



OSDE briefing

Version 2.0 compiled by VA
Updated 13/12/05

This document is divided into 8 sections:

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1. DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Understanding the Context: where we are coming from...

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 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.

1.1 The 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.

1.2 Objectives of OSDE

This methodology intends to support the structure of safe spaces where individuals can develop the skills to perceive and examine their assumptions, be exposed to different assumptions, make connections, address complexity and decide for themselves whether or not they want to change their perspectives.

The project has an ethical framework for engaging with difference within the safe space (it proposes a set of ground rules for engagement within the space), but it does not prescribe a moral framework for thinking and action outside the space (it does not tell participants what they should think or do in their lives). Within a safe space, participants are not encouraged to reach consensus – in fact it is the difference of perspectives that makes the process more productive and prompts participants to challenge their own viewpoints.

2. OSDE METHODOLOGY

The methodology consists of a set of ground principles for dialogue and a set of procedures for opening and closing the space.

2.1 Ground Principles for Dialogue

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 should 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.

2.2 Set of procedures

There are four essential and five additional steps in the methodology (essential steps highlighted):

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)

2.3 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 (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).

3. CRITICAL LITERACY

The 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.

The following table illustrates the differences between traditional reading, critical reading and critical literacy:

Traditional Reading	Critical Reading	Critical Literacy
<i>Types of questions:</i> Does the text represent the truth? Is it fact or opinion? Is it biased or neutral? Is it well written/clear? Who is the author and what level of authority/legitimacy does he/she represent? What does the author say?	<i>Types of questions:</i> What is the context? To whom is the text addressed? What is the intention of the author? What is the position of the author (his/her political agenda)? What is the author trying to say and how is he/she trying to convince/manipulate the reader? What claims are not substantiated? Why has the text been written in this way)	<i>Types of questions:</i> What are the assumptions behind the statements? How does the author understand reality? What is shaping his/her understanding? Who decides (what is real, can be known or needs to be done) in whose name and for whose benefit? What are the implications of his/her claims (past/present/future: social, environmental, economic, etc...)? What are the sanctioned ignorances (blind spots) and contradictions?
<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, 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.”ⁱ

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

- 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.

4. MATERIAL DESIGN

Guidelines for each stage of the methodology are provided below:

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 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."

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:

- a. 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?
- b. A short text with a summary of mainstream and alternative perspectives to be discussed

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

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)

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. What are the connections of the mainstream understandings of development to the processes of colonisation?
5. What are the consequences of economic growth defined as accumulation of wealth? What are the consequences of undergrowth?
6. 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?
7. How does the development of one country/community affect the development or underdevelopment of other communities?
8. How do the labels developed/underdeveloped affect social relations?

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?

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?

5. OSDE AGENDA

Understanding where we think this could lead us to...

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 – where everyone is acknowledged as a 'whole' person regardless of what they think or say.

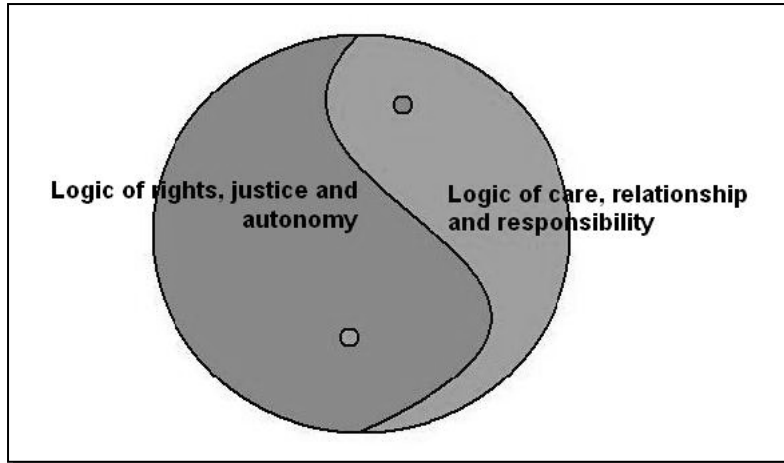
Learning to cope with complexity and uncertainty is the first step to learning to live, to be and to do together

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 grow and to survive.

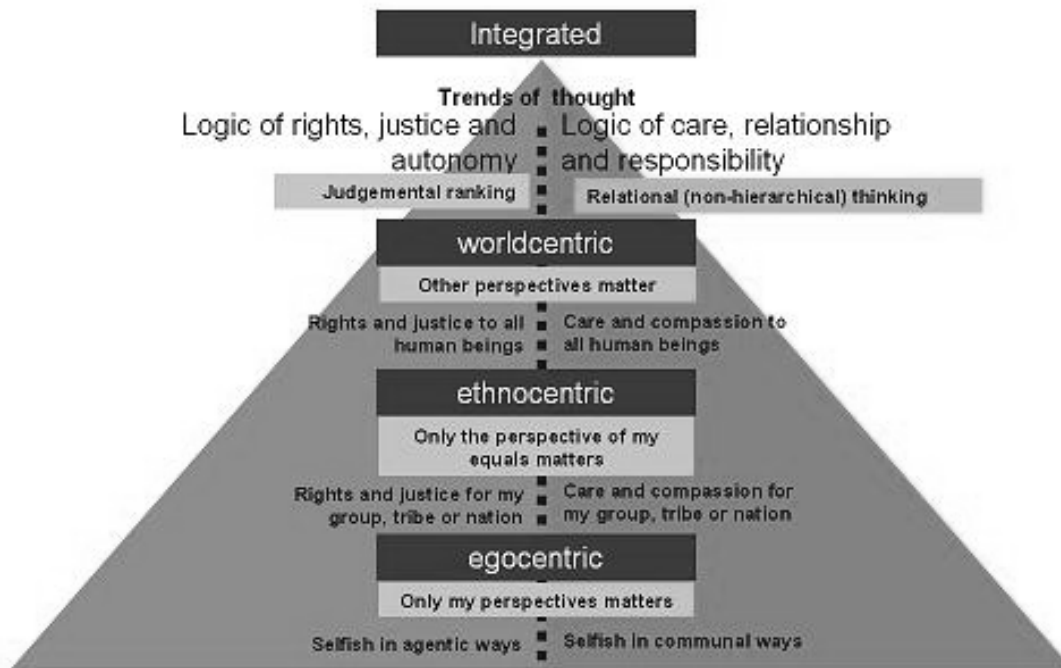
Going beyond individualism and ethnocentrism towards global (planetary) integrated 'citizenship' (as stewardess/hospitality)

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!

6. Definition of 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 (Adapted from 'Deep Dialogue' definition - www.globaldialogue.org)

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.

7. Getting Involved

You can get involved in a number of ways:

1. BECOMING A PARTNER

Partners are individuals or institutions that are formally connected to this initiative. You decide what is the right level of involvement for you. By taking part in any of the activities below you are already part

of the OSDE network. If you want to strengthen your connection to it by establishing a formal partnership, you will be working more closely with us in the development and organisation of projects and activities related to this initiative (e.g. research projects, seminars, publications, etc.)

2. PILOTING OR ADOPTING THE METHODOLOGY IN YOUR CONTEXT

If you are an educator, you can adapt the methodology to the context where you work. You can use the sample units available to create and adapt the content.

Some partners have embedded the methodology as an integral part of their courses or modules. You can make this an action research project and ask participants to keep a reflection journal as they go along (don't forget to keep one yourself).

Briefing workshops and induction seminars can be organised to support institutions that want to pilot or adopt the methodology. Let us know what your needs are and we will check what the team can do for you.

Please inform us about your plans and outcomes. ANY feedback or evaluation is more than welcome and helps keep this initiative 'alive'!

3. CREATING CONTEXTS WHERE THE METHODOLOGY CAN BE PILOTED

If you cannot adapt the methodology in the contexts that you work in, an alternative is to create a context. A community or faith group, an informal group of co-workers or a group of friends can be a great way to experiment! Again, we are very interested in your plans and feedback!

4. DEVELOPING MATERIALS

If you have developed any materials using the OSDE sets of procedures (or if you have adapted something you already did to fit the model) and you would like to make it available on the site to share with others, please send those to us. Some partners have started with piloting and then involved participants in material design and it has worked really well! When you submit materials, an editorial board will be in contact with you to share suggestions and comments about your work before it is published on the site.

5. CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEORETICAL DIMENSION

This project is grounded on a theoretical framework based on various schools of thought and it aims to keep a close relationship between theory and practice. If you think that your work is in line with what is proposed here (even if you use different names to describe it) or if you think that it isn't in line but you still want to engage with the theory, please let us know. Partners who are interested in the theory are constantly discussing issues that arise from applying it. They also revise related documents and units, and write articles connected to the project.

6. TAKING PART IN THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Partners who are part of the educational research agree to pilot the methodology for at least 10 hours and collect data using a research diary (provided) and recorded focus groups (script also provided). The data generated in this process is going to be analysed collaboratively and a case-study will be developed for each context. The results will be presented at a conference in 2009 and published in a volume.

6. STARTING A NEW PROJECT USING THE METHODOLOGY

If you have an idea for a project that incorporates the methodology, we would like to discuss that with you in order to support your initiative or do something collaboratively.

7. SPREADING THE WORD

From talking to your colleagues about the project - or the outcomes of your involvement with it - to organising seminars or presenting papers at conferences, spreading the word makes the network grow and adds (invaluable) value and strength to this initiative.

8. LETTING US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

Any feedback you can provide is highly valued. Your assessment of potentials, challenges and limitations, helps us to continue to reflect and transform it. It also helps potential and current funders assess whether they should support it.

9. FUNDING RELATED PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

If you are part of an organisation that can fund projects and activities and you think this initiative is consistent with what it is willing to support or promote, don't hesitate to get in touch.

8. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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 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 alienatingⁱⁱⁱ. 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^{iv}. 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. 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 (apart from primary education)?

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 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.

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 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 system in the UK. That is one of the reasons why we have decided to prioritise them in this project.

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

Within logocentrism 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.

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

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. We are not saying people should adopt post-structuralism or an idea that there is no absolute truth as an absolute truth. 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.

ⁱ Source: Morgan, W. (1997). *Critical literacy in the classroom: The art of the possible*. New York: Routledge.

ⁱⁱ Source: Cervetti, G., Pardales, M., Damico, J.(2001) *A Tale of Differences: Comparing the Traditions, Perspectives, and Educational Goals of Critical Reading and Critical Literacy*, www.readingonline.org last accessed 17/09/2005

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example **South Atlantic Quarterly, Volume 103**, Numbers 2-3, Spring/Summer 2004, **Human Rights in Cross-Cultural Perspectives: A Quest for Consensus** edited by Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, or **Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry** by Ignatieff, M. published by Princeton University Press where Ignatieff argues that human rights can command universal assent only if they are designed to protect and enhance the capacity of individuals to lead the lives they wish.

^{iv} Chris Ann Moore is a project partner based in Honolulu. Her statement was part of an e-mail exchange on 16/09/05