

Basic Module Promoting Critical Thinking



Promoting Critical, Creative and Ethical Thinking

This module provides two theories that can be used to promote reflection about individual learning and thinking – for example, in street football or in looking at children’s rights. The first theory is about thinking routines, which is rooted in the areas of pedagogic psychology, and the second has to do with the concept of a dialogue community, from the field of philosophy.

These theories are presented by Centro para el Desarrollo de la Intelligencia (CDI) from Paraguay. CDI uses both theories in its projects in order to promote critical, creative and ethical thinking. In this module, CDI presents its experiences and demonstrates how both theories can be used in practice. The methods and content presented here can be used in all other modules in this guide to deepen understanding.

The Dialogue Community

The dialogue community describes a space in which all participants (children, adolescents and young adults) are encouraged to develop their critical, creative and ethical thinking. The dialogue community is based on a technique put forth by Socrates called the ‘Socratic method’. The goal is to go through different questions and eventually come to recognise the truth.

Leader’s tasks

The supervisor’s task is to be “pedagogically strong and philosophically modest”. The term “pedagogically strong” here means that, through their appearance and behaviour, this person is able to create a respectful and trusting atmosphere in which everyone feels safe, listens, and can find their place. “Philosophically modest” means that the leader does not act as though he or she is the owner of absolute truth, but rather he or she respects and values the experience, knowledge and beliefs of all participants. In this way, the supervisor leads the dialogue and encourages discussion through his or her questions and conduct.

Characteristics and requirements of participants in a dialogue community

- in a position to seriously weigh in and reflect on the ideas of others
- able to develop their own thoughts about the ideas of others
- able to develop ideas without being afraid that others will disagree or misunderstand
- open to new ideas
- respects the right of others to express their views
- treats all participants in the dialogue community with respect
- asks for the criteria that will be used for argumentative reasoning