

# (anti) DiALOGICAL CARDS

**Reflection Cards to mediate critical designs approaches**

**BASED ON PAULO FREIRE'S WORKS**

Versão 2.3 / June 2022

## PRESENTATION

This is a pack of cards that presents concepts drawn from the the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's theory of dialogical and anti-dialogical action.

The material is composed of 16 cards which proposes a debate about Freirean concepts in order to provoke reflection, politicization and process of awareness.

The cards are organized in seven opposite pairs, referring to practices or dialogical/anti-dialogical concepts. Besides, there are two cards that represents dialogical actions methods drawned by Paulo Freire, that may be used for inspiration to critical and politically engaged design practices.

# CONCEPTS

## DiALOGiCAL ACTION

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CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

GENERATING THEMES

PRAXIS

UNVEILING

HUMILITY

SOLIDARITY

DiALOGiCAL LEADERSHIP

## anti-dialogical action

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Cultural invasion

The theme of silence

BlahBlahBlah and activism

Limit situation

Banking education

Empathy

Anti-dialogical leadership

## GOALS:

- ★ To foster critical reflections on past and current Design practices, identifying oppressions and reflecting on ways to fight against them.
- ★ To help in the introduction to concepts of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy.
- ★ To encourage counter-hegemonic and decolonial forms for Design praxis.

## SUGGESTIONS OF USE:

The reflective cards are an open educational material, and can be used in many ways depending on the intended objectives, the time available, the profile of the participants, or the mediator creativity. Some suggestions are:

- ★ **MEADIATION OF DISCUSSIONS ABOUT DESIGN EXPERIENCES:** In groups, the cards may be used to reflect about the lived or present experiences in projects of design. Each participant can choose one or more cards to critically analyse a case.

## SUGGESTION OF USE:

- ★ **GLOSSARY OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY CONCEPTS.** For introductory classes in the linking between the critical pedagogy and Design, the cards may serve as overview material to support in the readings of Paulo Freire's original texts. Presenting the concepts in an organized and synthesized way.
- ★ **CRITICAL SELF-EVALUATION MATERIAL.** During the implementation of design projects, the cards can be used by those engaged to critically reflect on decisions and actions that need to be taken or challenging situations that arise.

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## MEDIA

Print the cards for face-to-face activities:

<https://bit.ly/3Oxei8f>

Use them in digital format for online activities:

<https://bit.ly/3Nv6sL5>

## NUMBER OF CARDS

There are no restriction of the selective use of cards. The mediators may choose whether or not to use the full deck depending on the activity theme or time available.



# Anti-Dialogical Cards

These cards present concepts and approaches that make difficult the development of design projects that are truly participatory, dialogical and transformative of the oppressed reality.

# **CULTURAL INVASION**

It is the imposition of values, techniques, and knowledge from the outside, replacing local culture and eliminating the creativity of the oppressed. Even with good intentions, the invading designer tries to impose to the invaded the “correct way” to be and to transform the world.

# **THE THEME OF SILENCE**

Daily oppressions can lead to the inability of the oppressed to express their opinions or even to choose the topics to be discussed. Silence and its causes should be the first topic to be discussed when this occurs.

# **BLAH BLAH BLAH & ACTIVISM**

Blah blah blah is trying to change the world with just words. Activism is trying to change it with thoughtless actions. It is only action and reflection together (praxis) that can lead to a critical dialogue about the transformations we need. Changing the world while we change ourselves.

# LIMIT SITUATIONS

These are concrete situations that oppress and limit us. They seem to be dead-end mazes that can lead to fatalism, demotivating participants and leading to the belief that we cannot change the world. But "the world is not, the world is being", our actions have brought us here and other choices can lead us to a different world.

# **BANKING EDUCATION**

Education that understands knowledge as a donation from those who think they know it all (educators, designers) to those who think they know nothing (learners, users). It is the act of depositing, transferring, transmitting values and knowledge from one to another, without a critical and transforming dialogue.

# EMPATHY

It is feeling the "pain of others" before designing. Empathy can be an excuse for not actively involving people during design because designers already "know what it is like to be the other". Dialogic action does not need empathy, but solidarity.

# **ANTI-DIALOGICAL LEADERSHIP**

Even with good intentions, this kind of leadership guides the group without critical and collective discussion about reality, with no unveiling, no collaborative construction of actions, no dialogue. Although it fights against oppression, this leadership acts in an oppressive way.



# DIALOGICAL CARDS

THESE CARDS PRESENT CONCEPTS AND APPROACHES THAT HELP TO BUILD DESIGN PROJECTS THAT ARE DIALOGICAL, HORIZONTALS, CRITICALS AND AIMED AT OVERCOMING OPPRESSIONS.

DIALOGICAL ACTION

# CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

IT IS THE RESULT OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES AND EXTERNAL DESIGNERS. IT'S NOT A CULTURAL INVASION, IT'S NOT ABOUT OMITTING YOURSELF, IT'S A COLLECTIVE CONSTRUCTION IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPRESSION.

# GENERATIVE THEMES

IT IS THE COLLABORATIVE AND DIALOGICAL SELECTION OF THEMES FOR DISCUSSION AND FOR DESIGN PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT. THESE ARE EXISTENTIAL SITUATIONS THAT THE OPPRESSED GO THROUGH, AND THAT ARE PART OF THEIR REALITY AND INTEREST. THESE ARE NOT THEMES IMPOSED BY THE DESIGNER.

# PRAXIS

THE RADICAL INTERACTION BETWEEN REFLECTION AND ACTION. ACTION ALONE IS ACTIVISM, WITH NO DIALOGUE AND NO CRITICAL THINKING. REFLECTION ALONE IS VERBALISM, JUST "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH", WITH NO CHANGE IN THE WORLD. PRAXIS IS TRANSFORMING THE WORLD WHILE CRITICALLY THINKING ABOUT IT AND HOW TO TRANSFORM IT.

## DIALOGICAL ACTION

# UNVEILING

NOTHING IS NEUTRAL, EVERYTHING IS POLITICAL.  
UNVEILING IS THE PROCESS OF QUESTIONING  
AND DEVELOPING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS,  
IDENTIFYING WHETHER OUR PROJECT PRACTICES  
REINFORCE OPPRESSION OR HELP IN THE  
STRUGGLE AGAINST IT.

DiALOGICAL ACTION

# HUMiLiTY

NOBODY KNOWS EVERYTHING, NOBODY IS  
iGNORANT. EVERYONE HAS SOMETHiNG TO LEARN  
AND SOMETHiNG TO TEACH. AS DESiGNERS, WE ARE  
NOT SAViORS, AND WE CANNOT SOLVE ALL  
PROBLEMS ON OUR OWN.

# SOLIDARITY

IF EMPATHY IS "FEELING THE PAIN OF OTHERS", SOLIDARITY IS ABOUT RECOGNIZING THAT PAIN, BEING IN SOLIDARITY WITH IT, AND JOINING FORCES IN THE STRUGGLE TO OVERCOME IT. IT IS ABOUT HELPING TO STRENGTHEN PEOPLE IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPRESSION, RATHER THAN KEEPING THEM OUT OF THE PROCESS JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE "WEARING THEIR SHOES".

DIALOGICAL ACTION

# DIALOGICAL LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP AS A KEY ROLE FOR TRANSFORMATION,  
CREATING ENVIRONMENTS OF DIALOGUE WHERE  
DECISIONS ARE COLLECTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS. THIS  
KIND OF LEADERSHIP DOES NOT RELINQUISH ITS  
RESPONSIBILITY TO COORDINATE, BUT DOES NOT  
CONFUSE IT WITH THE IMPOSITION OF ITS WILL.



# CULTURE CIRCLES

IT IS THE HORIZONTAL SPACE WHERE GENERATIVE ISSUES ARE DISCUSSED AND UNVEILED. THE LEADERSHIP MUST COORDINATE AND ENCOURAGE THE DIALOGUE, MAKING IT INCREASINGLY PROBLEMATIC. TO DO THIS, THE THEMES ARE CODED (REPRESENTED VISUALLY) AND DECODED (DEBATED UNTIL THEY ARE UNVEILED).

## CODING / DECODING

CODING IS THE REPRESENTATION OF THE GENERATIVE THEMES THROUGH ARTISTIC, PLAYFUL PROPOSALS THAT CONVERSE WITH MULTIPLE FORMS OF EXPRESSION, SUCH AS PHOTOGRAPHS, ILLUSTRATIONS, PLAYS, ETC. DECODING IS THE PROCESS OF CRITICALLY INVESTIGATING THESE REPRESENTATIONS IN ORDER TO UNCOVER THE RELATIONS OF OPPRESSION THAT EXIST WITHIN THEM.

CHANGING THE WORLD WHILE CHANGING OURSELVES IS A CONTINUOUS EXERCISE AND IT CAN BE A HARD PROCESS, BUT ALSO BEAUTIFUL. WE HOPE THAT THESE CARDS MAY MEDIATE MOMENTS OF PLEASURE AND ENCOURAGEMENT, BECAUSE WE HAVE LEARNED FROM FREIRE THAT TEACHING AND LEARNING CAN'T HAPPEN OUTSIDE OF THIS SEARCH, OF JOY AND BEAUTIFULNESS.

# (anti) DiALOGICAL

## CARDS

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