numbers
- Applying basic mathematical techniques to a variety of practical situations

### 5. IT skills

- When and how to use information technology

## Interpersonal communication skills

Questions to consider could include:

1. Why is the ability to work in teams so valued?
2. What is group think?
3. What characteristics are required to lead and manage a team?
4. Are there different perceptions of leadership based on age, gender and/or culture?
5. Why are accepting responsibility and accepting criticism necessary attributes when working with other people?
6. Is there a difference between being assertive and being aggressive?
7. Why do some people say there is a difference between hearing and listening?
8. Is it important to interpret body language?
9. Should we “dress to impress”?
10. Is there a distinction between empathy and sympathy?
11. How can you understand someone without sharing his or her experiences?
12. What are some of the causes of conflict between people?
13. Should conflict be avoided?
14. Are there strategies to manage and resolve conflict?

## Teaching resources and strategies

This section of the course is a good opportunity to bring in role-playing activities to model effective and ineffective interpersonal communication strategies.

Another possible strategy is to provide the opportunity for students to work collaboratively in a stimulating environment. Encouraging students to attend a “development camp” can develop interpersonal skills and personal skills. This could be in the form of a two- or three-day camp (even prior to the beginning of the programme) where students work together at simple tasks initially that then get progressively harder, including outdoor adventure or wilderness activities. Ensure that

every student takes the lead in at least one activity. The key to the success of this type of camp is the emphasis on reflection related to the different activities, as well as inclusion and accessibility.

### Formal writing skills

Questions to consider could include:

1. How can someone find appropriate print and electronic literature resources?
2. Are there strategies to synthesize all the information gathered?
3. What are the various ways to collect information?
4. Should research findings be related to the existing literature?
5. What are the key qualities of a good essay?
6. How do students avoid plagiarism?
7. What is an abstract?
8. When should footnotes or endnotes be used?
9. Is there a difference between a list of references and a bibliography?
10. Is there a particular style or structure that must be used when writing reports?

### Teaching resources/strategies

As research is critical to the reflective project, teachers should spend time familiarizing students with the research process.

The following websites may help.

- <http://www.sdst.org/rguide/approaching.html>
- <http://www.lib.washington.edu/uwill/research101/index.html>
- [http://nb.wsd.wednet.edu/big6/big6\\_resources.htm](http://nb.wsd.wednet.edu/big6/big6_resources.htm)

The website <http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/jbednar/writingtips.html> has some good tips for formal writing.

### Presentation skills

Questions to consider could include:

1. In what ways can technology help and hinder communication?
2. What type of visuals is most effective in a presentation?
3. If using Microsoft Powerpoint® to give a presentation, how many slides should be used?
4. How can Web 2.0 tools and applications be incorporated into presentations?
5. How do speeches that inform differ from speeches that persuade and speeches that entertain?
6. Are there strategies that can be employed to minimize the fear of public speaking?
7. How are you going to differentiate yourself from other presenters?
8. How much should you rehearse your presentation?
9. What is the “rule of three” and how can it be applied to a presentation?
10. How important is body language when giving a presentation?
11. When and how can the use of clichés, colloquial phrases, euphemisms, jargon, slang and redundancies lead to confusion?

### Teaching resources/strategies

The website [www.presentationmagazine.com/Essential\\_Presentation\\_skills.htm](http://www.presentationmagazine.com/Essential_Presentation_skills.htm) gives some good tips for presentations.

There are a number of very good videos on YouTube that give some sound advice on public speaking

## Numeracy skills

Questions to consider could include:

1. How can you use numerical skills to check whether an answer obtained using a calculator is reasonable?
2. When displaying data, how do you decide on which type of graph/table to use?
3. How do you decide on what an appropriate level of accuracy in a final answer is?
4. In which circumstances might you have to deal with:
  - a. very large numbers
  - b. very small numbers
  - c. negative numbers?
5. When is it necessary to be very accurate in multi-stage calculations and when can you legitimately use approximate values?
6. How do you decide on appropriate units to use?
7. How can IT packages such as Microsoft Excel® help with complex calculations?
8. Why is sampling important?
9. What methods can you use to find probabilities?
10. How do you choose a suitable scale for a graph or scale drawing?
11. How do you deal with “outliers” in collected data?

### Teaching resources/strategies

Teachers could access the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) specifications on numeracy skills for the workplace.

Some texts to consider (EMPower Books) have been produced by TERC (Technical Education Research Centres) in the United States. Use the link below for more information;

[http://adultnumeracy.terc.edu/EMP\\_books.html](http://adultnumeracy.terc.edu/EMP_books.html)

## IT skills

Questions to consider could include:

1. What is considered appropriate use of the internet in an educational context?
2. How can you use the search tools provided on the internet to locate appropriate sources?
3. What are the relative strength and weaknesses of using different software packages such as spreadsheets, databases and presentations?
4. How can e-learning and mobile learning (m-learning) be used to enhance learning?
5. How good are your basic IT skills, that is, the skills that are demanded by employers and needed by students undertaking further education (for example, word processing, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, email, databases)?
6. How important is it to have expertise in programming and database design?

### Teaching resources/strategies

Get students to build a portfolio of all the IT skills they have and how these skills can be applied in the workplace.

Students could also do a research project on the IT skills that are likely to be in demand when they enter the workforce.

## Personal skills

### Personal development

#### 1. Emotional intelligence

- Emotional Quotient (EQ) compared to the Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

#### 2. Domains of emotional intelligence

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationships management

#### 3. Process skills

- Change management
- Organizational skills
- Time management
- Commitment
- Decision-making
- Self-appraisal

### Emotional intelligence

Questions to consider could include:

1. What is emotional intelligence?
2. Why is emotional intelligence considered important?
3. How is the EQ different to the IQ?
4. What number in the EQ is considered desirable?
5. How meaningful and important are the IQ and EQ scores? In what sense are process skills different from the domains of emotional intelligence?

### Teaching resources and strategies

Teachers should think about developing emotional literacy education in the school. The website <http://www.emotionalliteracyeducation.com/index.shtml> is a good website for ideas in this area.

Students could also undertake an emotional intelligence test to determine their own EQ score.

### Domains of emotional intelligence

Questions to consider could include:

1. What are Daniel Goleman's four domains of emotional intelligence and what are his 19 categories of emotional intelligence?
2. Can the domains of emotional intelligence be acquired and developed over time?

### Teaching resources and strategies

Students could be asked to do a poster on emotional domains and emotional categories similar to the one found on [http://crg-hrdev.com/pdf/AiA\\_Emotiona\\_Intelligence.pdf](http://crg-hrdev.com/pdf/AiA_Emotiona_Intelligence.pdf).

### Process skills

Questions to consider include:

1. What factors have contributed to change over the last 20 years?

2. What is the change curve and what reactions and behaviours are evident during the stages of change?
3. Are there strategies to help people deal with the change process?
4. In what ways do improved organizational skills, better time management, greater commitment, more decisive decision-making, and self-appraisal assist in the personal development of an individual?

**Teaching resources and strategies**

While some of the domains of emotional intelligence and some of the process skills may not be evident in many of our students, they can be acquired and developed over time.

Students should be exposed to the concepts and introduced to a number of strategies to help them enhance the skills and competencies that are likely to lead to positive outcomes in a person's life.

The website <http://www.businessballs.com> is a good starting point to explore some interesting and innovative ideas.

## Context

The skills that students acquire in this strand of the core need to be applied in various contexts.

The four main contexts that should be analysed are: technologies, communities, environments and workplaces.

It is suggested that a “big picture” approach is taken, whereby key issues linking the skills and the context are explored. Some possible “big picture” issues and questions are identified below.

### 1. Technologies

- **Thinking:** How do you know what to believe on the internet?
- **Intercultural understanding:** How does the cultural context affect the way in which technology is used?
- **Communication:** What has been the impact of different communication media on language, dialogue and interaction?
- **Personal:** Electronic communication lacks an emotional context. What problems, if any, does this raise?

### 2. Communities

- **Thinking:** Are so-called multicultural communities in fact fertile ground for stereotyping, racist behaviour and terrorist acts?
- **Intercultural understanding:** How does our cultural setting influence the way we perceive those outside the dominant culture?
- **Communication:** Have modern information systems homogenized and pluralized cultural identities?
- **Personal:** To what extent do individuals have a say in the decision-making processes within a nation?

### 3. Environments

- **Thinking:** Sustainable development involves protection of non-renewable resources. Is nuclear energy a viable alternative to the use of fossil fuels?
- **Intercultural understanding:** In what way is maintaining cultural identity a prerequisite for environmentally sustainable development?
- **Communication:** What are some of the national and international agreements on biodiversity, recycling, renewable energy, global warming and deforestation, and have they been successfully implemented?
- **Personal:** More and more people are committed to helping environments. What duty do individuals have to reduce their “carbon footprint”?

### 4. Workplaces

- **Thinking:** Group think can occur in very task-oriented and goal-driven organizations. How can it be avoided in the workplace?
- **Intercultural understanding:** Why is cultural change in the workplace so difficult to achieve?
- **Communication:** Every organization has its own distinct culture, which is reflected in its organizational structure. How does the nature of the organizational structure of a business affect communication within that business?
- **Personal:** It is now acknowledged that a person’s values and character traits are good indicators of success in a working environment. How can a business promote emotional intelligence in the workplace?

## Assessment

The nature of the assessment in the critical thinking strand of the IBCC core is to be determined by the school.

The assessment in this strand of the core, however, should be an aid to teaching and learning and, therefore, should be for formative purposes.

Appropriate examples could include essays on particular topics, teacher feedback on various activities and assessment of work.

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# Appendix 1.

## Teachers' notes

**Time**                      **One hour**

### Purpose

**Identify personal values to assist in the decision making process.**

### Rationale

Values are personal beliefs, viewpoints, attitudes and outlooks on life. The ability to recognise and discuss personal values is necessary in the decision making process, and understanding values is an important part of career decision making.

### Activities

Values can be very personal things and students should be given the option not to participate in discussions about their own personal values if they are not comfortable with this.

1. In small groups, students discuss the five questions on the Values worksheet. Each group member records the answers. These may then be shared in a brief class discussion.
2. Students individually answer questions on the *What is important to me* handout.
3. Students discuss the results (as much as they feel comfortable with). Major values can be identified and written down.
4. The teacher facilitates a discussion on:
  - Where do our values come from?
  - How much are we affected by families, school, social institutions, religions, the media and our peers?
  - How do people learn to identify and understand their values?
  - How do they know what to value?
5. Using the Identifying my values handout, students individually work through the list of values and rate each term according to how important it is to them. This may be done individually and discussed in pairs.
6. In small groups students choose a selection of jobs and identify values that are important in these jobs.

### Further activities

- Get all students to stand in a line and then call out instructions, e.g. "Two steps forward if you think that jobs that earn more money are more important, one step sideways to the right if you think environmental issues should be more important than job losses, two steps back if you think liking a job is more important than earning lots of money, etc.". The teacher makes up other instructions. At the end, students end up all over the room and it illustrates the different values people hold. This activity should be done quickly enough, so that it is not divisive.

### Resources

- Copies of *My values, What is important to me, Identifying my values* handouts for each student
- *Youth Central* <http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/>
- Why do people work? in the Preparing / Reviewing step in the My guide section of the *myfuture* website at <http://www.myfuture.edu.au>
- *Job Guide* – in print or online at <http://jobguide.dest.gov.au/>

### Victorian Essential Learnings (VELS)

#### Level 5 and 6

Strand	Domain	Dimension
Physical, Personal and Social Learning	Health and Physical Education	Health knowledge and promotion
	Personal Learning	The individual learner Managing personal learning
	Civics and Citizenship	Civic knowledge and understanding Community engagement
Interdisciplinary Learning	Thinking Processes	Reasoning, processing and inquiry Reflection, evaluation and metacognition

Values are personal beliefs, viewpoints, attitudes and outlook on life. Values come from your family background, the way you are brought up and your own experiences. People are sometimes confused about their values. It is important to think about and be clear about your values, as they influence many things you will do in your life.

### Discussion questions

1. *How do you know what you believe?*

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2. *How can you find out what you actually value?*

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3. *Why doesn't everyone have the same values?*

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4. *What happens when people don't have the same values?*

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5. *Can people who have different values live together? Why?*

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## What is important to me

Complete the following questions, to find out about your personal values.

1. Name the three most important people in your life and why they are important to you and what they value most in life.

Person	Why they are important to me	What they value most in life
1		
2		
3		

2. Write down the three most important goals in your life right now.

1.

2.

3.

3. What have you always wanted to do?

4. What makes you feel really good about yourself?

5. What would you do if you won \$1 million? Would you change anything?

6. If you could write a personal values message on the containers of all the fast food meals sold throughout the world in a week, what would it be?

7. List the four things you value most in life.

1.

2.

3.

4.

### Identifying my values

Go through the list below and rate the values according to how important they are to you (never important, sometimes important, always important).

Value	Definition	Never	Some times	Always
Challenge	you enjoy being challenged and having new problems to solve			
Communication	you enjoy talking with all sorts of people			
Confidence	you tackle new tasks without hesitation			
Creativity	you enjoy thinking up new ideas and ways of doing things			
Freedom	you like to do things in your own way			
Friendship	you like to be with people who are friendly and understanding			
Helping others	you like to do things that help other people			
Independence	you like to do things without interference from others			
Leadership	you like to be in charge when you do things			
Learning	you like to have new things to learn			
Money	earning a good salary is important to you			
Organisation	you are an organised and tidy person			
Peace & quiet	you like working without pressure, setting your own deadlines			
Precision	you like to work with care and concentration			
Pressure	you like to work to meet strict deadlines			
Recognition	you want your efforts to be recognised by others			
Respect	you respect the rights and property of others			

Responsibility	you accept responsibility for your own actions and don't blame others			
Risk taking	you enjoy taking risks			
Routine	you like to have regular tasks and work patterns			
Security	you want a job that you know will last			
Status	you like to be respected by others because of your position			
Surroundings	you like to be in pleasant surroundings			
Teamwork	you like to work cooperatively and be part of a team			
Variety	you enjoy having lots of different things to do			

## Appendix 2.

### Learning Styles

#### Definition

This approach to learning emphasizes the fact that individuals perceive and process information in very different ways. The learning styles theory implies that how much individuals learn has more to do with whether the educational experience is geared toward their particular style of learning than whether or not they are “smart.” In fact, educators should not ask, “Is this student smart?” but rather “How is this student smart?”

#### Discussion

The concept of learning styles is rooted in the classification of psychological types. The learning styles theory is based on research demonstrating that, as the result of heredity, upbringing, and current environmental demands, different individuals have a tendency to both perceive and process information differently. The different ways of doing so are generally classified as:

1. **Concrete and abstract perceivers**—Concrete perceivers absorb information through direct experience, by doing, acting, sensing, and feeling. Abstract perceivers, however, take in information through analysis, observation, and thinking.
2. **Active and reflective processors**—Active processors make sense of an experience by immediately using the new information. Reflective processors make sense of an experience by reflecting on and thinking about it.

Traditional schooling tends to favor abstract perceiving and reflective processing. Other kinds of learning aren’t rewarded and reflected in curriculum, instruction, and assessment nearly as much.

#### How the Learning Styles Theory Impacts Education

*Curriculum*—Educators must place emphasis on intuition, feeling, sensing, and imagination, in addition to the traditional skills of analysis, reason, and sequential problem solving.

*Instruction*—Teachers should design their instruction methods to connect with all four learning styles, using various combinations of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. Instructors can introduce a wide variety of experiential elements into the classroom, such as sound, music, visuals, movement, experience, and even talking.

*Assessment*—Teachers should employ a variety of assessment techniques, focusing on the development of “whole brain” capacity and each of the different learning styles.



## Appendix 3.

### Learning Styles Explained

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#### Topics:

#### What are learning Styles?

#### What are the types of learning styles?

#### Visual Learners

#### Auditory Learners

#### Kinesthetic Learners

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#### What are learning styles?

Learning styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning.

#### What are the types of learning styles?

##### ● Visual Learners:

*learn through seeing...* .

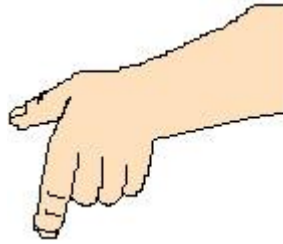
These learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the content of a lesson. They tend to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to avoid visual obstructions (e.g. people's heads). They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated text books, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and hand-outs. During a lecture or classroom discussion, visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.

##### ● Auditory Learners:

*learn through listening...*

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meanings of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.

##### ● Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners:



*learn through , moving, doing and touching...*

Tactile/Kinesthetic persons learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

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## Multiple Intelligence Explained

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### What is Multiple Intelligence?

### What are the types of Multiple Intelligence?

#### Visual/Spatial Intelligence

#### Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence

#### Logical/Mathematical Intelligence

#### Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence

#### Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence

#### Interpersonal Intelligence

#### Intrapersonal Intelligence

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### What is Multiple Intelligence?

Conceived by Howard Gardner, Multiple Intelligences are seven different ways to demonstrate intellectual ability.

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### What are the types of Multiple Intelligence?

#### ● Visual/Spatial Intelligence

*ability to perceive the visual.* These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They enjoy looking at maps, charts, pictures, videos, and movies.

Their skills include:

puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts and graphs, a good sense of direction, sketching, painting, creating visual metaphors and analogies (perhaps through the visual arts), manipulating images, constructing, fixing, designing practical objects, interpreting visual images.

Possible career interests:

navigators, sculptors, visual artists, inventors, architects, interior designers, mechanics, engineers

### ● **Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence**

*ability to use words and language.* These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.

Their skills include:

listening, speaking, writing, story telling, explaining, teaching, using humor, understanding the syntax and meaning of words, remembering information, convincing someone of their point of view, analyzing language usage.

Possible career interests:

Poet, journalist, writer, teacher, lawyer, politician, translator

### ● **Logical/Mathematical Intelligence**

*ability to use reason, logic and numbers.* These learners think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns making connections between pieces of information. Always curious about the world around them, these learner ask lots of questions and like to do experiments.

Their skills include:

problem solving, classifying and categorizing information, working with abstract concepts to figure out the relationship of each to the other, handling long chains of reason to make local progressions, doing controlled experiments, questioning and wondering about natural events, performing complex mathematical calculations, working with geometric shapes

Possible career paths:

Scientists, engineers, computer programmers, researchers, accountants, mathematicians

### ● **Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence**

*ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully.* These learners express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination. (e.g. ball play, balancing beams). Through interacting with the space around them, they are able to remember and process information.

Their skills include:

dancing, physical co-ordination, sports, hands on experimentation, using body language, crafts, acting, miming, using their hands to create or build, expressing emotions through the body

Possible career paths:

Athletes, physical education teachers, dancers, actors, firefighters, artisans

### ● **Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence**

*ability to produce and appreciate music.* These musically inclined learners think in sounds, rhythms and patterns. They immediately respond to music either appreciating or criticizing what they hear. Many of these learners are extremely sensitive to environmental sounds (e.g. crickets, bells, dripping taps).

Their skills include:

singing, whistling, playing musical instruments, recognizing tonal patterns, composing music, remembering melodies, understanding the structure and rhythm of music

Possible career paths:

musician, disc jockey, singer, composer

### ● **Interpersonal Intelligence**

*ability to relate and understand others.* These learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. They often have an uncanny ability to sense feelings, intentions and motivations. They are great organizers, although they sometimes resort to manipulation. Generally they try to maintain peace in group settings and encourage co-operation. They use both verbal (e.g. speaking) and non-verbal language (e.g. eye contact, body language) to open communication channels with others.

Their skills include:

seeing things from other perspectives (dual-perspective), listening, using empathy, understanding other people's moods and feelings, counseling, co-operating with groups, noticing people's moods, motivations and intentions, communicating both verbally and non-verbally, building trust, peaceful conflict resolution, establishing positive relations with other people.

Possible Career Paths:

Counselor, salesperson, politician, business person

### ● **Intrapersonal Intelligence**

*ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being.* These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

Their Skills include:

Recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting and analyzing themselves, awareness of their inner feelings, desires and dreams, evaluating their thinking patterns, reasoning with themselves, understanding their role in relationship to others

Possible Career Paths:

Researchers, theorists, philosophers

## **Appendix 4.**

### **Why Critical Thinking?**

#### **The Problem**

Everyone thinks. It is our nature to do so. But much of our thinking, left to itself, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, or downright prejudiced. Yet, the quality of our life and that of what we produce, make, or build depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking is costly, both in money and in quality of life. Excellence in thought, however, must be systematically cultivated.

#### **A Definition**

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities, as well as a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.

#### **To Analyze Thinking**

Identify its purpose, and question at issue, as well as its information, inferences(s), assumptions, implications, main concept(s), and point of view.

#### **To Assess Thinking**

Check it for clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, significance, logic, and fairness.

#### **The Result**

**A well-cultivated critical thinker:**

- Raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely
- Gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively
- Comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards

- Thinks openmindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as needs be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences
- Communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems

### **The Etymology & Dictionary Definition of "Critical Thinking"**

The concept of critical thinking we adhere to reflects a concept embedded not only in a core body of research over the last 30 to 50 years but also derived from roots in ancient Greek. The word "critical" derives etymologically from two Greek roots: "kriticos" (meaning discerning judgment) and "kriterion" (meaning standards). Etymologically, then, the word implies the development of "discerning judgment based on standards."

In Webster's New World Dictionary, the relevant entry reads "characterized by careful analysis and judgment" and is followed by the gloss, "critical — in its strictest sense — implies an attempt at objective judgment so as to determine both merits and faults." Applied to thinking, then, we might provisionally define critical thinking as thinking that explicitly aims at well-founded judgment and hence utilizes appropriate evaluative standards in the attempt to determine the true worth, merit, or value of something.

The tradition of research into critical thinking reflects the common perception that human thinking left to itself often gravitates toward prejudice, over-generalization, common fallacies, self-deception, rigidity, and narrowness.

The critical thinking tradition seeks ways of understanding the mind and then training the intellect so that such "errors", "blunders", and "distortions" of thought are minimized. It assumes that the capacity of humans for good reasoning can be nurtured and developed by an educational process aimed directly at that end.

The history of critical thinking documents the development of this insight in a variety of subject matter domains and in a variety of social situations. Each major dimension of critical thinking has been carved out in intellectual debate and dispute through 2400 years of intellectual history.

That history allows us to distinguish two contradictory intellectual tendencies: a tendency on the part of the large majority to uncritically accept whatever was presently believed as more or less eternal truth and a conflicting tendency on the part of a small minority — those who thought critically — to systematically question what was commonly accepted and seek, as a result, to establish sounder, more reflective criteria and standards for judging what it does and does not make sense to accept as true.

Our basic concept of critical thinking is, at root, simple. We could define it as the art of taking charge of your own mind. Its value is also at root simple: if we can take charge of our own minds, we can take charge of our lives; we can improve them, bringing them under our self command and direction. Of course, this requires that we learn self-discipline and the art of self-examination. This involves becoming interested in how our minds work, how we can monitor, fine tune, and modify their operations for the better. It involves getting into the habit of reflectively examining our impulsive and accustomed ways of thinking and acting in every dimension of our lives.

All that we do, we do on the basis of some motivations or reasons. But we rarely examine our motivations to see if they make sense. We rarely scrutinize our reasons critically to see if they are rationally justified. As consumers we sometimes buy things impulsively and uncritically, without stopping to determine whether we really need what we are inclined to buy or whether we can afford it or whether it's good for our health or whether the price is competitive. As parents we often

respond to our children impulsively and uncritically, without stopping to determine whether our actions are consistent with how we want to act as parents or whether we are contributing to their self esteem or whether we are discouraging them from thinking or from taking responsibility for their own behavior.

As citizens, too often we vote impulsively and uncritically, without taking the time to familiarize ourselves with the relevant issues and positions, without thinking about the long-run implications of what is being proposed, without paying attention to how politicians manipulate us by flattery or vague and empty promises. As friends, too often we become the victims of our own infantile needs, "getting involved" with people who bring out the worst in us or who stimulate us to act in ways that we have been trying to change. As husbands or wives, too often we think only of our own desires and points of view, uncritically ignoring the needs and perspectives of our mates, assuming that what we want and what we think is clearly justified and true, and that when they disagree with us they are being unreasonable and unfair.

As patients, too often we allow ourselves to become passive and uncritical in our health care, not establishing good habits of eating and exercise, not questioning what our doctor says, not designing or following good plans for our own wellness. As teachers, too often we allow ourselves to uncritically teach as we have been taught, giving assignments that students can mindlessly do, inadvertently discouraging their initiative and independence, missing opportunities to cultivate their self-discipline and thoughtfulness.

It is quite possible and, unfortunately, quite "natural" to live an unexamined life; to live in a more or less automated, uncritical way. It is possible to live, in other words, without really taking charge of the persons we are becoming; without developing or acting upon the skills and insights we are capable of. However, if we allow ourselves to become unreflective persons — or rather, to the extent that we do — we are likely to do injury to ourselves and others, and to miss many opportunities to make our own lives, and the lives of others, fuller, happier, and more productive.

On this view, as you can see, critical thinking is an eminently practical goal and value. It is focused on an ancient Greek ideal of "living an examined life". It is based on the skills, the insights, and the values essential to that end. It is a way of going about living and learning that empowers us and our students in quite practical ways. When taken seriously, it can transform every dimension of school life: how we formulate and promulgate rules; how we relate to our students; how we encourage them to relate to each other; how we cultivate their reading, writing, speaking, and listening; what we model for them in and outside the classroom, and how we do each of these things.

Of course, we are likely to make critical thinking a basic value in school only insofar as we make it a basic value in our own lives. Therefore, to become adept at teaching so as to foster critical thinking, we must become committed to thinking critically and reflectively about our own lives and the lives of those around us. We must become active, daily, practitioners of critical thought. We must regularly model for our students what it is to reflectively examine, critically assess, and effectively improve the way we live.

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking — about any subject, content, or problem — in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It presupposes assent to rigorous standards of excellence and mindful command of their use. It entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities, as well as a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.

## Becoming a Critic Of Your Thinking

by Dr. Linda Elder and Dr. Richard Paul

### Learning the Art of Critical Thinking

There is nothing more practical than sound thinking. No matter what your circumstance or goals, no matter where you are, or what problems you face, you are better off if your thinking is skilled. As a manager, leader, employee, citizen, lover, friend, parent — in every realm and situation of your life — good thinking pays off. Poor thinking, in turn, inevitably causes problems, wastes time and energy, engenders frustration and pain.

Critical thinking is the disciplined art of ensuring that you use the best thinking you are capable of in any set of circumstances. The general goal of thinking is to “figure out the lay of the land” in any situation we are in. We all have multiple choices to make. We need the best information to make the best choices.

What is really going on in this or that situation? Are they trying to take advantage of me? Does so-and-so really care about me? Am I deceiving myself when I believe that . . .? What are the likely consequences of failing to . . .? If I want to do . . . , what is the best way to prepare for it? How can I be more successful in doing . . .? Is this my biggest problem, or do I need to focus my attention on something else?

Successfully responding to such questions is the daily work of thinking. However, to maximize the quality of your thinking, you must learn how to become an effective “critic” of your thinking. And to become an effective critic of your thinking, you have to make learning about thinking a priority.

Ask yourself these — rather unusual — questions: What have you learned about how you think? Did you ever study your thinking? What do you know about how the mind processes information? What do you really know about how to analyze, evaluate, or reconstruct your thinking? Where does your thinking come from? How much of it is of “good” quality? How much of it is of “poor” quality? How much of your thinking is vague, muddled, inconsistent, inaccurate, illogical, or superficial? Are you, in any real sense, in control of your thinking? Do you know how to test it? Do you have any conscious standards for determining when you are thinking well and when you are thinking poorly? Have you ever discovered a significant problem in your thinking and then changed it by a conscious act of will? If anyone asked you to teach them what you have learned, thus far in your life, about thinking, would you really have any idea what that was or how you learned it?

If you are like most, the only honest answers to these questions run along the lines of, “Well, I suppose I really don’t know much about my thinking or about thinking in general. I suppose in my life I have more or less taken my thinking for granted. I don’t really know how it works. I have never really studied it. I don’t know how I test it, or even if I do test it. It just happens in my mind automatically.”

It is important to realize that serious study of thinking, serious thinking about thinking, is rare. It is not a subject in most colleges. It is seldom found in the thinking of our culture. But if you focus your attention for a moment on the role that thinking is playing in your life, you may come to recognize that, in fact, everything you do, or want, or feel is influenced by your thinking. And if you become persuaded of that, you will be surprised that humans show so little interest in thinking.

To make significant gains in the quality of your thinking you will have to engage in a kind of work that most humans find unpleasant, if not painful — intellectual work. Yet once this thinking is done



and we move our thinking to a higher level of quality, it is not hard to keep it at that level. Still, there is the price you have to pay to step up to the next level. One doesn't become a skillful critic of thinking over night, any more than one becomes a skillful basketball player or musician over night. To become better at thinking, you must be willing to put the work into thinking that skilled improvement always requires.

This means you must be willing to practice special "acts" of thinking that are initially at least uncomfortable, and sometimes challenging and difficult. You have to learn to do with your mind "moves" analogous to what accomplished athletes learn to do (through practice and feedback) with their bodies. Improvement in thinking, in other words, is similar to improvement in other domains of performance where progress is a product of sound theory, commitment, hard work, and practice.

Consider the following key ideas, which, when applied, result in a mind practicing skilled thinking. These ideas represent just a few of the many ways in which disciplined thinkers actively apply theory of mind to the mind by the mind in order to think better. In these examples, we focus on the significance of thinking clearly, sticking to the point (thinking with relevance), questioning deeply, and striving to be more reasonable. For each example, we provide a brief overview of the idea and its importance in thinking, along with strategies for applying it in life. Realize that the following ideas are immersed in a cluster of ideas within critical thinking. Though we chose these particular ideas, many others could have instead been chosen. There is no magic in these specific ideas. In short, it is important that you understand these as a sampling of all the possible ways in which the mind can work to discipline itself, to think at a higher level of quality, to function better in the world.

## **1. Clarify Your Thinking**

Be on the look-out for vague, fuzzy, formless, blurred thinking. Try to figure out the real meaning of what people are saying. Look on the surface. Look beneath the surface. Try to figure out the real meaning of important news stories. Explain your understanding of an issue to someone else to help clarify it in your own mind. Practice summarizing in your own words what others say. Then ask them if you understood them correctly. You should neither agree nor disagree with what anyone says until you (clearly) understand them.

Our own thinking usually seems clear to us, even when it is not. But vague, ambiguous, muddled, deceptive, or misleading thinking are significant problems in human life. If we are to develop as thinkers, we must learn the art of clarifying thinking, of pinning it down, spelling it out, and giving it a specific meaning. Here's what you can do to begin. When people explain things to you, summarize in your own words what you think they said. When you cannot do this to their satisfaction, you don't really understand what they said. When they cannot summarize what you have said to your satisfaction, they don't really understand what you said. Try it. See what happens.

### *Strategies for Clarifying Your Thinking*

- State one point at a time
- Elaborate on what you mean
- Give examples that connect your thoughts to life experiences

- Use analogies and metaphors to help people connect your ideas to a variety of things they already understand (for example, critical thinking is like an onion. There are many layers to it. Just when you think you have it basically figured out, you realize there is another layer, and then another, and another and another and on and on)

*Here is One Format You Can Use*

- I think . . . (state your main point)
- In other words . . . (elaborate your main point)
- For example . . . (give an example of your main point)
- To give you an analogy . . . (give an illustration of your main point)

*To Clarify Other People's Thinking,  
Consider Asking the Following*

- Can you restate your point in other words? I didn't understand you.
- Can you give an example?
- Let me tell you what I understand you to be saying. Did I understand you correctly?

## **2. Stick to the Point**

Be on the look out for fragmented thinking, thinking that leaps about with no logical connections. Start noticing when you or others fail to stay focused on what is relevant. Focus on finding what will aid you in truly solving a problem. When someone brings up a point (however true) that doesn't seem pertinent to the issue at hand, ask, "How is what you are saying relevant to the issue?" When you are working through a problem, make sure you stay focused on what sheds light on and, thus, helps address the problem. Don't allow your mind to wander to unrelated matters. Don't allow others to stray from the main issue. Frequently ask: "What is the central question? Is this or that relevant to it? How?"

When thinking is relevant, it is focused on the main task at hand. It selects what is germane, pertinent, and related. It is on the alert for everything that connects to the issue. It sets aside what is immaterial, inappropriate, extraneous, and beside the point. What is relevant directly bears upon (helps solve) the problem you are trying to solve. When thinking drifts away from what is relevant, it needs to be brought back to what truly makes a difference. Undisciplined thinking is often guided by associations (this reminds me of that, that reminds me of this other thing) rather than what is logically connected ("If a and b are true, then c must also be true"). Disciplined thinking intervenes when thoughts wander from what is pertinent and germane concentrating the mind on only those things that help it figure out what it needs to figure out.

### *Ask These Questions to Make Sure Thinking is Focused on What is Relevant*

- Am I focused on the main problem or task?
- How is this connected? How is that?
- Does my information directly relate to the problem or task?
- Where do I need to focus my attention?
- Are we being diverted to unrelated matters?
- Am I failing to consider relevant viewpoints?
- How is your point relevant to the issue we are addressing?
- What facts are actually going to help us answer the question? What considerations should be set aside?
- Does this truly bear on the question? How does it connect?

### **3. Question Questions**

Be on the look out for questions. The ones we ask. The ones we fail to ask. Look on the surface. Look beneath the surface. Listen to how people question, when they question, when they fail to question. Look closely at the questions asked. What questions do you ask, should you ask? Examine the extent to which you are a questioner, or simply one who accepts the definitions of situations given by others.

Most people are not skilled questioners. Most accept the world as it is presented to them. And when they do question, their questions are often superficial or “loaded.” Their questions do not help them solve their problems or make better decisions. Good thinkers routinely ask questions in order to understand and effectively deal with the world around them. They question the status quo. They know that things are often different from the way they are presented. Their questions penetrate images, masks, fronts, and propaganda. Their questions make real problems explicit and discipline their thinking through those problems. If you become a student of questions, you can learn to ask powerful questions that lead to a deeper and more fulfilling life. Your questions become more basic, essential, and deep.

### *Strategies for Formulating More Powerful Questions*

- Whenever you don’t understand something, ask a question of clarification.

- Whenever you are dealing with a complex problem, formulate the question you are trying to answer in several different ways (being as precise as you can) until you hit upon the way that best addresses the problem at hand.
- Whenever you plan to discuss an important issue or problem, write out in advance the most significant questions you think need to be addressed in the discussion. Be ready to change the main question, but once made clear, help those in the discussion stick to the question, making sure the dialogue builds toward an answer that makes sense.

#### *Questions You Can Ask to Discipline Your Thinking*

- What precise question are we trying to answer?
- Is that the best question to ask in this situation?
- Is there a more important question we should be addressing?
- Does this question capture the real issue we are facing?
- Is there a question we should answer before we attempt to answer this question?
- What information do we need to answer the question?
- What conclusions seem justified in light of the facts?
- What is our point of view? Do we need to consider another?
- Is there another way to look at the question?
- What are some related questions we need to consider?
- What type of question is this: an economic question, a political question, a legal question, etc.?

#### **4. Be Reasonable**

Be on the lookout for reasonable and unreasonable behaviors — yours and others. Look on the surface. Look beneath the surface. Listen to what people say. Look closely at what they do. Notice

when you are unwilling to listen to the views of others, when you simply see yourself as right and others as wrong. Ask yourself at those moments whether their views might have any merit. See if you can break through your defensiveness to hear what they are saying. Notice unreasonableness in others. Identify times when people use language that makes them appear reasonable, though their behavior proves them to be otherwise. Try to figure out why you, or others, are being unreasonable. Might you have a vested interest in not being open-minded? Might they?

One of the hallmarks of a critical thinker is the disposition to change one's mind when given good reason to change. Good thinkers want to change their thinking when they discover better thinking. They can be moved by reason. Yet, comparatively few people are reasonable. Few are willing to change their minds once set. Few are willing to suspend their beliefs to fully hear the views of those with which they disagree. How would you rate yourself?

### *Strategies for Becoming More Reasonable*

Say aloud, "I'm not perfect. I make mistakes. I'm often wrong." See if you have the courage to admit this during a disagreement: "Of course, I may be wrong. You may be right."

Practice saying in your own mind, "I may be wrong. I often am. I'm willing to change my mind when given good reasons." Then look for opportunities to make changes in your thinking.

Ask yourself, "When was the last time I changed my mind because someone gave me better reasons for his (her) views than I had for mine?" (To what extent are you open to new ways of looking at things? To what extent can you objectively judge information that refutes what you already think?)

### *Realize That You are Being Close-Minded If You*

- a.** are unwilling to listen to someone's reasons
- b.** are irritated by the reasons people give you
- c.** become defensive during a discussion

*After you catch yourself being close-minded, analyze what was going on in your mind by completing these statements:*

- a.** I realize I was being close-minded in this situation because . . .
- b.** The thinking I was trying to hold onto is . . .
- c.** Thinking that is potentially better is . . .
- d.** This thinking is better because . . .

In closing, let me remind you that the ideas in this article are a very few of the many ways in which critical thinkers bring intellectual discipline to bear upon their thinking. The best thinkers are those who understand the development of thinking as a process occurring throughout many years of

practice in thinking. They recognize the importance of learning about the mind, about thoughts, feelings and desires and how these functions of the mind interrelate. They are adept at taking thinking apart, and then assessing the parts when analyzed. In short, they study the mind, and they apply what they learn about the mind to their own thinking in their own lives.

The extent to which any of us develops as a thinker is directly determined by the amount of time we dedicate to our development, the quality of the intellectual practice we engage in, and the depth, or lack thereof, of our commitment to becoming more reasonable, rational, successful persons.

Elder, L. and Paul, R. (2004). Adapted from *The Thinker's Guide to the Art of Strategic Thinking: 25 Weeks to Better Thinking and Better Living.*

### Thinking Gets Us Into Trouble Because We Often:

- jump to conclusions
- fail to think-through implications
- lose track of their goal
- are unrealistic
- focus on the trivial
- fail to notice contradictions
- accept inaccurate information
- ask vague questions
- give vague answers
- ask loaded questions
- ask irrelevant questions
- confuse questions of different types
- answer questions we are not competent to answer
- come to conclusions based on inaccurate or irrelevant information
- ignore information that does not support our view
- make inferences not justified by our experience
- distort data and state it inaccurately
- fail to notice the inferences we make
- come to unreasonable conclusions
- fail to notice our assumptions
- often make unjustified assumptions
- miss key ideas
- use irrelevant ideas
- form confused ideas
- form superficial concepts
- misuse words
- ignore relevant viewpoints
- cannot see issues from points of view other than our own
- confuse issues of different types
- are unaware of our prejudices
- think narrowly
- think imprecisely
- think illogically
- think one-sidedly
- think simplistically
- think hypocritically
- think superficially
- think ethnocentrically
- think egocentrically
- think irrationally
- do poor problem solving
- make poor decisions
- are poor communicators
- have little insight into our own ignorance

### A How-To List for Dysfunctional Living

Most people have no notion of what it means to take charge of their lives. They don't realize that the quality of their lives depends on the quality of their thinking. We all engage in numerous dysfunctional practices to avoid facing problems in our thinking. Consider the following and ask yourself how many of these dysfunctional ways of thinking you engage in:

1. Surround yourself with people who think like you. Then no one will criticize you.

2. Don't question your relationships. You then can avoid dealing with problems within them.
3. If critiqued by a friend or lover, look sad and dejected and say, "I thought you were my friend!" or "I thought you loved me!"
4. When you do something unreasonable, always be ready with an excuse. Then you won't have to take responsibility. If you can't think of an excuse, look sorry and say, "I can't help how I am!"
5. Focus on the negative side of life. Then you can make yourself miserable and blame it on others.
6. Blame others for your mistakes. Then you won't have to feel responsible for your mistakes. Nor will you have to do anything about them.
7. Verbally attack those who criticize you. Then you don't have to bother listening to what they say.
8. Go along with the groups you are in. Then you won't have to figure out anything for yourself.
9. Act out when you don't get what you want. If questioned, look indignant and say, "I'm just an emotional person. At least I don't keep my feelings bottled up!"
10. Focus on getting what you want. If questioned, say, "If I don't look out for number one, who will?"

As you see, the list is almost laughable. And so it would be if these irrational ways of thinking didn't lead to problems in life. But they do. And often. Only when we are faced with the absurdity of dysfunctional thinking, and can see it at work in our lives, do we have a chance to alter it. The strategies outlined in this guide presuppose your willingness to do so.

## The Analysis & Assessment of Thinking (Helping Students Assess Their Thinking)

by Richard Paul and Linda Elder

There are two essential dimensions of thinking that students need to master in order to develop as fairminded critical thinkers. They need to be able to identify the "parts" of thinking, and they need to be able to assess use of these parts of thinking , as follows:

- All reasoning has a purpose
- All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, to settle some question, to solve some problem
- All reasoning is based on assumptions
- All reasoning is done from some point of view
- All reasoning is based on data, information, and evidence
- All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas
- All reasoning contains inferences by which we draw conclusions and give meaning to data
- All reasoning leads somewhere, has implications and consequences

The question can then be raised, "What appropriate intellectual standards do students need to assess the 'parts' of their thinking?" There are many standards appropriate to the assessment of thinking as it might occur in this or that context, but some standards are virtually universal (that is, applicable to all thinking): clarity, precision, accuracy, relevance, depth, breadth, and logic.

How well a student is reasoning depends on how well he/she applies these universal standards to the elements (or parts) of thinking.

What follows are some guidelines helpful to students as they work toward developing their reasoning abilities:

1. All reasoning has a **PURPOSE**:
  - Take time to state your purpose clearly
  - Distinguish your purpose from related purposes
  - Check periodically to be sure you are still on target
  - Choose significant and realistic purposes
2. All reasoning is an attempt to **FIGURE SOMETHING OUT, TO SETTLE SOME QUESTION, TO SOLVE SOME PROBLEM**:
  - Take time to clearly and precisely state the question at issue
  - Express the question in several ways to clarify its meaning and scope
  - Break the question into sub questions
  - Identify if the question has one right answer, is a matter of opinion, or requires reasoning from more than one point of view
3. All reasoning is based on **ASSUMPTIONS**:
  - Clearly identify your assumptions and determine whether they are justifiable
  - Consider how your assumptions are shaping your point of view
4. All reasoning is done from some **POINT OF VIEW**:
  - Identify your point of view



- Seek other points of view and identify their strengths as well as weaknesses
  - Strive to be fair-minded in evaluating all points of view
5. All reasoning is based on **DATA, INFORMATION and EVIDENCE**:
- Restrict your claims to those supported by the data you have
  - Search for information that opposes your position as well as information that supports it
  - Make sure that all information used is clear, accurate, and relevant to the question at issue
  - Make sure you have gathered sufficient information
6. All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, **CONCEPTS and IDEAS**:
- Identify key concepts and explain them clearly
  - Consider alternative concepts or alternative definitions to concepts
  - Make sure you are using concepts with care and precision
7. All reasoning contains **INFERENCES** or **INTERPRETATIONS** by which we draw **CONCLUSIONS** and give meaning to data:
- Infer only what the evidence implies
  - Check inferences for their consistency with each other
  - Identify assumptions which lead you to your inferences
8. All reasoning leads somewhere or has **IMPLICATIONS** and **CONSEQUENCES**:
- Trace the implications and consequences that follow from your reasoning
  - Search for negative as well as positive implications
  - Consider all possible consequences

## Universal Intellectual Standards

by Linda Elder and Richard Paul

Universal intellectual standards are standards which must be applied to thinking whenever one is interested in checking the quality of reasoning about a problem, issue, or situation. To think critically entails having command of these standards. To help students learn them, teachers should pose questions which probe student thinking; questions which hold students accountable for their thinking; questions which, through consistent use by the teacher in the classroom, become internalized by students as questions they need to ask themselves.

The ultimate goal, then, is for these questions to become infused in the thinking of students, forming part of their inner voice, which then guides them to better and better reasoning. While there are many universal standards, the following are some of the most essential:

**CLARITY:** *Could you elaborate further on that point? Could you express that point in another way? Could you give me an illustration? Could you give me an example?* Clarity is the gateway standard. If a statement is unclear, we cannot determine whether it is accurate or relevant. In fact, we cannot tell anything about it because we don't yet know what it is saying. For example, the question, "What can be done about the education system in America?" is unclear. In order to address the question adequately, we would need to have a clearer understanding of what the person asking the question is considering the "problem" to be. A clearer question might be "What can educators do to ensure that students learn the skills and abilities which help them function successfully on the job and in their daily decision-making?"

**ACCURACY:** *Is that really true? How could we check that? How could we find out if that is true?* A statement can be clear but not accurate, as in "Most dogs are over 300 pounds in weight."

**PRECISION:** *Could you give more details? Could you be more specific?* A statement can be both clear and accurate, but not precise, as in "Jack is overweight." (We don't know how overweight Jack is, one pound or 500 pounds.)

**RELEVANCE:** *How is that connected to the question? How does that bear on the issue?* A statement can be clear, accurate, and precise, but not relevant to the question at issue. For example, students often think that the amount of effort they put into a course should be used in raising their grade in a course. Often, however, the "effort" does not measure the quality of student learning; and when this is so, effort is irrelevant to their appropriate grade.

**DEPTH:** *How does your answer address the complexities in the question? How are you taking into account the problems in the question? Is that dealing with the most significant factors?* A statement can be clear, accurate, precise, and relevant, but superficial (that is, lack depth). For example, the statement, "Just say No!" which is often used to discourage children and teens from using drugs, is clear, accurate, precise, and relevant. Nevertheless, it lacks depth because it treats an extremely complex issue, the pervasive problem of drug use among young people, superficially. It fails to deal with the complexities of the issue.

**BREADTH:** *Do we need to consider another point of view? Is there another way to look at this question? What would this look like from a conservative standpoint? What would this look like from the point of view of . . . ?* A line of reasoning may be clear accurate, precise, relevant, and deep, but lack breadth (as in an argument from either the conservative or liberal standpoint which gets deeply

into an issue, but only recognizes the insights of one side of the question.)

**LOGIC:** *Does this really make sense? Does that follow from what you said? How does that follow? But before you implied this, and now you are saying that; how can both be true?* When we think, we bring a variety of thoughts together into some order. When the combination of thoughts are mutually supporting and make sense in combination, the thinking is "logical." When the combination is not mutually supporting, is contradictory in some sense or does not "make sense," the combination is not logical.

**FAIRNESS:** *Do I have a vested interest in this issue? Am I sympathetically representing the viewpoints of others?* Human think is often biased in the direction of the thinker - in what is the perceived interests of the thinker. Humans do not naturally consider the rights and needs of others on the same plane with their own rights and needs. We therefore must actively work to make sure we are applying the intellectual standard of fairness to our thinking. Since we naturally see ourselves as fair even when we are unfair, this can be very difficult. A commitment to fairmindedness is a starting place.

### Valuable Intellectual Traits

**Intellectual Humility:** Having a consciousness of the limits of one's knowledge, including a sensitivity to circumstances in which one's native egocentrism is likely to function self-deceptively; sensitivity to bias, prejudice and limitations of one's viewpoint. Intellectual humility depends on recognizing that one should not claim more than one actually knows. It does not imply spinelessness or submissiveness. It implies the lack of intellectual pretentiousness, boastfulness, or conceit, combined with insight into the logical foundations, or lack of such foundations, of one's beliefs.

**Intellectual Courage:** Having a consciousness of the need to face and fairly address ideas, beliefs or viewpoints toward which we have strong negative emotions and to which we have not given a serious hearing. This courage is connected with the recognition that ideas considered dangerous or absurd are sometimes rationally justified (in whole or in part) and that conclusions and beliefs inculcated in us are sometimes false or misleading. To determine for ourselves which is which, we must not passively and uncritically "accept" what we have "learned." Intellectual courage comes into play here, because inevitably we will come to see some truth in some ideas considered dangerous and absurd, and distortion or falsity in some ideas strongly held in our social group. We need courage to be true to our own thinking in such circumstances. The penalties for non-conformity can be severe.

**Intellectual Empathy:** Having a consciousness of the need to imaginatively put oneself in the place of others in order to genuinely understand them, which requires the consciousness of our egocentric tendency to identify truth with our immediate perceptions of long-standing thought or belief. This trait correlates with the ability to reconstruct accurately the viewpoints and reasoning of others and to reason from premises, assumptions, and ideas other than our own. This trait also correlates with the willingness to remember occasions when we were wrong in the past despite an intense conviction that we were right, and with the ability to imagine our being similarly deceived in a case-at-hand.

**Intellectual Integrity:** Recognition of the need to be true to one's own thinking; to be consistent in the intellectual standards one applies; to hold one's self to the same rigorous standards of evidence and proof to which one holds one's antagonists; to practice what one advocates for others; and to honestly admit discrepancies and inconsistencies in one's own thought and action.

**Intellectual Perseverance:** Having a consciousness of the need to use intellectual insights and truths in spite of difficulties, obstacles, and frustrations; firm adherence to rational principles despite the irrational opposition of others; a sense of the need to struggle with confusion and unsettled questions over an extended period of time to achieve deeper understanding or insight.

**Faith In Reason:** Confidence that, in the long run, one's own higher interests and those of humankind at large will be best served by giving the freest play to reason, by encouraging people to come to their own conclusions by developing their own rational faculties; faith that, with proper encouragement and cultivation, people can learn to think for themselves, to form rational viewpoints, draw reasonable conclusions, think coherently and logically, persuade each other by reason and become reasonable persons, despite the deep-seated obstacles in the native character of the human mind and in society as we know it.

**Fairmindedness:** Having a consciousness of the need to treat all viewpoints alike, without reference to one's own feelings or vested interests, or the feelings or vested interests of one's friends, community or nation; implies adherence to intellectual standards without reference to one's own advantage or the advantage of one's group

## Appendix 5.

### OSDE IN BRIEF

The **OSDE** methodology supports the creation of **OPEN SAFE SPACES FOR DIALOGUE AND ENQUIRY** about **GLOBAL ISSUES** and **PERSPECTIVES** focusing on **INTERDEPENDENCE**.

In these spaces, people are invited to **ENGAGE CRITICALLY** with their **OWN** and with **DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**, think **INDEPENDENTLY** and make **INFORMED** and **RESPONSIBLE** decisions about how they want to think and what they want to do.

The **OSDE** methodology offers a **SET OF PROCEDURES** and **SUGGESTED GROUND RULES** that can be adapted to different age groups and contexts.

The key is to create spaces where people **GATHER TOGETHER** to **LISTEN** and **TRANSFORM THEMSELVES - LEARNING** and **UNLEARNING** together, re-inventing ways of **RELATING** to one another and **IMAGINING OTHER POSSIBLE FUTURES**. The following sections describe the methodology in more detail:

- [OSDE PROCEDURES](#)
- [OSDE GROUND RULES](#)
- [FACILITATION](#)
- [MATERIAL DESIGN](#)
- [CRITICAL LITERACY](#)
- [EDUCATIONAL AGENDA](#)
- [DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS](#)
- [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#)
- [DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION](#)

### OSDE PROCEDURES

#### General procedures for teacher/adult education (16+):

1. Engagement with stimulus (prompting cognitive dissonance) & Airing of views - in pairs
2. Informed thinking – where to find out more
3. Reflexive questions - individually (related to own perspectives)
4. Open Space questions – in small groups (focus on different logics and power + origins and implications of perspectives)
5. Responsible choices – in small groups (decision making processes related to the theme)
6. Debriefing (reflection on learning process and quality of space)

1. **Stimulus and airing:** exposure to a stimulus presenting different and ‘logical’ perspectives on the theme. The perspectives should present different angles of the issue and prompt ‘cognitive dissonance’ in the participants, who are encouraged to react to the stimulus by exploring the origins and implications of each perspective and relate them to their own perspectives. Note: the main objective of this step is NOT to check what participants ‘think about’ the theme. Suggested timing and mode: 10 minutes of pair work

2. **Informed thinking:** brainstorm on sources of information about the theme, mainstream and non-mainstream perspectives and access to and of public channels of communication. Suggested timing and mode: 5 minutes of group work with round up by facilitator

3. **Reflexive questions:** exposure to questions that refer to the individual. Note: these should not be discussed as a group activity until learners are familiar with the methodology or participants might feel they are too exposed or that they need to compete for legitimacy. Suggested timing and mode: 3 minutes of silent reflection

4. **Group Dialogue Questions:** exposure to questions that promote 'critical literacy' or formulation of questions (in an open enquiry). Suggested timing and mode: 30 minutes for discussion in small groups + 10 minutes in the whole group for a round of burning statements and questions

5. **Responsible Choices:** This is problem solving task which gives participants an opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge gained in the enquiry process to a real-life or simulated situation of decision making. Suggested timing and mode: 20 minutes – group work

6. **Debriefing:** Participants are invited to reflect on their participation and learning (what they have learned about the topic, themselves, about others, about the space itself, and about the learning process). This is also a 'closing the open space' ritual. Suggested timing and mode: 10 minutes – whole group (facilitator invites individuals to say a word, a sentence, nothing at all or anything they want about their learning process and the quality and safety of the space)

#### **General procedures for secondary schools:**

1. Looking at PERSPECTIVES: image, film, cartoon, song, story
2. Drawing or writing your FIRST THOUGHTS and sharing it
3. Making QUESTIONS in pairs
4. VOTING on a question
5. TALKING about it
6. SHARING what we have learned

#### **OSDE GROUND RULES**

Version A (generic):

- a) **that each individual brings valid knowledge to the open space** (everyone is a pot of knowledge!)
- b) **that this knowledge deserves respect** (everyone should have the right to express themselves without fear of being 'looked down' by others and should be committed to listening to others with respect)
- c) **that all knowledge is related to who you are and where you come from** (we construct the lenses we look through at the world in our contexts and interactions with others)
- d) **that all knowledge is partial and incomplete** (we all see the world through different lenses that continuously change and there are no universally better or clearer lenses)
- e) **that all knowledge can and should be questioned through dialogue** (we should engage critically with actions, thoughts and beliefs of both ourselves and others as we need different lenses – other perspectives - to challenge and transform our own views).

Version B (used in teacher education/HE):

**1. That every individual brings to the space valid and legitimate knowledge constructed in their own contexts**

We look at the world through lenses constructed in a complex web in our contexts, influenced by several external forces (cultures, media, religions, education, upbringing), internal forces (personality, reactions, conflicts) and encounters and relationships. The image these lenses project represent our knowledge of ourselves and of the world and therefore, whether they are close or far from what is considered 'normal', they have a history and their validity needs to be acknowledged within the space

**2. That all knowledge is partial and incomplete**

As our lenses are constructed in specific contexts, we lack the knowledge constructed in other different contexts and therefore we need to listen to different perspectives in order to see/imagine beyond the boundaries of our own lenses

**3. That all knowledge can be questioned**

Critical engagement in the project is defined as the attempt to understand where perspectives are coming from and where they are leading to (origins and implications). Therefore, questioning is not an attempt to break the lenses (to destroy or de-legitimise perspectives), but to sharpen and broaden the vision.

Version C (used in secondary schools):

- No one should feel left out
- There should be a good atmosphere
- No one should tell you what you should think
- No one - not even the teacher - has all the answers
- Everyone should attempt to do their best in relation to the three key challenges: staying focused, thinking hard and working as a team

Version D:

We accept that we **all** have knowledge to share and we **continue to learn** all our lives, **we all know** different things in different ways **according to our experience** and that we are ready to **interrogate our assumptions and the implications of our perspectives**.

**FACILITATION**

The idea is to create an atmosphere of trust and openness where the 'being' of an individual is separate from his/her doing, seeing and saying. As a participant (being), an individual needs to feel safe and free to explore their lenses within the space (even things they are and aren't allowed to say or think in a normal situation). Individuals will be accepted and respected regardless of what is expressed. Facilitators are responsible for creating a supportive atmosphere of equality and commitment to a learning process of exploration. Only in extreme circumstances they are advised to silence or exclude participants on the grounds of their perspectives.

The role of the facilitator is

- To open and close the space
- To create the right atmosphere by modelling behaviour
- To help focus when necessary

- To offer different interpretations
- To balance the mood of the space (celebration/cynicism)
- To act as devil's advocate when the tendency of the group is to agree or see only through one perspective (to challenge consensus)

The opening and closing of the space is a necessary 'ritual' – especially to mark the return to other modes of engagement in schools. The opening ritual establishes the level of relationship of the group, therefore, a strategy that creates a closer environment is necessary (e.g. facilitator eye contact with members, a warm welcome, etc). The closing ritual starts with the debriefing of the learning process (last stage). Props can also be used to mark the opening and closing of the space (an activity, an object placed in the middle of the room, cards distributed to participants, special song or statement at the start and end of the session).

There is still a debate on whether facilitators should express their own perspectives to the group and take a more active role in the discussion. As a general rule, it is advisable that they should refrain from doing so until they feel confident that participants are not going to take the facilitator's perspective as the prescribed truth they need to agree with. This might require familiarity with the methodology and the ethics of the space on the part of students.

The way facilitators create the space and relate to participants is determinant in the quality of the learning process, participation, and the level of ownership the group is allowed to have over the process. The ideal scenario is that, the role of the facilitator disappears as participants get used to the methodology and start to mediate the dialogue by themselves.

In the piloting process, the spaces proved to be a unique experience for unexamined discriminatory assumptions to be aired and deconstructed in dialogue – with a greater and more sustainable impact for long term change of perception. However, this process depends heavily on the type of space created: whether participants feel safe to express what they think (if they feel they will not be judged as 'bad' or 'good' individuals) and if they feel free to change their minds and think independently (if there is no peer or facilitator pressure to adhere to a certain perspective).

## **MATERIAL DESIGN**

Guidelines for each stage of the methodology are provided below:

**Stage 1. Stimulus and airing** : exposure to a stimulus presenting different and 'logical' perspectives on the theme. The perspectives should present different angles of the issue and prompt 'cognitive dissonance' in the participants, who are encouraged to react to the stimulus by exploring the origins and implications of each perspective and relate them to their own perspectives. Note: the main objective of this step is NOT to check what participants 'think about' the theme. Suggested timing and mode: 10 minutes of pair work

**Objective** : breaking the ice, causing cognitive dissonance, acknowledging complexity and contingency (context dependency)

**Presents** :

- More than two perspectives that 'make sense'
- Conflict/difference of understanding
- A 'devil's advocate' atmosphere



### Challenges:

- Moving away from romanticisation
- Moving away from 'the right/wrong' and 'neutral/biased' or 'black/white' perception
- Keeping it short, accessible and clear!

(lesson learned: if students perceive we have a 'direct action' agenda here the exercise is defeated)

### Possible sources:

Quotations (author acknowledged), (retold) perspectives (author not acknowledged), pictures, cartoons, case-studies, poems, song lyrics, film, interview, drama (role play/facilitator in role)

**Questions** : provocative questions related to the stimulus inviting participants to engage critically with the stimulus (trace origins/assumptions and implications of perspectives)

### E.G. (from 'notions of development' used in teacher education)

Who is 'us' and who is 'them' in the perspectives below? How is 'development' defined? What are the assumptions informing these perspectives? What are the implications of those assumptions?

"Developing countries are poor because they lack technology and education. Their systems of governance are not as mature as ours. We need to help by giving them technology, proper work habits and good education."

"When we say a country is 'underdeveloped' we are implying that it is backward and retarded in some way, that its people have shown little capacity to achieve and evolve. The use of the word 'developing' is less insulting, but still misleading. It still implies that poverty was an original historic condition based on the 'lack' of attributes of its people (in relation to characteristics 'we' have) – a mindset that was dominant in colonial times."

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**Stage 2. Informed thinking** : brainstorm on sources of information about the theme, mainstream and non-mainstream perspectives and access to and of public channels of communication. Suggested timing and mode: 5 minutes of group work with round up by facilitator.

**Objective** : to reflect on access of information and the process of public knowledge construction (media literacy).

### Possible strategies:

1. The following questions as part of a handout or transparency :

What informed your current perspective on this topic? What shapes the mainstream perspectives available to the public? Where can you find out about different perspectives? How do you make your decisions about what you think about it?

2, A short text with a summary of mainstream and alternative perspectives to be discussed

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**Stage 3. Reflexive questions** : exposure to questions that refer to the **individual**. Note: these should not be discussed as a group activity until learners are familiar with the methodology or participants might feel they are too exposed or that they need to compete for legitimacy. Suggested timing and mode: 3 minutes of silent reflection

**Objective** : to relate the topic to participants' lives and to give them an opportunity to acknowledge (reflect on) their own assumptions and how those might have been constructed.

**Challenges** :

The idea is that the perspectives that individuals bring to the space will be challenged and transformed in dialogue. Therefore, if these are expressed at this stage, it might put participants at risk of exposure or contradiction. When groups get used to the methodology and to relating to each other in a different way this stops being an issue.

**Types of Questions:**

1. Do you think your country is 'developed'? What are your parameters for evaluating development? Where do those parameters come from?
2. What are the parameters for development (or achievement and merit) within your community (please define community in any way you want)?
3. How does your community see itself in relation to other communities? How do you think other communities see your community and why?
4. How do you think you contribute (or not) for the development of your country or community? Who has established the criteria of this contribution? Are there any groups that would have more difficulties of meeting these criteria?

From: Notions of Development

1. How do you define your priorities for consumption?
2. What most influences your needs and wants?
3. What do you think your clothes, hair style, shoes, accessories and make-up say about you? How are those interpreted by other people?
4. Who defines the parameters of what a successful or unsuccessful person should look like in the communities you belong to?

From: Consumerism and anti-consumerism

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**Stage 4. Group Dialogue Questions** : exposure to questions that promote 'critical literacy' or formulation of questions (in an open enquiry). Suggested timing and mode: 30 minutes for discussion in small groups + 10 minutes in the whole group for a round of burning statements and questions

**Objective** : to develop critical literacy and self-reflexivity through dialogue and exposure to different perspectives (please refer to section 3 – Critical Literacy) and to prompt participants to re-construct their understanding of the topic

## Challenges :

1. to formulate questions that are meaningful and accessible to participants (that present illustrations and contradictions in a way that relates to their own perspectives)
2. to avoid questions that do not promote critical engagement (e.g. What do you think of homelessness?) or that only prompt emotional responses (e.g. How did you feel when you heard about the terrorist bombings in London ?)
3. to avoid leading questions that point to only one right answer without addressing the complexity of the issue (e.g. is violence the best solution to problems?)
4. to avoid to demand participants to make choices (e.g. what are you prepared to change in your life now?)

## Types of questions

1. prompting definitions (how do you define development?)
2. addressing the construction of meaning (how was your understanding constructed?)
3. prompting participants to think about mainstream and alternative perspectives
4. addressing complexity (different perspectives and implications)
5. addressing origins and implications (critical literacy)
6. addressing contradictions
7. addressing power relations

The following dimensions can support the formulation of questions:

### Perspectives

Where has the information come from to form your perspective on this issue? What are other perspectives on these issues, mainstream and 'silenced' or alternative? How can you find out more? What validates a perspective? Who decides?

### Agents

Who are the main actors affecting this issue and what are their interests, for example, social groups, companies, countries, governments, political parties, institutions, faith communities, NGOs, etc?

### Assumptions and beliefs

How would you describe the assumptions or core principles behind mainstream views? What assumptions or beliefs are behind your own views? Do these differ?

### Trends

What was the situation 5, 10, 50 or 100 years ago and what are the predictions for the future (5, 10, 50 or 100 years ahead)? This period of time represents the life span of humanity today ie there are people alive today over 100 years old and people born today may live for 100 years.

### Drivers, interactions and implications

What are the main forces creating or preventing change, such as demography, environmental, natural resources, market forces, regulations, elections, lobby groups, media, beliefs, military etc.

What are the connections between these? How does the local relate to the global and the global relate to the local?

Contradictions and complexity

Are the perspectives you have identified contradictory? Is there something true in various perspectives that is in conflict with each other? Can both be true – at the same time different? Are there any ‘easy answers’ or ‘quick fixes’ to these issues? What has already been tried and what were the potentials and limitations?

The following questions are illustrations of the ‘critical literacy’ type:

**Where is this (or are we) coming from?**

What are the assumptions of reality and knowledge behind what is being said?

Does this way of seeing establish that there is only one or more interpretations of reality? Who defines what the ‘best’ interpretation of reality is? (Does any particular point of view imply it is the only way to see things? Does the mainstream view give the impression there is no other way of seeing things?)

Does this reality establish a dualist (us versus them) or a non-dualist (us all) cosmology? What are the implications of that?

Who decides what can be known (or not known) in this way of seeing? Who can produce knowledge? Who decides what is real and ideal?

What are the contradictions of this perspective?

**Where is this (or are we) leading to? (what are the implications of this perspective?)**

Who decides, in whose name and for whose benefit...

In terms of ethics/culture: which groups/individuals are affected? Which become more valued in society? Which become less valued as a result?

In terms of access to resources: which groups/individuals are affected? Which gain access to resources? Which lose access as a result?

In terms of political participation: which groups/individuals are affected? Which voices are valued /whose influence is increased? Which are silenced/have their influence decreased?

In terms of economic advantages: which groups/individuals are affected? Which groups/individuals profit/increase or gain revenue/employment? Which lose revenue or employment as a result?

In terms of social mobility: which groups/individuals are affected? Which gain access to social mobility? Which lose access?

In terms of basic and non-basic ‘rights’: which groups/individuals are affected? Which have their rights enhanced? Which lose their rights?

In terms of violence (or military power): which groups are affected? Which become more vulnerable? Which become more powerful?

In terms of environmental sustainability: how is the environment affected? What are the gains and losses of this situation? In terms of human conditions of survival? In terms of the conditions for survival for other life forms?

What are the local implications of this perspective?

How is the local scenario articulated with the global?

What are the future implications of these scenarios if these assumptions are reproduced?

What are the implications for human relations?

What are the implications for the achievement of justice?

What are the implications for the achievement of peace?

**E.G. (from 'notions of development' used in teacher education)**

- What are the mainstream definitions of development/underdevelopment? What are the assumptions about the causes of development and underdevelopment according to those definitions? What are the implications of these assumptions?
- Should all countries be aiming for one (universal) ideal of development? Who should define this ideal? What would be the implications of going in this direction?
- What do people in societies that are considered to be part of the 'First world' have in common with those of the 'Third World'? Do you know the origins of these terms?
- What are the connections of the mainstream understandings of development to the processes of colonisation?
- What are the consequences of economic growth defined as accumulation of wealth? What are the consequences of undergrowth?
- How do people/companies/governments generate wealth? Is it only a result of hard work and sacrifice? Does it involve the enforced disempowerment of other competitors or workers? Is the accumulation game fair? Who defines the rules? What are the implications of this game?
- How does the development of one country/community affect the development or underdevelopment of other communities?
- How do the labels developed/underdeveloped affect social relations?

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**5. Responsible Choices :** This is problem solving task which gives participants an opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge gained in the enquiry process to a real-life or simulated situation of decision making. Suggested timing and mode: 20 minutes – group work

**Objective:** to apply the skills and knowledge gained in the enquiry to a real-life or simulated situation of decision making, complexity and uncertainty and to develop a notion of responsible agency (as accountable reasoning)

The rationale of this stage is to demonstrate how dialogue and a process of questioning can fundamentally change decisions and courses of action. The facilitator can ask participants whether their decisions would have been different if they had they not participated in the collective learning process.

**E.G. (from ‘notions of development’ used in teacher education)**

You are working with a group of young people who want to make a difference in the world. They believe that underprivileged people are poor because they lack education, so the group has identified a slum in Ethiopia and are fundraising for a trip to enable them to spend some time in the country educating the people in that community. You have a 2-hour workshop to help them reflect about their assumptions, aims and objectives. You do not want them to lose their motivation to act and think independently, but you want them to act in an informed, responsible and ethical way. What would your workshop outline look like?

**E.G. (from ‘notions of development’ used in secondary schools in the UK )**

You have received £2000 from the Youth Agency to develop a project with pupils from a school in Venezuela . The school has got far less resources than yours and the pupils you are working with are the same age as your group. You want this partnership to give a sense of worth to both sides and create genuine dialogue and long-lasting friendships. What are your options for good use of this funding? What are the advantages, risks and limitations of each of these options? What will you do with the funding?

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**6. Debriefing :** Participants are invited to reflect on their participation and learning (what they have learned about the topic, themselves, about others, about the space itself, and about the learning process). This is also a ‘closing the open space’ ritual. Suggested timing and mode: 10 minutes – whole group (facilitator invites individuals to say a word, a sentence, nothing at all or anything they want about their learning process and the quality and safety of the space)

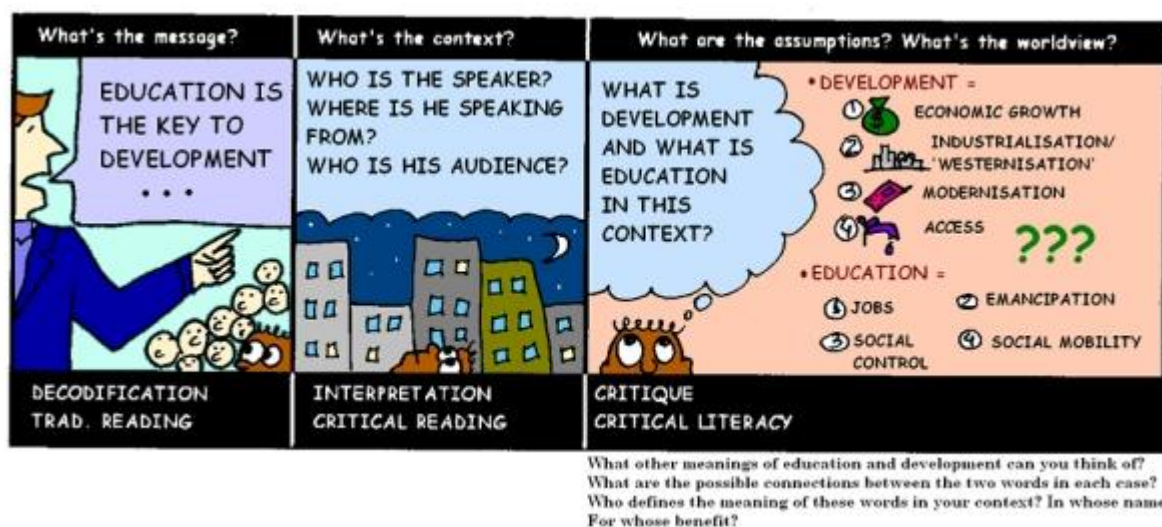
**Objective :** to give participants the opportunity to reflect on their own learning outcomes and the quality and safety of the space

The facilitator can ask each participant to say a word, a sentence or anything they feel like about their learning process. Having the questions below on the handout or a transparency may help:

Think about your learning process today. What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about others? What have you learned about knowledge and about learning? Do you feel you and other participants could express themselves in an open and safe space? What could be done to improve the learning process of the group and the relationships within the space?

**CRITICAL LITERACY**

Click [here](#) for a handout of this page.



The table below illustrates the central argument of a complex debate: the difference between two perspectives on language: one that says that language describes reality (positivism) and another that says that language creates reality (post-positivism). It simplifies and breaks down these perspectives to show the differences between traditional reading, critical reading and critical literacy. The OSDE project focuses on critical literacy as a complement to critical reading. Critical reading refers to the skills needed to evaluate a text or a perspective in terms of legitimacy and intentionality, whereas critical literacy refers to the skills needed to understand how our parameters of evaluation are culturally constructed and the implications of these constructions

Traditional Reading	Critical Reading	Critical Literacy
<p><i>Types of questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the text represent the truth?</li> <li>Is it fact or opinion?</li> <li>Is it biased or neutral?</li> <li>Is it well written/clear?</li> <li>Who is the author and what level of authority/legitimacy does he/she represent?</li> <li>What does the author say?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Types of questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the context?</li> <li>To whom is the text addressed?</li> <li>What is the intention of the author?</li> <li>What is the position of the author (his/her political agenda)?</li> <li>What is the author trying to say and how is he/she trying to convince/manipulate the reader?</li> <li>What claims are not substantiated?</li> <li>Why has the text been written in this way?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Types of questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What could be the assumptions behind the statements?</li> <li>How do you think the author understands reality? What could be shaping his/her understanding?</li> <li>Who decides (what is real, can be known or needs to be done) in whose name and for whose benefit?</li> <li>What could be the implications of his/her claims (past/present/future: social, environmental, economic, etc...)?</li> <li>How could these statements be</li> </ul>

		<p>interpreted differently in different contexts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the sanctioned ignorances (blind spots) and contradictions?</li> </ul>
<i>Focus</i> : content and authority and legitimacy of the speaker and the text.	<i>Focus</i> : context, intentions, style of communication	<i>Focus</i> : assumptions, knowledge production, power, representation and implications
<i>Aim</i> : to develop an understanding of the content To establish the truth-value of the text	<i>Aim</i> : to develop critical reflection (ability to perceive intentions and reasons)	<i>Aim</i> : to develop reflexivity (ability to perceive how assumptions are constructed)
<i>Language</i> : is fixed, transparent and gives us access to reality	<i>Language</i> : is fixed and translates reality	<i>Language</i> : is ideological and constructs reality
<i>Reality</i> : Exists and is easily accessed through sensory perceptions and objective thinking	<i>Reality</i> : Exists and is accessible, but it is often translated into false representations	<i>Reality</i> : Exists, but is inaccessible (in absolute terms) – we have only partial interpretations constructed in language
<i>Knowledge</i> : Universal, cumulative, linear, right versus wrong, fact versus opinion, neutral versus biased	<i>Knowledge</i> : False versus true interpretation of reality	<i>Knowledge</i> : Always partial, context dependent (contingent), complex and dynamic

Adapted and expanded from: Gina CERVETTI, Michael J. PARDALES, James S. DAMICO, A Tale of Differences: Comparing the Traditions, Perspectives, and Educational Goals of Critical Reading and Critical Literacy, [www.readingonline.com](http://www.readingonline.com), 2001

The key is to address:

“Who constructs the texts [or perspectives/discourses/ideologies] whose representations are dominant in a particular culture at a particular time; how readers come to be complicit with the persuasive ideologies of texts; whose interests are served by such representations and such readings; and when such texts and readings are inequitable in their effects, how these could be constructed otherwise.” Morgan, W. (1997). *Critical literacy in the classroom: The art of the possible*. New York : Routledge.

When approaching a text/discourse/ideology, the questions below become the focus of critical engagement:

- How are the meanings assigned to a certain figure or events in a perspective?
- How does it attempt to get readers to accept its constructs?
- Whose interests are served by the dissemination of this perspective? Whose interests are not served?
- What view of the world is put forth by the ideas in this perspective? What views are not?
- What are other possible constructions of the world?



Thus, critical engagement in the project is understood as the ability to trace the origins and implications of perspectives and assumptions. One of the implications for educational practice is that it changes our role as 'teachers', as Scholes (1985) points out:

"Our job is not to produce 'readings' for our students, but to give them the tools for producing their own (...) Our job is not to intimidate our students with our own superior textual production; it is to show them the codes upon which all textual production depends and to encourage their own textual practice". Scholes, R., (1985) *Textual power : literary theory and the teaching of English*, New Haven, Conn. ; London : Yale university press

In this context 'reading refers to 'reading the world' and 'textual practice' refers to 'producing knowledge/meaning'. Freire (1985) also points in the same direction:

"When we try to be neutral we support the dominant ideology. Not being neutral, education must be either liberating or domesticating. Thus, we have to recognise ourselves as politicians. It does not mean that we have the right to impose on students our political choice (...) our task is not to impose our dreams on them, but to challenge them to have their own dreams, to define their choices, not just to uncritically assume them". Freire, P. (1985) *Reading the world and reading the word: an interview with Paulo Freire*. *Language Arts* 62 (1).

## **EDUCATIONAL AGENDA**

Key Assumptions:

### **More accountable reasoning (is and prompts) more responsible action**

Understanding where we are coming from (the social-cultural conditioning of our ways of seeing) and the potential implications of what we are doing is necessary if we want to try to avoid reproducing the mechanisms that might have created the problems we are trying to 'solve' in the first place (in which case our intervention might worsen the situation). This is best illustrated in examples where people in the 'North' (First World) try to help or export solutions to the 'South' without understanding the context or the local and global implications of their interventions.

### **Learning to unlearn\* (is and prompts) a decolonisation of the imagination**

Understanding the construction of our lenses allows us to re-construct them, making it possible to 'think outside the box' and imagine different ways of being, seeing, relating to others and imagining a collective future (\* critical literacy).

### **Learning to 'read' the world through different cultural logics (is and prompts) empathy and solidarity**

We aim to create a space where people feel safe to relate and be open to difference: going beyond the anxiety created when we try to change the other to make him/her the same as ourselves. Within this space there is no battle of wills or competition for legitimacy – everyone is acknowledged as a 'whole' person regardless of what they think or say.

### **Learning to cope with complexity and uncertainty is the first step to learning to live, to be and to do together**

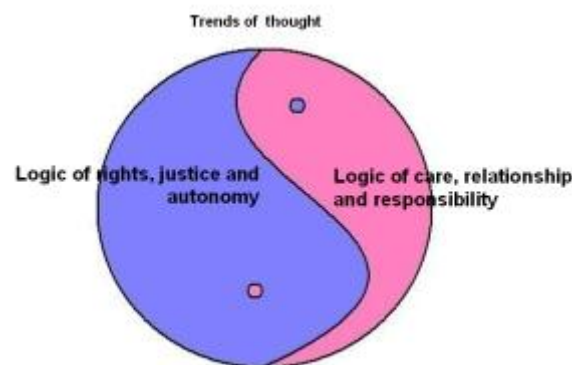
We are conditioned to believe that conflict is negative and destructive and that it needs to be controlled and avoided. However, it is difference that creates conflict and without conflict there is only sameness. Without conflict there is no newness, no growth, no change. Being opened to the new is looking at conflict from a radically different perspective: as something natural, constructive and necessary for transformation. The Kashinawa – an indigenous nation in Brazil – illustrate this

with the metaphor of the Anaconda: she constantly changes her skin to remain the same. In the same way, we need the 'new' (difference) to transform our skins and lenses in order to continue to evolve and to face the challenges of survival.

### **Going beyond individualism and ethnocentrism towards global (planetary) integrated 'citizenship' (as stewardess/hospitality)**

Gilligan's model of integrated planetary citizenship is used (critically) in this initiative to illustrate the agenda of the methodology. Gilligan suggests that, apart from our cultural bias, two kinds of logics (or reasoning) are always within us in our struggle for a better life and that, depending on the context that we are interacting with, one is usually predominant:

- a logic of control, judgement and ranking (of the world, of others, of ourselves) that can be related to discourses of rights, justice and autonomy
- a logic of relational thinking that is non-hierarchical (and resists 'control') that can be associated with discourses of love, care and responsibility



She also suggests that there are stages of development within these logics: egoistic, ethnocentric, worldcentric and integrated. Each of these stages 'open up' to more perspectives and groups and culminate in an 'integrated' stage (which is associated to planetary citizenship), where the two logics are balanced and the perspectives of all life forms (even if they cannot be expressed through language) are taken into account in order to guaranty everyone's right of survival and the survival of the planet itself (as some indigenous non-humanist cultures already do). See the diagram:



This model can be interpreted as putting together complementary and contradictory forces in a dynamic flux: one trying to order and control the world (a centripetal force) and the other trying to contest this ordering (a centrifugal force). Equilibrium is the ideal scenario – but it is never stable (the flux and play/conflict of the forces is what prompts evolution).

A radical form of democracy - the inclusion of every form of life in the agenda of decisions about our collective future - seems to be the goal in Gilligan's model. This project regards this goal as one possible horizon, but we invite partners and participants to engage in the construction of other possibilities as well!

## KEY TERMS

An **OPEN SPACE** is a safe space where everyone is welcome and different perspectives can be explored. No one establishes the boundaries of what one should think or do in their lives. In an open space for dialogue and enquiry, participants are not committed to an identity, to an ideology or to achieving consensus, but to a process of self-transformation through the encounter with difference.

**DIALOGUE** is an encounter with those whose view of the world is significantly different from our own: an encounter of worlds. The primary purpose of this opening out is for each to gain a new insight into reality. Such a dialogical encounter enables each of us to view ourselves, others, and the world, as well as our understanding of it, from a new perspective, enriched through the eyes of others\*.

An **ENQUIRY** is a questioning process where we ask ourselves what our assumptions are, how they have been constructed and what are the implications of our ways of seeing and being. We also ask these questions in relation to the perspectives of others - as all perspectives (and knowledges) are partial and incomplete. This is done in order to open our hearts and minds to difference and to train our imagination in other (un)imaginable ways of relating, seeing and being.

**CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT** with perspectives is the opposite of critical disengagement (where perspectives are silenced) and uncritical engagement (where 'anything goes'). Engaging critically

with perspectives is a respectful attitude that promotes attentive and serious listening and tracing of assumptions and implications.

**CRITICAL LITERACY** is the capacity to trace assumptions and implications. It is knowledge about knowledge construction, the connection between knowledge and power and the implications of this connection to the ways people see and act in the world and relate to others.

**SELF-REFLEXIVITY** is the capacity to see one's own lenses - to look at the image in the mirror and perceive how one's assumptions and identity are socially constructed (in order to re-construct it).

**POST-COLONIAL THEORY** is a set of debates that come from struggles for independence in former colonies, experiences of immigration and the study of representations of peoples from the 'Third World' in documents and literature of the 'First World'. This set of debates has colonialism and its effects on assumptions, relationships and distribution of resources as a starting point of analysis of what is going on today.

**POST-STRUCTURALISM** is a theory of knowledge that states that one's understanding of reality is shaped by one's culture. Culture is understood as a verb - a dynamic process of production of meaning (interpretations of reality). The lenses one uses to understand the world are bound to their context and lived experience and therefore, are partial, incomplete and dynamic. Post-structuralism questions universal claims of objective or neutral knowledge (everyone is 'naturally' biased) and reminds us that ultimate reality is still a mystery (even for science). In this project it is used as a strategy to develop specific cognitive skills - NOT as a political agenda.

**DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION** is a term used in 'First World' countries (which is referred to as 'the North') to refer to education about the 'Third World' (which is referred to as 'the South') and 'North-South' relations and interdependence. In the UK, it is part of the National Curriculum (the Global Dimension) and the training of teachers is mainly done by small NGOs (Development Education Centres). The UK government has stated that development education should not be based on notions of charity or compassion, but on an understanding of global interdependence.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1 Does this approach lead to action?**

Potentially yes, but this operates at two levels. If action is defined as a change of assumptions/worldview that leads to a change in behaviour and relationships, the answer can be that this is the aim of the project: that people will change themselves through the interaction with others, that this change will happen at an epistemic level and that it will be transferred to other areas of their lives. If action is defined as 'direct collective action', then the answer is still 'potentially yes, but this is not the aim of the project. In order to enable people to think independently, our role in the project cannot be one of telling people what they should think or what they should do. This would be inconsistent with the theoretical principles of the project that establishes an ethical framework described by Foucault as seeking not to "suggest what people ought to be, what they ought to do, what they ought to think and believe", but to enable the construction of an awareness about how social mechanisms have, up to now, been able to work and how, therefore, these systems have conditioned the way we think, evaluate, act and relate to others. And then, starting from there, leave to the people themselves, knowing all the above, the possibility of self-determination and the choice of their own existence. However, through the tasks and simulations (of decision making processes) we encourage participants to plan collective interventions

responsibly and nothing prevents educators/facilitators from supporting the group in implementing their ideas if participants choose to do so.

2 Are you saying that questioning and seeing things from different perspectives should be the aim of citizenship education?

What we are advocating for is responsible/accountable action in which pupils know WHY they are intervening and the implications and potential limitations of their strategies. We believe that without the knowledge of where their possibility for intervention is coming from (their lenses/position of privilege), they will intervene in an uncritical way and this intervention may exacerbate the conditions they are trying to change in the first place (especially if this intervention is related to the 'Third World' or to local disenfranchised groups).

3 Does the methodology allow for racist, sexist or homophobic perspectives to pass unchallenged?

No. It is precisely the unpacking/challenging/dealing with these perspectives – and not simply silencing them - that is one of the central objectives of the project (the last of the five principles sets the mode for that). However, each educator/facilitator will need to determine the right moment to unpack those perspectives (or whether, in certain contexts, they will need to silence them to protect other participants).

4 Wouldn't it be more effective just to teach pupils virtues and values explicitly?

We are not saying that virtues and values should not be taught at different moments in the educational process, however, the view that morality can be explicitly taught and be unproblematically assimilated by students can be interpreted as a kind of banking concept of education that assumes that the authority of institutions/teachers can 'input' something directly into the minds of learners and that as long as they 'provide' the right answers in tests or interviews, they have changed their values and behaviour. Social and educational theory has challenged these assumptions by acknowledging that the students come to school already knowing a lot about the world (due to their exposure to language/cultural significations) and that 'real' learning will be the result of a complex interaction between what the student is exposed to at school (formal input, but also several aspects of the environment) and the understanding of the world he/she has already constructed. Therefore, this learning is not the work of the teacher, but of the student him/herself. There are several implications arising from this change of perception (which is central to most of the theories used in the project), but an important one is that, within a complex environment of peer pressure, information overload and different kinds of (local and global) injustices, empowering pupils to think independently and make informed and responsible decisions become more meaningful than a rhetoric of good virtues.

5 Isn't a framework of human rights more useful in assisting pupils in relation to what should or not be tolerated (as has been suggested in some of the citizenship literature)?

First, presenting human rights as a "universally agreed" unproblematic set of values is misleading and potentially alienating \*. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created as a governance mechanism of the United Nations to prevent genocide (it was not meant to be used as a statement of values either). According to the UN, it was conceived as a statement of objectives to be pursued by Governments, and therefore it is not part of binding international law. Nonetheless, it is still a potent instrument used to apply moral and diplomatic pressure on states that violate the Declaration's principles. As an instrument, it has been used to protect civilians from State violence, but it has also been used by powerful countries as an alibi for other types of interventions (with

ambiguous aims/interests). Therefore, we believe that, although people should support it in principle, they should also engage critically with it. Third, from a pedagogical perspective, apart from a simplistic and uncritical view of international politics, potential outcomes of implementing the UDHR as a framework of values could include the reinforcement of assumptions of cultural and economic superiority/inferiority, reinforcement of Eurocentrism and a vanguardist/missionary feeling and attitude towards the South. This does not mean that human rights should not be addressed (and supported!) as one of the global issues addressed in the project, but that approaching it uncritically as an uncontested, universally agreed framework for values does have highly problematic potential implications.

#### 6 Can we support something and be critical of it at the same time?

We believe this can be done and should happen. First, the inter-relations amongst countries are extremely complex and, although quick fix solutions are necessary sometimes, they are also risky as any intervention to bring justice is limited and can potentially exacerbate other injustices (think about fair trade, for example). Second, system thinking asks us to move beyond the either/or or black/white mentality (e.g. this is either good or bad) towards addressing (and learning to live with) complexity, contradictions and uncertainty (e.g. this can be both good and bad at the same time – fair trade can be good for poor farmers in the South who are part of the fair trade network and bad for poor farmers in the South who cannot be part of it). We believe that acknowledging the origins, limitations and implications of our ways of seeing and being is important if we want to intervene responsibly and accountably in our contexts.

#### 7 Is this a guilt trip for Northern/privileged people?

No, it is not a guilt trip. If we want a world without divisions, we need to clear the space for dialogue by examining how historical processes and violences (the world's wrongs) have affected our identities, cultures and assumptions and those of others – as well as constructed 'our' privilege and wealth. This position of privilege should not be viewed as one of 'help' to those who have been wronged, but responsibility to them – a commitment to NOT reproducing the same systems – of changing the source in order to tackle injustice. In order to achieve that, we think it is necessary to encourage a productive acknowledgement of complicity (with historically determined systems that reproduce oppression) that instead of paralysing people, should lead to better and more effective and responsible interventions.

#### 8 Do you think that after questioning and recognising complexity people will still feel outraged in the face of injustice?

We feel that after questioning and recognising complexity people will be better able to intervene responsibly in their context (within their capacities). We do not encourage 'outrage'. As Moore (2005) suggests, outrage as a base for activism leads to disappointment, disillusionment, quick burn out, self-righteousness, fundamentalism, being willing to harm others for one's righteous cause, and most importantly to being so caught up in your rage that you end up attacking the very people you are supposedly working with in the name of making the world a better place. Therefore, we believe that it is important to acknowledge that this is about 'us all' – we are all part of the problem AND part of the solution - and that we need to try to change our contexts without reproducing the relations of domination (that created the problems in the first place). However, we recognise that, in certain contexts (e.g. where there is a high level of political apathy), strategies that promote outrage can be used to sensitise pupils and prompt quicker responses. But the strategy and outcomes should be approached critically and lead to reflection and other strategies should be used to move the process along towards reflection and responsible action.

9 Are you saying that critical reading is bad and critical literacy is good?

No. We are saying that critical reading is not enough. We are saying that they are different approaches to problems and people should have both available in order to assess the best way to intervene in their contexts. In certain contexts a decision based on critical reading may be better than one based on critical literacy (e.g. applying the law to protect potential victims of a genocide). However, in other contexts, a decision based on critical literacy may offer a more ethical base for decisions (e.g. determining how a country/community should develop or deciding on curriculum content). The idea is to enable people to make better informed decisions within their contexts.

10 Are you neutral?

On the one hand, we are "neutral" in the sense that we do not want to impose a specific ideology - participants decide what they want to believe in and what they want to do. On the other hand, as the project is based on a post-structuralist perspective, we do not believe in the possibility of complete neutrality or objectivity. The agenda of the project is explicit and the central idea is to develop specific analytical skills and move towards 'worldcentric' or planetary citizenship. People may use mainstream and non-mainstream perspectives for that, but there is a strong tendency in the project to privilege non-mainstream (silenced or subalternised) perspectives, coming with the perception that students are exposed to (and have probably assimilated) mainstream perspectives in their ordinary lives (through the media, education or religion), but this might not be the case in certain contexts.

11 Are you saying that this methodology can work in any educational context?

No. The methodology has been piloted successfully in certain contexts in Brazil and the UK (e.g. teacher training, higher education, community groups, post-16 education) and we now have an international research project to pilot it in more contexts in 11 countries (e.g. secondary education and union education). Each context will have specific characteristics related to the profile of participants. Factors like age, level of inclusion/exclusion in the social-economic system, emotional stability, communication skills, etc. directly affect how participants react to the methodology. The right choice of content and its level of language are key in addressing these factors and the educator/facilitator who works in the context is in the best position to make decisions. However, there may be contexts where the methodology will not work or will prompt unexpected and undesirable outcomes (like any other pedagogical intervention). Therefore, it is again up to the educator/facilitator to assess the suitability of the methodology for their context, to adapt it as necessary, to evaluate its effectiveness or to choose not to use it.

12 Will you present a balance of perspectives? Will you present capitalist and socialist perspectives to students?

Each unit for adults should engage with a range of perspectives (trace where things are coming from and where they are leading to). The content is defined in each context by the educator/facilitator who is organising the space. If capitalist or socialist perspectives are presented, students should be encouraged to engage critically with both of them. Although the resources for young people sometimes present only one perspective, learners are especially encouraged (through the groundrules and procedures) to engage critically with it and explore different angles and possibilities.

13 Will you question the voices of the oppressed as well?

Yes. The objective is to critically engage with any perspective. This is done with the acknowledgement that all perspectives are partial and culturally biased -including those of the oppressed individuals and the observer.

14 Won't this process undermine the claims of certain groups struggling for justice?

If the strategy used by such groups cannot stand critical scrutiny in terms of its implications and power relations, then, potentially yes.

15 Isn't it important to define what is right or wrong for pupils?

Yes, it is important. But pupils are exposed to different notions of right and wrong in different contexts. Defining right and wrong in absolute terms is unrealistic and strategically, it can reproduce relations of domination that have led to colonialism and its aftermath in the first place - that of one people feeling they had the right to define what is right or wrong for everyone else. Within the methodology what is suggested is that what is right needs to be (re)defined in each context by a careful analysis of the different aspects of the (complex) part of the system we are intervening in. If adopting an absolute/universal framework of values is the best we can do, we are seriously running the risk of leaving some of the roots of the injustice we want to fight against unexamined and unchallenged, by reproducing the assumptions that may keep these roots alive. Therefore we are promoting the creation of a small space in the curriculum where we can engage critically with the assumptions that define what is right or wrong. Once the space is closed, participants go back to the original context of pre-defined rights and wrongs.

16 Isn't citizenship education about changing other people as well as ourselves?

We believe citizenship education is about influencing change in the world through responsible intervention. We don't believe it is about changing other people (as it implies wanting to have power over them, which infringes their right of self-determination). As mentioned before, imposing what people ought to think (or do with their lives) in an educational context is not consistent with the theoretical framework of the project. However, we would agree that change in institutions, processes and systems is a necessary and urgent task to challenge injustice. Therefore, our interventions should be informed and responsible because we are intervening in complex systems and contexts and uncritical interventions may end up being detrimental to the very people we want to help, especially if coming from the 'North' (e.g. Campaign against child labour or no-sweat). Critical engagement and self-reflexivity demand analytical tools that are not being (and probably have not been) developed in the current mainstream educational systems in the UK and around the world. That is one of the reasons why we have decided to prioritise them in this project - but we are NOT saying that all education should follow this approach. We are not even saying that all citizenship education should follow this approach.

17 What is the difference between knowledge, perspectives and opinions in the project?

From a positivist perspective these lines are very clear cut: knowledge is what has an unproblematic connection with objectivity, or truth (what is legitimate within a universalised value-system), an opinion is a value statement that is considered unfundamented or biased. Within post-structuralism, these lines are blurred as it is assumed we do not have the means to access reality objectively (which is different from saying that reality does not exist). All our attempts to refer to reality are culturally biased and therefore partial and incomplete. Thus, within an open space, we take the opinion of an individual (even if he/she is a famous philosopher or professor) as his/her partial/culturally biased



knowledge/perspective. Both perspectives (positivism and post-structuralism) are legitimate perspectives in academia.

18 Should we then question facts that are 'proven', like 'the world is round', ' $2+2=4$ ' and 'bananas are yellow'?

From a 'critical literacy' standpoint, even these assumptions are not universal. Considering them 'facts' already shows a cultural bias and the partiality of knowledge of the speaker in terms of: systems theory (the world is flat if you look at it from a specific perspective and therefore it can be flat and round at the same time), (ethno-)mathematics ( $2+2$  does not equal 4 in all cultures or circumstances) and linguistics ('bananas' and 'yellow' are culturally bound constructs as well -and not transparent and neutral references to reality).

19 Are you saying that all knowledge is legitimate and that everything goes? Are you promoting relativism?

From lenses based on critical literacy, all knowledge is legitimate (as it is constructed in our contexts and interpretations of the world), but it is also partial and incomplete. In terms of relativism, the principles of the open space methodology suggest that knowledge is contingent and therefore "truth" and morality are defined in each context. However, relativism implies that the moral or ethical judgments or acts of one person or group cannot or should not be judged by another and we are promoting critical engagement with perspectives. The difference here is that, as in Maturana's theory, we separate the "being" (the person) from his/her perspective. You are valid and legitimate as a person with whatever knowledge you bring to the space which is probably different from other spaces where your legitimacy depends on the kind of knowledge you have got and whether it conforms to 'normality' or not). But once inside the space, the partiality of this knowledge, as well as the limitations and implications of what one says or does is open to question. As this happens to everyone in the space (including the facilitator), the integrity of participants is maintained - we do not engage critically with people, but with partial and unfinished perspectives. And this is not done in order to reach a consensus or agree on a course of action, therefore, anyone can take from the exercise what one wishes to take.

20 Are you promoting a particular kind of ideology?

No. We are using post-structuralism as a pedagogical strategy to trigger the development of specific cognitive behaviours and to create different kinds of relationships. We are not saying people should adopt post-structuralism or an idea that there is no absolute truth as an absolute truth or ideology. The methodology proposes critical engagement with fundamentalisms/dogmatisms and relativism (which also becomes a dogmatism if taken literally).

21 What do you hope to achieve?

In pedagogical terms, we hope to develop critical and transnational literacies, as well as knowledge about knowledge construction (or epistemic cognition). In ethical terms, within an open space, understanding our lenses better (where we are coming from, where we are leading to), as well as the lenses of others may help us perceive the limitations and contradictions in our own ways of seeing. It may open our lenses to an ethical dialogue with other lenses. It may help us change the colours of our own lenses and influence others to change their lenses as well. It may also help us think outside our boxes/lenses and imagine other possible ways of seeing, being and living together - another possible world without the current divisions. This process may support us in intervening responsibly to make it happen as well.

22 Isn't what you are trying to promote too advanced for most people? Won't participants need a degree of intellectual maturity to participate in the space?

People are exposed to different logics/lenses all the time - some develop enquiry skills and critical literacy naturally, others need support to learn. The more we are exposed to difference the better (e.g. migrant children or children from mixed heritage families may learn it at home as a strategy of survival). Our assumptions in terms of what is real and possible in relation to learning are also dependent on our lenses, cultures and contexts. Whether this is advanced or not depends on our parameters to evaluate learning and cognitive development. There is research evidence from the philosophy for children (P4C) initiative that suggests that even 'ordinary' 6 year-olds are capable of applying very complex philosophical strategies if their environment encourages the use of these skills (they claim that children are natural 'questioners'). However, as in this initiative we are dealing with 'heavy' subject matter (injustice, oppression, power, etc) and although I believe both privileged and disenfranchised children are exposed to versions of that from a very early age in their contexts (and can feel and recognise the effects of those in their environment even if they do not have the language to talk about them), we do recommend caution when using this with primary schools on the grounds of appropriacy of content - and not of cognitive or intellectual development.

23 Aren't participants lost with so much questioning?

Some individuals (or even cultures) tend to avoid uncertainty, difference, complexity and conflict, so some people might experience discomfort or feel overwhelmed by the questioning process. However, if people do not have spaces where they can develop skills to deal with these things, they will remain where they are. Conflict and being outside the comfort zone are important dimensions of learning. On the other hand, facilitators are also responsible for providing support when learners get stuck in their learning process. Modelling behaviour is a way of reassuring participants that there are other possible ways of relating to these things. Therefore, it is extremely important that facilitators have developed critical literacy skills before they start facilitating. Going through the teacher education units is a way of building the repertoire that will improve facilitation skills.

24 Shouldn't we be trying to reach some consensus on what we need to do together in the world?

We believe spaces of consensus are extremely important for collective decision making in different contexts. And so are educational spaces of dissensus - for learning how to listen, to relate, to think independently, to address issues of power, to deal with conflict and complexity and to engage with assumptions and implications of perspectives (to develop critical literacy). We believe that there are few projects doing this, so this is an educational project about spaces of dissensus that build skills that are important for spaces of consensus. They are complementary strategies used in different contexts with different aims. We believe educators should decide what is best for their context according to the needs of learners and adopt appropriate strategies accordingly.

25 What is the difference between the resources for adults and the resources for young people?

The resources for adults follow an inductive approach to questioning: each procedure has specific aims in relation to critical literacy. They are also more text-based. The procedures for young people are more experiential and the aims relate to building relationships in the group, developing clarity in thinking and empowering learners to feel the ownership of the space in order to feel safe in participating in the debate. The critical literacy dimension, in this case, is developed by the facilitator during the debate by modelling 'critical literacy' questioning (e.g. where things are coming from/leading to? what other possibilities are there? what are the contradictions? etc.)

## 26 What is the role of the facilitator?

The ideal role of the facilitator is to open and close the space and to create the conditions for its role to disappear in the group's process. Depending on the type of group the facilitator will have a more passive or active role. If the group is relatively homogeneous, if there is a problem with its dynamics, if participants are reluctant or lack the skills to engage critically with the issues, if the group tends to move quickly towards consensus, and/or if key different perspectives are absent in the space, there will be a greater need for facilitator intervention. Facilitators need to be very responsive to the climate of the group, to be able to "read" the degree of intervention which would be productive. \*\*\*

## 27 What is the difference between OSDE and Philosophy for Children (P4C) or Philosophy for Global Citizenship (P4GC)?

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an enquiry approach that has very similar procedures to OSDE (especially the procedures for young people). However, OSDE and P4C/P4GC come from different philosophical traditions. P4C is based on a tradition that emphasises morality and rationality (i.e. analytic philosophy), the basic principle is that if people reason better, they will see the same thing (a universal morality/truth/way of being/etc.). The philosophical tradition that is the basis of OSDE (i.e. continental philosophy) emphasises ethics and difference, the basic principle is that there will always be difference, that difference and conflict are extremely important for change/learning and that the better we reason, the more we understand that there are no universal parameters as at different periods of time, different cultures/peoples/individuals will invariably see things in ways that are based on different assumptions about reality and being. In practical terms, OSDE facilitation has the specific objective of developing critical literacy and an ethical relation to difference, therefore, the facilitator's main roles are: 1) to model respect for difference and b) to challenge the group to explore origins and implications of assumptions. P4C enquiry is more exploratory and the facilitation process has different guidelines.

## 28 How much should facilitators steer the process with young people?

In order to create trust, safety and ownership of the space, there should be a balance in relation to the decisions related to the enquiry. This will vary according to context and should be negotiated with the group. In general terms, if facilitators choose the topic and the stimulus, they should allow participants to choose how they will interpret those and the angle/questions to be explored in the debate. If facilitators steer too much and participants feel they have a low degree of choice in relation to the topic, they will tend to participate less in the discussion or try to arrive at the 'right' answer they think the 'teacher' wants them to arrive at. The focus of the intervention should be on building skills/relationships, not on 'content': on how to examine issues rather than on what to think or do about the issue. As a general rule: the less you influence the choice of topic for discussion, the more effective the space is in terms of ownership, safety and participation. If you want people to arrive at (or agree to) a particular perspective (e.g. that we all need to be responsible citizens), creating a safe space for independent thinking is not the best strategy and participants may feel manipulated if you say it is open-ended when it is not (which may damage the relationship between you and the group). There are many other strategies that deal with critical literacy that do not require open-endedness, so a clear idea of what your goals are is necessary before you open a safe space.

## 29 How is OSDE different from other critical thinking approaches?

OSDE is an approach to develop critical literacy, which operates at two levels: a cognitive level and a relational level. The 'magic' of the space is to discover that you do not need to agree to an identity or ideology to be accepted in a relationship/group. In certain cultures, this can be extremely empowering. At the cognitive level, OSDE is not interested in the search for one (universal) 'truth' but in how truths are constructed and the possibilities opened by different 'truths'. This is a very creative and rewarding process as well (at the same time that it can be confusing and uncomfortable - depending on the individual's stage in the process). Critical thinking approaches based on the idea of objectivity tend to generate spaces where people compete with one another for legitimacy. This should not happen in OSDE spaces where there is a concern for an ethical relationship with difference.

## **DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION**

This methodology has been developed in a project based on the DFID Strategy Paper Building Support for Development which states that:

...development awareness has failed to make the breakthrough in public perceptions which, for example, environmental education has made in recent years. If we are to achieve this breakthrough, the key lies in going beyond attitudes to development based on compassion and charity, and establishing a real understanding of our interdependence and of the relevance of development issues to people's everyday lives.

This official document is one of the foundations of development education in the UK, which, according to the **Development Education Association** (DEA) has the following objectives:

- to explore the links between people living in the "developed" countries of the North with those of the "developing" South, enabling people to understand the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world
- to increase understanding of the economic, social, political and environmental forces which shape our lives
- to develop the skills, attitudes and values which enable people to work together to take action to bring about change and take control of their own lives
- to work towards achieving a more just and a more sustainable world in which power and resources are more equitably shared.

The concept of interdependence is central to development education. Interdependence can be understood in different ways. Within this project, it has two dimensions: on the one hand, it refers to the ways in which decisions made at different levels in the Global North and South affect how power, resources, wealth and labour are used and distributed in the world. On the other hand it relates to how ways of seeing and being (cultures) of different groups affect how people see themselves and see and relate to others – and how this affects the reproduction of inequalities.

Understanding the complex processes and different logics of these connections is crucial in developing skills for responsible and informed 'global active citizenship' and for promoting critical and independent thinking and action in education.

## **OSDE Justification**

The link between the cultural and material forces that shape our lives is a central concern in this project. We believe that tracing the origins and implications of our ways of seeing and being – and of our positions in the world - is fundamental in preparing individuals and communities to intervene

responsibly towards justice, peace and equality. Addressing complexity, understanding interdependence and learning to question and use different modes of thinking may help learners see themselves as integral to the picture they are trying to change (both as part of the problem and the solution) and prevent the reproduction of mechanisms that generate or maintain the problems that are addressed.

Therefore, we have adopted an approach based on 'communities of enquiry' to create a methodology to structure 'open spaces for dialogue and enquiry' about social and global justice and our collective responsibility. In these spaces, learners can engage critically with their own and other people's perspectives without being told what to think or what to do. Openness, in this case, refers to the collective aims of the group: rather than building a community based on an identity or an ideology, what binds the community together is a process of self-transformation, of 'learning to live together' (engagement and relationship with difference) and of imagining beyond our 'selves' and cultures. Reflection (thinking about assumptions), reflexivity (thinking about where assumptions come from and their implications) and enquiry are central strands of this process.

## Appendix 6

### How to use the Random Word technique

Welcome to the Random Word technique, the most basic and obviously creative technique where you use a random word (hence the name!) to generate new ideas. By getting a random word as a prompt and forcing yourself to use it to solve your problem you are practically guaranteed to attack the problem from a different direction to normal. You take a word from a random word generator, extract its underlying principles and then apply them to your problem to see how they can help. The skill is stopping your mind from (a) thinking this is silly and (b) directly using the actual principles behind the word to your problem without changing them to ones which are easier to apply.

The first thing you need is the random word itself which is classed as the **initial stimulus**. Next, you establish a **bridging idea**, which is an idea based on the stimulus. This is used, as the name implies, as a bridge between the stimulus and an idea which you could actually use on your problem. The simplest way to get a random word is using our dedicated software ([Brainstorming Toolbox](#)) to give you a random word at the touch of a button.

#### Quick example 1:

Using the random word "**Balloon**" in the context of new ideas about **cars**.

A bridging idea could be that you inflate the balloon under the car. The advantages of this would be that the car jack would not puncture rusty cars and that cars could be raised on soft ground.

The resulting final idea could be to have a car jack which spreads its force more evenly under the car and onto the ground.

#### Quick example 2:

Using a random word of "**Spacecraft**" in the context of new ideas about **kitchens**.

A bridging idea would be to consider what would happen if the kitchen was in space and what would happen because of gravity.

The resulting idea could lead to the fact that you would need to stop the pans from floating off the cooker/hob. This could lead to using magnets to hold the pans on (back on the earth's surface). This would stop small children from accidentally pulling the hot pans onto themselves. Or how about using a magnetic field to heat the pan?

Where you get the random word is up to you. The quickest and most random way to get one is by using computer software. If you don't have that, flip through a dictionary and stop randomly, or pick a random page, paragraph and word from a general interest magazine.

You are welcome to use our [free web version](#) (which contains one hundred words) to show you how useful it can be.

**One you have got a random word, there are many ways of using it, including:**

1. Replacing the problem object with the random noun and imagining what would happen. (NB. It is easier, safer and cheaper to do this first in your mind and than in reality.) Think it over in your mind and see what you can get out of it. What does it remind you of, regarding your own problem? What are the benefits from replacing it? If the benefits are original but not practical, then are there any ways you can get the same effect from a more practical means? If there are no benefits, what are the disadvantages and how might you counter them? (See how powerful this is - whether you think it is good or bad to replace it, both points of view can lead to new ideas!)
2. Looking at the principles behind the random word and reapplying them to your own problem. How does the random object behave? Why does it behave like that? What are its characteristics? Why does it fit its own environment but has not been reapplied elsewhere? Now think of HOW you can apply the principles to your own problem. The skill is in thinking "How can we make this work?" and disregarding any initial thoughts that it won't work.
3. Looking at its benefits. Are they benefits you want? How can you get the same benefits for your own situation? How does the selected word achieve the benefits and how can you use that principle?

[Click here for more methods of moving from a stimulus to an idea.](#)

#### **Use the following as an example:**

You are working for a car manufacturer in the wheel department and are trying to come up with some new ideas about the wheel (without reinventing it!) Imagine you are now given this random word: **toothbrush**! What are your initial thoughts? Probably something like "How on earth is this relevant?" or "What a silly idea, they're totally unconnected". But before we go on, spend a couple of minutes trying to come up with a few ideas.

Ok, here are some examples of ideas you might have come up with (including some working through of the thinking process behind them, which you would not normally write down):

#### **Replacing the wheel with a toothbrush:**

##### **Bridging ideas:**

Imagine the whole tyre of the wheel is made of toothbrush bristles. What are the advantages? (PS tyre = tire using US spelling)

1. Much better grip in the snow.
2. Small stones pass straight through with a minor disturbance of the bristles. Cleans the road as it goes.

##### **Resulting relevant ideas:**

1. Create a snow tyre where the snow (or water) is forced through holes in the bottom of the tyre and shot out through small tubes in the rubber, thus stopping the tyre tread from clogging up.
2. Retractable spikes in the tyre.
3. Dimples in the tyre so that small stones are not felt by the passenger(s).
4. What other principles are there about toothbrushes?

### **Features of a toothbrush:**

#### **Bridging ideas:**

1. Some toothbrushes change colour when they have been used for too long.
2. Some toothbrushes squirt out toothpaste while you brush.
3. They have springy handles to make sure you do not press too hard.
4. Some have ridges so that at least some bristles get to the bottom of the dips in teeth.
5. They come in plastic containers for travelling.
6. You brush your teeth with them twice a day.

#### **Resulting relevant ideas:**

1. How about a tyre which has two layers of coloured rubber so that when the underneath layer shows through, the tyre needed replacing. Also police could spot bald tyres from a distance.
2. Could a mini-camera spot oil on the road and spray out an oil remover or could the tyre eject salt in front of the car in the case of ice?
3. Could the suspension be a flexible bit of metal instead of a spring and damper?
4. If the rubber of the tyre was made of a mixture of hard and soft rubber then the soft bits would stick into the dimples in the road and stick better.
5. Could we sell a cover for car wheels so that in snowy countries the wheels would not get blocked with snow? Could we use the cover to stop being wheel-clamped?
6. Could we produce a device which measured the deterioration of the car tyre which each person could check everyday (how might they remember?)?

### **What are the benefits of a toothbrush?**

#### **Bridging ideas:**

1. You don't get rotten teeth.
2. It scrapes nasty stuff from your teeth.
3. It makes your teeth feel clean and smooth.

#### **Resulting relevant ideas:**

1. Could we produce an X-ray device to measure the internal condition of a tyre.
2. People often have to pick out stones from the tyre treads. We could make a 'tread comb' to make this easier and encourage people to use it to make their tyres last longer. We could make it so it only fitted the tyres we sell and so our customers would be pleased by how much longer our tyres lasted.
3. Can we produce a tyre that sprays the ground water on to the car tyre and thus washes itself?



### **Things to watch out for when using the technique**

You must be careful not to decide that a specific word is of no use and getting another instead. If you do this then you are more likely than not just trying to choose a word which neatly fits into the problem you are trying to solve; effectively you don't really end up with a random word. Again, the skill is to work out HOW the word can be made to fit.

Be careful not to create too many steps between the random word as a stimulus and the creation of a relevant idea, or you may run the risk of ending up with an idea you already know works. eg. A suggests B, which suggests C, which suggests D - which is the idea we're already using.

You also have to train yourself not to link the word with an idea you already know about. You should not take the word at face value. You must guard against using the technique to come up with an old idea to show that the old idea is good, eg. I already like the idea of using brushes on the inside of the wheel arches to clean the tyre so I will link "toothbrushes" to a wheel to come up with the same idea. Wow, it must be a good idea because this random technique came up with it.

### **Other things to bear in mind**

Some words will work and others will not, depending on the problem and on the individual involved. No word is guaranteed better than another, it just depends on the situation. You could use a large number of words for each problem or a small number but if you find yourself using a large amount then you should question yourself as to how you are using the word. You may be just searching for a word to fit with an idea you have already. Of course, sometimes using a continuous stream of different words can get a large number of ideas too, but ... c'est la vie.

You can also use the random word technique for assessing the current situation. Often by having a word in front of you, you are stimulated to think about different aspect of the problem. Eg. when I brush my teeth the forces on the toothbrush are in all different directions; is there a problem with having suspension which only goes up and down?; or, when I was a child I hated brushing my teeth, so is the problem with a lot of car journeys that the people in the back hate being there because they cannot see anything?

Often using a random word can just remind you of something which you knew all along but you had forgotten to write down in your investigation. If you have dozens of aspects to a problem, and even if you feel you know them all, it can still be tricky to recall them all when it comes to actually writing them down. A random word can often help remind you of them again.

A similar technique, and the next technique to be explained, is the Random Picture Technique which uses a picture as a stimulus instead of a word. Some people find it easier to use pictures rather than words, others vice-versa. You will have to experiment to see which suits you best.

Try the random word technique for yourself and you will certainly improve at coming up with new ideas.

### **How to use the Random Picture technique**

This method is very similar to the [random word technique](#) and many of its working principles are explained in that section, so please read that first if you haven't already. You should also [read the section](#) on methods of using a stimulus for new ideas.

The first thing you need for this technique is, fairly obviously, a random picture. This is then used as a prompt to come up with new ideas and solutions. You can get such an image from brainstorming software or you can select it at random yourself from a magazine, encyclopedia or picture book. You can also use a picture from a website (see the [Random Website technique](#)).

You should look at the picture, extract a concept or idea from it and use this idea to stimulate a possible solution to your problem. Try to see anything in the picture which reminds you of your problem and how it might be solved. What activities are going on? What situations are being faced? Why are the people doing what they are doing? What principles are being used?

With a picture in front of you, extract an idea from it, or imagine a similar theme/person/action happening within your own situation.

Next think of how you can use that new situation/object/attitude in your own situation. It does not immediately have to be a positive solution but you may later be able to move from it to a good solution.

[Click here for more methods of moving from a stimulus to an idea.](#)

Use similar techniques and attitudes to those for the Random Word. The same "watch outs" and skills are needed as described for the [Random Word technique](#).

### **What do you have to be careful of when using the Random Picture technique?**

You must be careful of deciding that a specific picture is of no use and getting another instead. If you do this then often you are just trying to choose a random picture which obviously fits into the problem you are trying to solve and therefore you end up with a picture which is not random. Again, the skill is to work out HOW the picture can be made to fit.

You also have to be careful of linking the picture with an idea you already know about. You have to train your mind not to do this and to take the picture at face value and not use the technique to come up with an old idea to show that the old idea is good.

Also, a point which is not so relevant to Random Word, is that you may just stare at the picture and think how nice the picture is and not get anything out of it except a sense of wellbeing (which, admittedly, may not be such a bad thing at times!).

Please try the Random Picture technique for yourself and you will certainly improve at coming up with new ideas.

Get a random picture now and try it out. [Click here for the free interactive demonstration.](#)

### **How to use the Challenge Facts technique**

How many facts are really facts and how many are just the most reasonable, educated guess based upon the knowledge known at the time? It is very rare that anything remains an undeniable fact for

too long, especially when you consider people's views and differently acquired knowledge. We are in a constant state of change. We think differently as we gain knowledge and skills in thinking. One generation to the next have different aims, ambitions and morals. What might be seen as a good thing by one generation could be seen as a bad thing by the next. Political parties change their views, as do their voters. Due to personal circumstances, individuals can change their whole philosophy of life within months. Technology and other inventions now change the world faster than most people can keep up with. What seemed impossible one week can become plausible the next, reality within months and an accepted way of life in a year or two. This is not really surprising when you consider the combined, diverse thought power of billions of people spread across the globe.

**How do you know that what you considered to be a fact in the past has now become inappropriate due to changes which have happened since then? Might you now be able to improve your current product because of a change in human values or lifestyles?**

The way to answer these questions is to **challenge the facts**. You are not saying that the facts are wrong but you are investigating what might happen if that fact were not true. It is important not to see this technique as a way of proving someone wrong or inaccurate. Everyone does what they think to be right at the time and based upon the knowledge they have at that time. If you now have more information or the world has changed in some way, this does not put any blame on the person who had the original idea or on someone who could not solve the probortunity. Just as you must be considerate towards the people whose facts you are challenging, you should acknowledge that the world will probably develop a better way of doing what you are doing now. This does not reflect on your ability, it merely reflects the way in which the world develops. At one time all the available evidence gave rise to the fact that the sun went round the world. If no one had challenged this fact, then we might still believe it. Even Einstein's theory of relativity has been modified to take into account effects which were not possible for him to contemplate because technology at the time could not do what it does now.

The Challenge Facts technique asks you to consider what you think are facts and investigate what differences and advantages it would make if they were not facts. You could try to imagine what would be the case if the fact were totally wrong. Or you could try to modify the fact and see whether that now fits into the current situation better than the original one. Or is the world likely to change so that the modified fact will fit in better in the future? If so, what new ideas does this future world suggest? If you find that your new consideration blatantly doesn't fit, then consider what advantages this hypothetical situation might have and how you might be able to incorporate them into your current solution.

**You are using the challenge of a fact as a stimulus for new ideas, nothing else.**

First list the facts, then write a statement which challenges that fact, then use that challenge to develop new ideas.

**Example 1:**

**Fact:**

Computer users position the mouse pointer over one of many buttons they want to use and press a single mouse button.

**Challenge of the fact:**

Computer users position the mouse pointer over a single button and press one or more mouse buttons.

**New idea based on challenging the fact:**

Have an area of the screen where if the mouse is over it, the user can press one or more mouse buttons to perform different functions.

**Example 2:**

**Fact:**

Companies pay its employees for their time.

**Challenge of the fact:**

Employees pay their company for the use of its facilities.

**New idea based on challenging the fact:**

Each employee receives a percentage of the profits based on their position within the company and the amount of time and contributions spent on its products or services. Out of this amount is taken the amount of money related to that employee's use of the facilities. In this way the employee is directly affected by the quality of the product or service and is more motivated to improve it. Also, the employee is directly affected by the amount of money they use in the course of their work. It could also mean that employees are free to live their own life and work the way they want to work.

**Examples for you to practise on:**

Fact: Unemployment benefit is kept to a low level to encourage the unemployed to work.

Fact: Trains set off from the station at set times.

Please try this technique for yourself and you will certainly improve at coming up with new ideas.