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EMOTICAL Literacy: A Development Education Framework for cultivating Global Citizenship

‘Both emotional skills and critical thinking skills are mutually essential, and in fact it is only by cultivating a symbiosis between these, can pedagogy be developed that presents a true transformational agency to people’ (read more [here](#))

Background

In 2013, Children in Crossfire launched an Educating the Heart initiative as part of its Development Education (DE) programme. The organisation’s patron, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, visited Northern Ireland, and addressed a private audience of educators, students, policy makers, and researchers to explore the theme of compassion and Educating the Hearts of ourselves and our young people, specifically, within education.

Inspired by the Dalai Lama’s vision for an education system that instils unbiased love, respect and compassion into the hearts and minds of young people; Children in Crossfire sought to explore if compassion training can be incorporated to the heart of its DE programme and across the school curriculum. The organisation asked itself if its ‘critical literacy’ approach to implementing DE was fully adequate for cultivating a sense of global citizenship amongst young people. Would a DE pedagogical approach which also seeks to nurture emotional literacy and well-being prepare young people more holistically for participating as compassionate global citizens in an increasingly interconnected world?

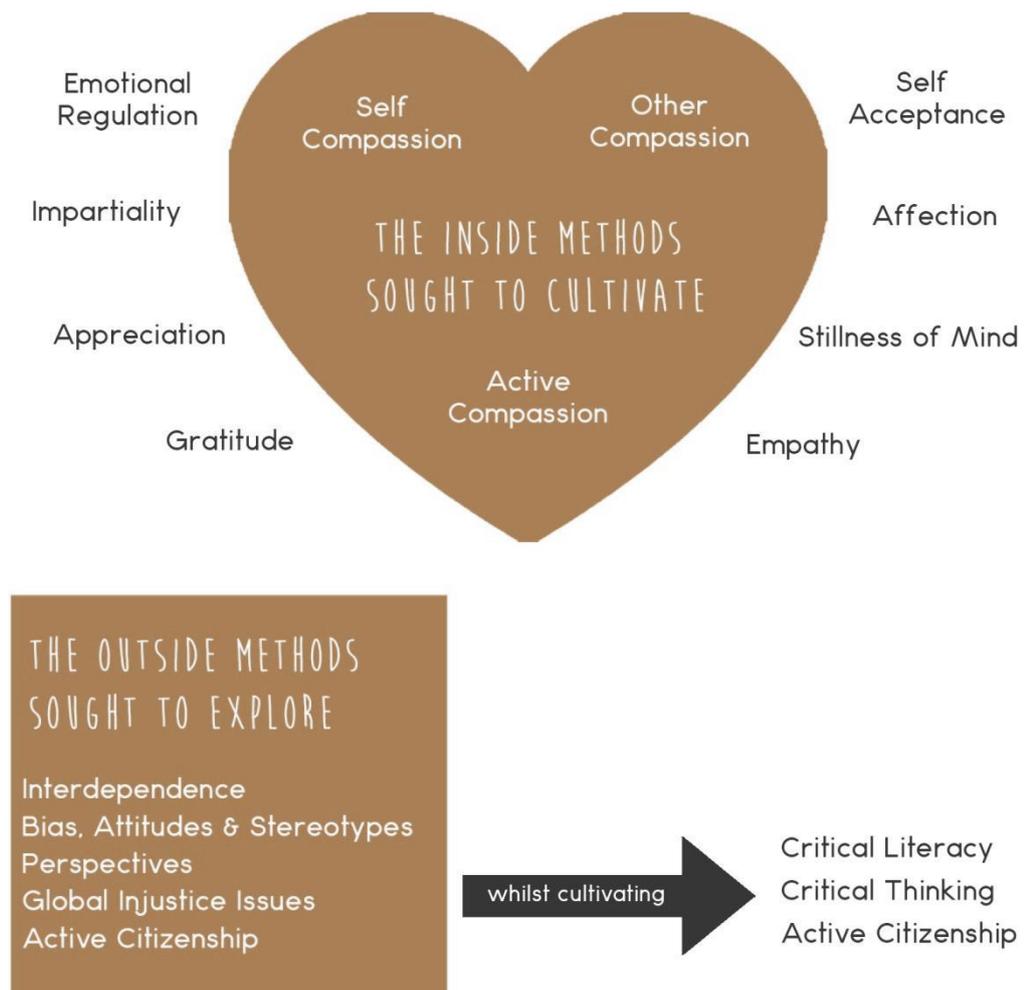
Based on these questions, Children in Crossfire hosted a series of consultation seminars with key stakeholders, including 200 educators and DE practitioners, and up to 50 young people. Educators and DE practitioners highlighted that “there is a need to develop a deeper level of emotional capacity alongside critical thinking so that young people develop more courage to take part in life in general, as well as working to build a more just global society”. The young people stated that “they have a lot of responsibility on their shoulders”, and it takes a “lot of energy and head-space to try to fix all the problems with our world”. Educators further stated that “young people are being failed miserably, as we as a society do not focus enough on their emotional skills for life and citizenship, and expect them to have positive values to act for peace and global justice without adequately skilling them at both an emotional and thinking level”.

Therefore, recognising a possible gap in Children in Crossfire’s DE pedagogical approach, the organisation sought to develop its DE methods to nurture compassion and emotional literacy

alongside critical thinking and critical literacy. Further, it sought to combine curriculum elements such as well-being, personal development, critical thinking and active citizenship.

Intervention Steps

1. Children in Crossfire's DE team initially undertook training to build knowledge, skills and understanding of emotional literacy learning approaches. This was conducted through a process of [Cognitively Based Compassion Training](#) (CBCT) under the direction of Dr Brendan Ozawa de-Silva and CBCT founder Geshe Lobsang Tenzin Negi
2. Drawing on CBCT learning, Children in Crossfire shaped a DE programme of learning to be conducted as an 8 week pilot intervention with students aged 11-12 from Oakgrove Integrated College in Derry. 2 classes (14 students per class) took part in the study. One class received an **Inside-Out** programme intervention (beginning with compassion training and emotional literacy elements as a building block for later applying DE issues through critical literacy). The other class received an **Outside-In** programme intervention (beginning with DE issues through critical literacy as stimulus for later applying compassion training and emotional literacy elements)



3. The research findings, alongside further consultations with stakeholders, indicated the need to break the siloed approach between **Inside-Out** and **Outside-In**. Thus, Children in Crossfire’s Development Educators undertook a further period of reflective practice, and evolved the approach in consultation with 10 educators and 12 young people. It was recommended to merge both approaches in symbiosis so that emotional and critical literacy operate as mutually interconnected aptitudes for exploring DE issues
4. Children in Crossfire developed and termed **‘Emotical Literacy’** as a conceptual framework to break the silo between **Inside-Out** and **Outside-In**



Pupils from Oakgrove Integrated College during Educating the Heart

Children in Crossfire’s ‘EMOTICAL Literacy’ approach is complemented by innovative tools, methods and activities which can be utilised for participatory learning in formal and non-formal settings. The below Core Competencies are inherent in ‘EMOTICAL Literacy’ and its connected tools. ‘EMOTICAL Literacy’ remains a Children in Crossfire work in progress.

STIMULUS COMPETENCIES

1. Exploring: global injustice issues, interdependency, interconnectedness, relevant personal experience.
2. Cultivating: awareness of thoughts and feelings, emotional awareness, self-acceptance, gratitude, impartiality, empathic concern, perspectives, cultural understanding, solidarity, universal values, critical literacy, communication skills, self-expression, creativity, discernment, confidence.

PROCESSING COMPETENCIES

1. Affirming: inner conviction, inner courage, wisdom.

RESPONSE COMPETENCIES

1. Embodied Action: taking informed and sustained action for global justice as a teacher, student, school, educator, individual.



Access further information, including ‘**Emotical Literacy**’ and Curriculum Links [here](#)

Next Steps

1. The ‘**Emotical Literacy**’ Framework remains a work in progress, and following further consultations with key stakeholders, it will be more extensively presented in relation to theoretical background, pedagogical approaches, curriculum links, and overall how all of these translate into practical implementation methods
2. Innovative tools, methods and activities which can be utilised for cultivating the core competencies inherent in ‘**Emotical Literacy**’ remain in development
3. The research report outlining findings from the initial pilot study will be published in January 2017
4. In 2017 and 2018, Children in Crossfire will conduct a further pilot through the training of 120 primary and post-primary teachers across Ireland

Children in Crossfire welcomes feedback and input from all those interested in the ongoing development of ‘**Emotical Literacy**’ and the underpinning practical tools and methods. Please contact the Development Education department on 02871269898 or caroline.murphy2@childrenincrossfire.org