



## **OSDE RESEARCH Introductory Activity**

by VA and KNJ  
Updated 18/04/07

**This is an introductory activity to help you decide if you want to take part in the research. It has four stages:**

- 1. Stage 1: 'Is OSDE for me?' reflection**
- 2. Stage 2: questionnaire to be sent to CSSGJ**
- 3. Stage 3: trying out one of the activities**
- 4. Stage 4: evaluation and final decision about the research**

**Please read all sections of OSDE Methodology available at:**

**<http://www.osdemethodology.org.uk/osdemethodology.html>**

**Coordinator:  
Vanessa Andreotti  
Research Fellow – Education/Outreach Coordinator  
Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice  
The University of Nottingham  
[vanessa@osdemethodology.org.uk](mailto:vanessa@osdemethodology.org.uk)**



## Stage 1: Is OSDE for me?

Please read and reflect on the information in this section.

Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry (OSDE) is a methodology for the introduction of global issues and perspectives in educational contexts, such as teacher, adult, higher and secondary education. The development of critical literacy and independent thinking are the central aims of this initiative.

OSDE encourages educators to open safe spaces for dialogue and enquiry in their educational contexts. An OSDE space is different from a traditional teaching environment: it has different objectives, it constructs a different kind of relationship between teachers and students and it demands that teachers perform a different role to what they are used to in 'traditional teaching' (see table below).

<b>Traditional 'teaching' role</b>	<b>OSDE 'facilitation' role</b>
Focus on transmission or construction of content/knowledge pre-defined by the teacher or curriculum	Focus on building critical skills and ethical relationships within the group
The teacher is the holder of knowledge that is often considered 'universal'	The facilitator has partial knowledge that is always already culturally biased (like everyone else in the group)
The teacher decides what is right and what is wrong	The facilitator encourages participants to speak and to engage critically with what they say and with what other people say
The teacher tries to get people to accept certain views as true	The facilitator tries to get people to question/examine assumptions and implications of any view
Conflicts and contradictions need to be 'resolved'	Dissonance, conflicts and contradictions are necessary components of the methodology
The teacher promotes consensus and agreement – students learn to avoid or solve conflict	The facilitator steers the group away from consensus – students learn: a) to think independently; b) to disagree and (still) respect one another; and b) to live with difference and uncertainty
The safety of the environment is based on the authority of the teacher	The safety of the environment is based on trust and respect for difference

Evidence so far shows that OSDE helps improve relationships and create a better environment for learning in classrooms. It also helps learners:

- to feel ownership and enjoyment in learning
- to appreciate and respect each other both for their differences and similarities
- to participate actively in their own intellectual development
- to develop self-control
- to develop tools to understand and deal with complex issues of their specific ages such as peer pressure and bullying
- to enhance their communicative skills (especially listening skills)
- to use and develop different learning styles

***But OSDE is NOT an appropriate methodology if your starting point is to get students to agree with your views.***

The difference between roles has many implications in terms of strategies. Here are some of them in terms of 'DOs and DON'Ts' for facilitators:

- DO examine and reflect on your own beliefs about the theme before starting a session. The activities in the 'Teacher Education' section were designed to help you build the skills you will need to do that and to feel confident about not having to know all the answers.
- DON'T give the 'right' answers when participants ask you to (and they will!). Some people have difficulties in dealing with uncertainty, learning to think independently and finding their own answers, but ending their discomfort will not help them develop these skills. This is a natural outcome of traditional education. Be supportive, and (if you find necessary) present your own perspective, but reinforce the idea that your perspective changes as you learn with others.
- DO show confidence and feel comfortable in your skin. Use the two magic sentences whenever things get complicated in the discussion: '**Where is this coming from?**' (What are your assumptions? How have they been constructed? Are they universally true? Do people in all cultures understand this in the same way?) and '**Where is this leading to?**' (What are the environmental, social, cultural, political implications or consequences of what you are saying in the short and long term?).
- DON'T put yourself above the group or dominate the space. You are there to support the group's learning process – to hold the time/space, to model behaviour, to guide them through the stages and to make your role disappear as participants learn to do these things by themselves. If you become the centre of the process, you are hijacking their opportunity to learn with/from one another and to develop autonomy.
- DO encourage the group to sort out their own problems and difficulties – especially those concerning respect and relationships. If participants are disrespectful, go back to the agreed rules or stop the process and encourage 'critical engagement' with what is happening (where is this coming from/leading to?) – but be careful not to resort to 'naming and shaming' those who have transgressed. Remember that everything is part of learning and that everyone makes mistakes.
- DO assess and respect the rhythms of the group. Sometimes you will see that the awareness or knowledge of individuals or groups around certain themes is very weak or superficial and this will affect the quality of the enquiry. This is when you will feel tempted to 'teach', but sometimes in this case it is better to listen, analyse and think strategically about what you are going to do in the next session to address the problems you have identified.
- DO turn whatever happens into a learning experience for you and for the participants. Successes and failures are part of the process and are necessary to help us develop and understand this approach.
- DO share with us what you have learned! OSDE works in different ways in different contexts. Therefore, as people use it, it changes and develops. Your input is extremely important in this process!

**But, before you start, you DO need to be clear about whether or not OSDE is appropriate for your objectives, personal style and context of work. If you are not sure, going through some of the activities for teacher education at <http://www.osdemethodology.org.uk/teachered.html> \* can help you reflect on your assumptions and goals. Another option is to contact us for a chat!**

\* The units on 'knowledge and perspectives' and on 'global citizenship education' can be particularly useful! Suggestion: do it with a friend or friends so that you can talk and listen to different perspectives.

## **Stage 2: Questionnaire: context**

If you think OSDE *IS* for you, you will be asked to try out one of the sample activities with a group before you join the research. Before you try one of the sample units, answer the questions below and send it to CSSGJ by e-mail at [vanessa@osdemethodology.org.uk](mailto:vanessa@osdemethodology.org.uk).

1. Please describe your context of work (country, region, age range, student profile, any other relevant information)?
2. What approaches to learning and teaching (lecture, question and answer, discussion, small groupwork) do you usually use?
3. Do you have any questions about the OSDE methodology?
4. Why have you decided to try OSDE in your context?
5. What do you expect to achieve?
  - a. For yourself?
  - b. For the students?
6. What challenges do you expect to face?

## **Stage 3: Trying an activity**

Choose one of the activities from:

[www.osdemethodology.org.uk](http://www.osdemethodology.org.uk) ► sample units

and try it out with a group. There are 8 activities for teacher training and 12 for secondary schools to choose from. Activities for secondary schools make use of power point presentations. Activities for teacher training can be adapted for adults or students who are 16+.

## **Stage 4: Evaluation**

After you try one of the units, send your answers to the questions below to CSSGJ by e-mail. Please answer as fully as possible, you might find you write between 500 and 1000 words, depending on how much detail you provide.

1. Which unit have you chosen and why?
2. Briefly describe the context (where, who were the students, how many were there, gender balance, age).
3. What (if anything) was positive about the session?
4. What (if any) were the difficulties?
5. Were your expectations met?
6. Comment on your facilitation role.
7. Comment on the response of the students.
8. What did you learn from the activity?
9. Comment on the materials from the OSDE website.
10. Would you like to carry on with the research project? Why?

**The research project involves:**

- **piloting the methodology for a minimum of 10 hours**
- **sharing the results**
- **analysing an aspect (of your choice) of the experience.**

**If you decide to go ahead, you will:**

- **be officially linked to the project as a practitioner-researcher**
- **be part of an international network**
- **receive regular updates on the research and project developments**
- **be invited to submit an article to a publication on the research findings**