

# COMMON VALUES:

## *Exploring strategies for finding commonality within contemporary plural communities*



Dissertation submitted as course requirement for the MSc in Education for  
Sustainability, London South Bank University

*By*

Stephanie Cottell

2900942

*May 2014*

*16,334 words*

*Dedicated to my Parents,  
For your enthusiastic and multidimensional support;  
To all my LSBU instructors, mentors, and specifically my dissertation supervisor L. Douglas,  
For sharing your knowledge and advice;  
To my Circle Sisters,  
For helping to keep this vision alive whenever the flame faltered;  
To my Community,  
Without whose open-minded participation this project would have indeed fallen flat;  
To my love CLK,  
For infusing this journey with joyful, bright, and boundless energy;  
And to my daughter Aislinn,  
Who provides my life's deepest meaning.*

## Contents

<b>Abstract</b>		<b>5</b>
<b>Definitions</b>		<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Establishing the Theme</b>	<b>6</b>
	1.1 Introduction	6
	1.2 Education for Sustainability	8
	Sustainability Perspective	9
	Sustainability Values	10
	Community Learning	11
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Research Overview</b>	<b>12</b>
	2.1 Inclusive Approach	12
	2.2 Theoretical Orientation	12
	Critical Realism and Ecological View	14
	2.3 Research Design and Context	16
	Design and Methodology	16
	Context	16
	2.4 Research Question	18
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>20</b>
	3.1 Perspectives on Values	20
	Classical Western Philosophy	24
	Spiritual, Alternative, and Indigenous Worldviews	28
	Cognitive Science	32
	3.2 Engaging the Conversation	
	Approaches in the field	34
	Open Space Technology	34
	Appreciative Inquiry	37
	World Café	38
	Indigenous Models	41

## Contents *continued*

<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Methodology and Methods</b>	<b>44</b>
	4.1 Methodology	44
	Validity	44
	4.2 Methods	46
	Engaging Participation	46
	Activity Selection Rationale	47
	Data Management Process	49
	Survey	49
	Observation	50
	Feedback	51
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Findings and Evaluation</b>	<b>52</b>
	5.1 Survey	52
	5.2 Observation	54
	5.3 Participants Feedback	58
	5.4 Facilitators Feedback	62
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Conclusion and Recommendations</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>References</b>		<b>71</b>
<b>Extended Bibliography</b>		<b>73</b>

## Appendices and Tables

Appendix 1: Swartz Values <i>definitions</i>	74	Appendix 9: Feedback Questionnaire	93
Appendix 2: Invitation letter	76	Appendix 10: Data Analysis Charts	96
Appendix 3: Consent Form	77	Appendix 11: Participant voices	103
Appendix 4: Waste Values Survey	78		
Appendix 5: Session Outline	81	<b>Tables and Diagrams</b>	
Appendix 6: Observation Sheet	85	Figure 1.1: Nested Systems	9
Appendix 7: Conversation Synthesis	86	Table 3.1: Activity Principles	43
Appendix 8: Creative Contributions	92	Table 4.1: Categories of Efficacy	50
		Table 5.1: Base Value Levels	52
		Figure 6.1: Integrated Process	67

## abstract

---

This action research case study is an exploration of values within contemporary plural society, with the aim of identifying approaches that can effectively bring diverse people into meaningful conversation around values and sustainability related themes. The literature review is twofold: in part an investigation into values, how they influence behaviour, and theories around how and why they are formed; followed by a study of several established methods for stimulating group engagement as well as an Indigenous model of participatory dialogue.

The research component involves a case study wherein voluntary participants from a small Canadian community engage in a two day session conversing about values and waste. Three approaches were practiced in the sessions for the purpose of evaluating efficacy. Data collected via surveys, observation, interviews, and questionnaires provided insight regarding effective methods for community engagement in an Education for Sustainability (EFS) learning context. Findings and recommendations for EFS include: supporting World Café, Open Space Technology, and Circle Council as effective methods to engage meaningful conversation around complex topics such as values; exploring the integrative use of these methods as three phases of an ongoing process; mentorship initiatives for new facilitators; and, deeper awareness of personality and psychological dynamics when designing values oriented initiatives for EFS in adult and community learning.

## terms

---

### *Contextual Definitions*

**Pluralism:** The idea that no individual explanatory system or understanding of reality can account for every aspect of life, wherein multiple diverse religious, cultural, political groups and belief systems co-exist and are appreciated within a society.

**Values:** The principles or qualities underlying ones beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours; learned beliefs about what is important in life (Crompton, 2012, p35).

*“The startling fact is that ecological wisdom does not consist in understanding how to live in accord with nature; it consists in understanding how to get humans to agree on how to live in accord with nature.”* Philosopher Ken Wilber, *A Brief History of Everything* (p268)

## **I.I Introduction ~ Community Values within Contemporary Pluralism**

There is little doubt that through the unfolding of space and time human thought has become an interwoven tapestry of values: perspectives, ideas, and beliefs informed by each person’s own story, place, and multilayered context, giving rise to how we act individually and collectively in the world. This complexity is both enriching and challenging to the discourse around the concept of sustainability of the biosphere and life systems as we know them. The range of human worldviews is all over the cosmological spectrum, influenced by a potentially limitless amount of intersubjectivity. Some folks function within the divide and conquer mindset, some are absolutists for specific faith or supposition based beliefs such as Scientific Materialism or Christianity, whilst others embrace a concept of an interconnected, mysterious web of life. In fact, I have experienced significantly conflicting mindsets within myself depending on which facet of life is under consideration. As an individual, this contradiction within self-understanding and awareness presents much like a fractal of our complex contemporary society.

Meanwhile this vivid and animated tapestry is positioned within an overarching bio-physical reality that, from scientific, replicable, evidence-based study amongst others - for example some Indigenous understandings (Nelson, 2008; Turner, 2005; O’Sullivan, Morrell,

O'Connor, 2002), is interdependent upon ecological conditions to support life. 97% of climate scientists agree that these conditions are changing and human activity is strongly implicated (UNEP, 2013; Molina *et al*, 2014). Climate change aside, Earth's ecosystems are under increasing pressure from water exploitation and contamination, extractive industries, toxic emissions, and more.

The aim of this research is to engage a qualitative enquiry into the complex interaction of values, perspectives and associated behaviours with sustainability concerns "on the ground" within a contemporary small community in the global north. Addressing the idea that at some point challenging conversations need to happen between diverse everyday people in order to facilitate important, participatory decision making (Bottery, 2000) and co-created solutions for the common good, I seek to explore and assess different types of approaches which might stimulate these challenging conversations in a safe, respectful, responsive, and creative environment.

The central theme is the exciting challenge of a community or group conversing about their personal and cultural values and potentially identifying commonality, a place from within which may emerge or deepen the awareness of concepts such as mutual benefit and reciprocity: human with human, as well as humans with Nature. Value concepts such as these transcend a dualistic "with us or against us" conceptual framework that, ideally, a pluralistic society also seeks to transcend. In this regard, these values and sustainability focused conversations have the potential to become transformational experiences in a community learning context. Transformational learning, as proposed by O'Sullivan *et al*,

“...involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premise of thought, feelings, and action. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world.”  
(2002, p11)

## **1.2 Education for Sustainability**

Through the process of my own learning in the emerging field of Education for Sustainability (EfS), I have come to understand that inclusive, participatory learning experiences are essential to provide people with the opportunity to engage in real and meaningful dialogue about the challenges we share (Sterling, 2001; Asun and Finger, 2001; Kidner, 2001; Bottery, 2000). The developing EfS philosophy is informed by and co-evolving internationally through the participation of leaders in academic and political institutions as well as civil society. Its emergence can be traced from origins within Environmental Education (EE), Development Education (DE), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Proponents of these fields have been involved in a global discourse for the past several decades regarding the complex interconnections between environment, development, society, and education in a multitude of contexts. (Parker *in* Education for Sustainability Unit 1 study guide, 2008, p51)

There are several key elements that distinguish EfS as a learning model. It's my view that EfS is an educational approach that can help communities face current ecological challenges and understand these interconnections, guiding a journey of collective learning towards a more sustainable society.

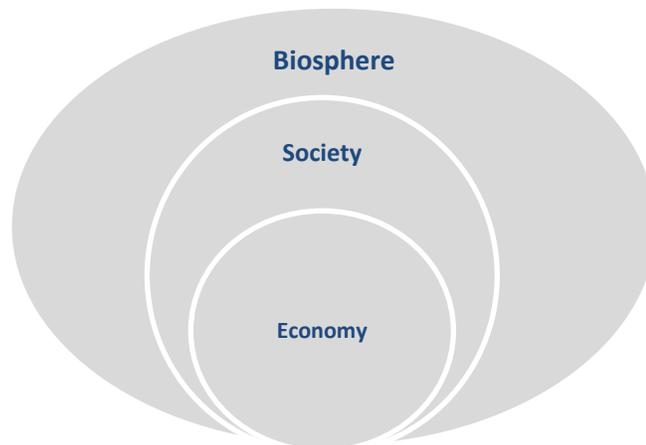
## Sustainability ~ *an EfS perspective*

To clearly understand the nature and implications of EfS it is essential to reflect upon the definition of sustainability as understood and expressed within the EfS philosophy. A quote from Scott (2005) summarizes sustainable development in a way that resonates well with an EfS perspective as:

“...a process of making the emergent future ecologically sound and humanly habitable as it emerges, through continuous responsive learning...[this is] a process which can be continued indefinitely without undermining itself.”

(as cited by Sterling *in* the EfS Unit 7 Study Guide, 2005, p.7)

An EfS understanding of sustainability is also well illustrated by the following diagram of nested systems:



**Figure 1.1 Nested systems** (adapted from the EfS Unit 7 Study Guide, p27)

This demonstrates an inherent hierarchy of systems: the economy as one subsystem of human society, which is a subsystem within the Earth’s network of ecosystems - the Biosphere. This model places the well-being of Bio-systems as the ultimate priority, as the

health, and thus sustainability, of each subset is dependent upon the integrity of our overarching life support system.

## **Sustainability values**

Many EfS proponents further qualify the concept of sustainability with a set of core values. The following core sustainability values have been proposed by leaders in the field:

**Efficiency** ~ relating to efficient resource use and doing more with less;

**Sufficiency** ~ recognizing and rethinking the dominant culture of overconsumption and exploring human satisfaction and meaning in non-material ways; and,

**Equity** ~ this value addresses the gap between wealth and poverty, towards establishing ways to ensure that material and social needs are met fairly and respectfully. This also includes equity for non-human life and systems.

According to Sterling,

“These three values can be seen as the core values of sustainability, any one of which is incomplete without the others. These values give us some grounding for understanding the conditions of ‘systems health’, while their opposites (inefficiency, over-consumption, and inequity) describe conditions for ‘systems breakdown’.” (Sterling *in* EfS Unit 7 study guide, 2005, p28)

Thus, EfS type thinking is associated with specific “fundamental principles, qualities, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours” (Crompton, 2010 p35).

## Theory and Practice in Community Learning

There seems, however, to be a gap between theory and practise towards bringing this concept of sustainability values into the meaningful conversations of people within diverse contemporary communities. We live in a society that often avoids engaging direct, inclusive conversations around subjects that are perceived as controversial or polarised. We may hear academics, scientists, celebrities, politicians, philosophers, and spiritual leaders in debate, but we usually do not engage, inclusively and directly, in these conversations ourselves. There seems to be an implied sense that this avoidance of confronting differences, assuming a sort of non-judgemental relativism, is what allows pluralism to function. I assert that this avoidance may be among our greatest limitations to growing universally appreciative social pluralism in our communities and discovering, at the center, our commonalities of meaningfulness that transcend the dominant yet superficial modern consumer paradigm. Margaret Wheatley expresses a similar understanding that she has developed over 40 years of community work all around the world:

“We are all human. The unique expression of culture and tradition that give us such interestingly different appearances are based on the same human desires for learning, freedom, meaning, and love. You and I are yearning for the same things~ wherever we are, using whatever means we have available.” (Wheatley, 2009, p11)

Yet uncertainty remains regarding how to effectively draw people together to explore and experience commonalities that traverse the values- landscape of our plural communities. This is the compelling motivation of the research at hand.

## 2.1 Inclusive Approach

My intention is that this research enquiry be critically reflective and purposeful while also appreciative in tone. The literary review component will explore the understanding of values from the perspectives of contemporary sociology, science, classical philosophy, spiritual, and Indigenous worldviews - looking at the proposed core sustainability values of *efficiency*, *sufficiency*, and *equity* through each of these lenses. This serves to acknowledge the subjective nature of pluralism and to examine with curiosity, rather than advocate for a single correct cosmology. My rationale for this inclusive approach is that within a diverse community activity it can be expected that participant's base self and social concept will be informed by one of, or a blend of, these value frameworks.

The literature review will also investigate conversational approaches, some activities that have been established as effective practices within the facilitation and organizational leadership sector as well as an Indigenous model. This review will inform the methodological framework of the action research component, providing a purposive selection of specific approaches to engage community conversation and evaluate for efficacy in this real world context.

## 2.2 Theoretical orientation ~ a research paradigm

An appreciative yet critical review of multiple perspectives certainly does not release this research from the influence of my own perspectives and values operating within an overarching theoretical orientation.

Through formal and experiential life-long learning I have come to a non-dogmatic understanding of the universe as composed of complex and interdependent physical, biological, and socio-cultural systems interacting and influencing each other, evolving into and co-creating a common reality. Physicist David Bohm has conceptualized this idea as explicate within implicate orders of being ~ an understanding that "...everything is enfolded within everything else." (*Selby in Morrell, O'Connor, and O'Sullivan, 2002 p82*)

Another conceptual framework that has influenced my view is that of 'levels of presence' as discussed by David Selby (*Selby in Morrell, O'Connor, and O'Sullivan 2002 p81*). He suggests a mechanistic, objectively measurable first level of presence. The human, socio-cultural, relational systems (both between humans and humankind with nature) could be viewed as a second level of presence, the level of interdependence. The dynamics within this level are subjective, challenging to measure, yet powerful in their effect via beliefs and associated behaviours. The behaviours and choices that people make based on their beliefs and experiences have a profound influence on the function and dysfunction of all systems at all levels. There is also a very influential dynamic between objective knowledge and the subjective interpretation of that knowledge by an individual or philosophy. For example, someone may see the evidence of polar ice melting as a critical call to action regarding climate change, whereas another may interpret it as an opportunity for further resource extraction and transportation. This demonstrates the subjectivity of facts associated with perspectives, which is a fundamental limitation of relativism. In the case of climate and ecology, realms of the global commons, action (or inaction) based on fact interpretation effects the whole regardless of whether those interpretations are shared. Therefore, the resulting impact becomes objectively real for the whole on the objective 'cause and effect' first level, rather than subjectively relative to the individual

(Babie, 2011). Therein is the reason for collectively exploring and proposing common values in relation to our ecological well-being, lest we

“...drift so far towards relativism, subjectivism and postmodernism that we can no longer be definite about their existence and the desirability of asserting them.”(Pepper, 1996, p294)

### **Critical realism within an Ecological worldview**

Physicist Fritjof Capra defines a paradigm as:

“A constellation of concepts, values, perceptions and practices shared by a community, which forms a particular vision of reality that is the basis of the way the community organises itself.” (as cited by Sterling *in* the EfS Unit 7 study guide, 2005, p42)

My research perspective and paradigm is most closely aligned to that of critical realism, which asserts a:

“ ‘common sense’ view of reality; that humanity is rooted in the natural world and that people live in their relationship with nature.” (Plant *in* the EfS Unit 8 study guide, 2005, p48)

To me, the view through this lens indicates a reality that exists as an inter-play of objective and subjective dynamics. These diverse dynamics must be, to the most possible extent, appreciatively recognized, valued, and examined as important contributing factors to the whole process of living.

My perspective is further informed by an ecological and relational worldview. As a non-religious, non-Indigenous, fourth generation Canadian woman, I feel that my worldview is one that is an on-going, co-created process of experience, reflection and response rather than a traditionally inherited set of absolute beliefs. Of course, I am not

completely free from entrenched assumptions that I continually attempt to identify and understand with self-curious vigilance.

According to Sterling,

“Increasing numbers of writers are pointing to the emergence and nature of what many call an ecological – that is, a relational – worldview. This worldview is sometimes called 'participative', or 'co-evolutionary' or a 'living systems' view.”(Sterling *in* the EfS Unit 7 Study Guide, 2005, p53)

This emerging ecological paradigm or worldview informs, inspires, and co-evolves an associated educational sub-paradigm. It is a holistic philosophy wherein:

“The purpose of education is essentially transformative. The nurturing of an ecological (or relational) consciousness is seen as necessary to realise healthy and sustainable systems in all human processes. Learning is seen as experiential, explorative, emergent and systemic, involving co-enquiry and co-learning in real world situations where possible. In EfS circles, this paradigm supports a cultural shift towards ‘sustainable education’ and ‘learning as change’.”(Sterling *in* the EfS Unit 7 study guide, 2005, p57)

This account of EfS resonates well with my own perspective, a strong rooting point from which to explore the concept of engaging community in *conversations* as learning and possibly *conversations as active community change*.

As Anne Doshier, a respected elder in the field of community dialogue, simply states:

“People think talking is not action. That’s a mistake. Conversation is a profound action that helps us to expand our consciousness and connect together parts and people that are separated.” (Doshier as cited by Brown, 2002, p214)

## **2.3 Research Design and Context**

### **Design and methodology**

The action research will focus on one community in conversation around values and waste. Presented as an exploratory case study, a detailed account of the methodology and methods used in this research is provided in chapter 4. The research will be informed through a participatory process, engaging several different group activities as well as a written survey. Feedback from the participants will be gathered by means of interviews and questionnaires, providing a rich substrate from which to draw both appreciative and critical insight into how groups of people can move forward through challenging conversations towards empowered, mutually created solutions for strong sustainability and healthy community.

### **Context: a community case study**

Many communities are engaged in a transition process towards more sustainable practices (James and Lahti, 2004; Starhawk, 2011; Hawken, 2007). These communities encounter challenges, barriers, limitations, and opportunities related to their particular circumstances. One recurrent central challenge is the range of values and behaviours within diverse populations and the perceived difficulties around communicating about these differences in respectful, inclusive, and responsive ways (James and Lahti, 2004; Crompton, 2012). This research will focus on a specific scenario in which to explore potentially beneficial approaches to stimulating challenging community conversations.

## Sketching the Scene: Thetis Island, BC, Canada

The scenario at the heart of this research, my home community of Thetis Island, is dealing with an increasing volume of waste. Thetis Islanders are in the process of refining a “sustainable” locally operated waste management system. Results of a recent referendum confirmed the community’s overwhelming support to keep our waste management services local, fostering economic and ecological sustainability.

Volunteer leaders on Thetis Island have understood the critical role of community learning in achieving waste reduction goals. Their aim is to transform waste associated behaviours that directly impact economic, social, and ecological well-being on this small island. It’s also understood that to inspire authentic learning rather than imposing a predetermined agenda it should happen in a way that is integrally inclusive and actively participatory.

This need for participatory community engagement is consistent with the findings of international sustainability researchers. Recommendations from the UNESCO Decade of Education for Sustainable Development reports identify that lifelong learning, including adult and community education, is vital in capacity building towards a sustainable future. (Sterling *in* the EfS Unit 7 study guide, 2005, p31)

Additionally, discussion around adult learning theory and sustainability issues determines that:

“The ecological crisis is the ultimate challenge to adult education, as there is no way out of this vicious circle except through individual and collective learning.”(Asun and Finger, 2001, p.120)

Leaders of the Thetis Island waste management system have discussed taking steps towards their aim by drafting a community charter which will, in part, identify the waste *values* of the community. However, upon contemplating this charter, the question arises: What *are* the “common waste values” of the community?

Thetis Island is a contemporary community with a varied demographic of backgrounds and perspectives. The waste management system is not without its strong critics. Should the leaders draft a charter outlining common values without the participatory input of the broader community it could understandably and justifiably be met with fierce opposition because “generally people support change they feel they own, and resist change they feel is externally imposed”. (Sterling, 2004, p81)

To be a truly participative learning initiative it makes good sense that the community should be engaged in meaningful, inclusive conversations about their personal values around waste, identifying those that might be considered shared or common within the community as well as those that are different.

The context described here presents a potentially rich research scenario where there is an existing desire to engage a challenging community conversation. Providing a real world situation where I can explore the primary research question of this enquiry, I can, in the spirit of reciprocity, provide service to my community by offering back the generative ideas and collective wisdom around *waste values* arising from the sessions.

## **2.4 Research Question**

This enquiry makes no attempt to pose a concise theory or hypothesize on a certain concept to be either proven or disproven. My approach is to explore and observe different

methods, collect feedback, analyse the data, and evaluate their efficacy in a community learning context with an EfS theme. My overall aim: to become better informed as a life-long learner and practitioner in the developing field of Education for Sustainability, and to share my learning with others for the best benefit of all. At the outset I do not champion any of the particular approaches to be explored. Therefore my primary research question is open and curious in nature rather than reductive.

- ***What are some effective approaches to help diverse communities or groups identify their common values?***

Clearly this query can't be answered with a simple yes or no. But, though expansive, the dynamic of this question is also purposive, which is appropriate for an action research project focused towards learning for change. Identifying commonality within pluralism through meaningful conversation has been established as a theme, and the work of the research will engage the practice of various conversation-based approaches in a real community context.

Some ancillary questions that surface to be explored, analysed, and evaluated within the research process and findings include:

- *In which circumstances might a specific approach be more effective than others?*
- *What, if any, are the benefits of engaging a variety of approaches?*
- *What are some common conditions that foster purposeful community conversation?*

My goal is that this case study will provide insight into these questions, and useful recommendations toward good practices in community learning around values and sustainability will emerge.

## chapter three

## *literature review*

### **3.1 Perspectives on Values**

Is there a common understanding of what values are, where and when they apply, and shared values to which we collectively subscribe? Sociologist Dr. Shalom Swartz has been exploring the question of overarching, cross-cultural values for over two decades. His research poses that there are ten value categories into which the limitless permutations can be grouped. These are (alphabetically listed rather than in order of importance): Achievement, Benevolence, Conformity, Hedonism, Power, Security, Self-direction, Stimulation, Tradition, and Universalism (Swartz, 2009). Expanded definitions of these values can be found in Appendix 1, p74.

Swartz's deep, cross cultural enquiry into values has led him to the following understanding regarding their nature:

- (1) Values are beliefs that are interconnected with emotional affect.
- (2) Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action.
- (3) Values transcend specific actions and situations.

(4) Values serve as standards or criteria.

(5) Values are ordered by importance relative to one another.

(6) The relative importance of multiple values guides action.

According to Swartz,

'The trade-off among relevant, competing values is what guides attitudes and behaviour. Values contribute to action to the extent that they are relevant in the context (hence likely to be activated) and important to the actor.' (Swartz, 2009, p3)

In my view, were the previously espoused core sustainability values of *sufficiency*, *efficiency*, and *equity* to be evaluated according to the Swartz categorization, they would be underpinned by the following base values:

Efficiency: *achievement, self-direction, benevolence, and universalism*;

Sufficiency: *achievement, self-direction, benevolence, and universalism*; and

Equity: *achievement, and universalism*.

Tradition, conformity, security, and stimulation could also be argued as relevant. For example, consider traditional adages such as "Waste not, want not". Conformity values may be activated if new sustainability-minded social norms are developed, and true security may follow if universal needs were met equitably for all. Also, many people are highly stimulated by the ecological challenges of meeting needs efficiently, sufficiently, and equitably. This is demonstrated clearly by the vast and growing alternative countercultures including movements such as permaculture, appropriate technology, living systems science, Transition Towns, do-it-yourself, and more (Hawken, 2007; Starhawk, 2011).

There is an important difference between benevolence and universalism. Swartz defines benevolence as goodwill and charitable attitudes towards people or places that have a direct connection to the individual; for example family, community, nation, and respectful treatment of your own surroundings. Universalism extends that sense of care to the whole Earth. In fact there often presents a dualism between the two if one feels like they must choose the direct, short term well-being of their family at the expense of the well-being of the whole, or vice versa (Swartz, 2009).

Upon reflecting on the work of Shalom Swartz, it became clear to me that community conversations around values are especially desirable in circumstances where it is not our social norm to connect our values to seemingly mundane issues, for example garbage. According to researcher Paul-Marie Boulanger, any substantial attempts change to our actual consumption and waste behaviour

“...will be most effective if they bring about higher-level changes in the socio-economic-cognitive system – i.e., by changing cultural values or worldviews.”

Boulanger points out that the

“...present high level of consumption in western societies (and more and more in non-western societies as well) could not occur without a socio-cultural conception of wellbeing and happiness that fosters the pursuit of ‘materialistic’ values (‘indulgence’, ‘pleasure’, ‘comfort’) more than non-materialist values of self-control, spirituality, simplicity, etc.”(Boulanger, 2010, pgh 48)

Therefore, there is certainly an imperative to seek out effective methods to engage this higher level learning of the “socio-economic-cognitive system”, within which pluralistic

contemporary community is located. In an environmental values study around the concept of “locus of control”, it is proposed that the discrepancy between an individual’s environmental values and their behaviour could be attributed to their feeling of lack of control and power within the broader societal values paradigm (Jonsson and Nilsson, 2014). Similarly, when Garvill and Nordlund (2002) incorporated a Swartz Values theory research approach to data collection around the relationship between values and pro-environmental behaviour, their findings demonstrated that *norms* are a primary intermediating factor between values and behaviour. They assert that having conversations about norms and values are beneficial in increasing our collective understanding, concluding that:

“It is meaningful to talk about a general disposition to act to protect the environment and towards general pro-environmental behaviour.” (Garvill and Nordlunds, 2002, p753)

### **Our Values: How are they formed?**

Exploring the question of what values are and whether we share common fundamental values naturally leads to queries regarding how we understand the very development of our values. This study is complex, but my reading has led me to group these underlying and interwoven threads into the following broad areas:

- Classical western philosophy (which also informs classical and neo-classical economics);
- Spiritual perspectives, alternative, and Indigenous worldviews;
- Cognitive and neuro- science.

Certainly in the pluralistic post-modern era it is unlikely that individuals are influenced by solely one of these knowledge bases. It is another question altogether as to the extent people are aware of their own values system and the roots from which their perspective grows. Consequently, I believe it is useful for EfS practitioners' intent on stimulating "values" oriented conversations to have a broad scope of understanding as to what may have over a lifetime implicitly influenced their own perspective, as well as a deep awareness of the origin and range of multiple views.

### **Classical western philosophy**

Classical western philosophy is historically connected to the ancient Greek, and subsequent enlightenment era thinkers. Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, and Locke are all familiar characters within the western philosophy narrative (Pepper, 1996). Renowned statements such as "I think, therefore I am" (Descartes, 1637) are taught in a very peripheral way to students as they work their way through studies such as Western Civilization. However, the strong influence that this philosophical system has in regards to acknowledging and validating the overarching ideologies of existence, knowledge, and values upon contemporary thinking is often more deeply implicit than openly considered. According to Foucault's concept of Power-Knowledge, social power and knowledge are inherently linked, and knowledge cannot be fully appreciated unless the underlying power relations are clearly understood (Palys, 1997, p423).

There were and are different schools of thought among classical western philosophers. However, the lasting legacy of the centuries has been the predominance of Cartesian Dualism; the separation of mind and matter (Robinson, 2012; Pepper, 1996; Kidner, 2001). This vein of philosophy, paired with early understandings and interpretations

about natural selection, strongly informed the development of the mechanist, deterministic worldview pervading general western philosophical and scientific attitudes for the past few centuries; the cause and effect, objectively measurable, rational observer in a hierarchical position over observed physical phenomena. This is reflected in the following words of Descartes:

“I was desirous to devote myself to the search after truth, I considered that I must do just the contrary, and reject as absolutely false every-thing concerning which I could imagine the least doubt to exist.” (Descartes, 1637, Discourse on Methods of Rightly Conducting one’s Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences)

This logic based, objective, deductive and dismissive perspective is foundational to modern philosophy. Approaches to values thinking such as Distributive Justice, the Method of Reflective Equilibrium, and Values Theory (Schroeder, 2012) have grown from these roots. Formulaic in that conclusions are deducted through a process of reason based on a pre-established premise (*a priori* knowledge), this mode of thinking has had a significant bearing on valuation in modern social and economic systems, as well as in human relationship to our natural environment. It’s based on the assumption of a certain order, with human rational thought being the superior tool for categorizing truth and placement in that order. At one time, the authorities of this hierarchical order were the Gods, then one God, and in the most recent chapter, the Rational Scientists (Pepper, 1996; Wallace and Hodel, 2008).

There are seemingly endless permutations of western philosophy with the central concept of the “autonomous rational agent” (Bottery, 2000, p40). However, there is a unified belief in an absolute *a priori* premise on which to dismiss, justify or validate

knowledge; whether it be via analytics, externalism, behaviourism, neo-Cartesianism, positivism, reliabilism, or pragmatism(Rey, 2013; Bottery, 2000). This flies somewhat in the face of contemporary pluralism (which accepts multiple perspectives) as a concept. Power-Knowledge dynamics do seem strongly indicated in this regard.

Any set of scientific facts themselves are subject to a broad spectrum of interpretation, as different scholars and researchers come to very different conclusions around the same data depending on their own subjective orientations (Maslow, 1966). Ironically, the modern pursuit of science is partially what has led to a dazzling lack of unanimity around the fundamentals of life. One feels as though the rationalist tendency to revert back to the enlightenment model formula is because of its safe and easy orderliness, a place for everything and everything in its place. However, the short-comings have been becoming evident for some time around the limitations of ‘black box’ reductionism (Wallace and Hodel, 2008), wherein everything that can’t be measured or quantified objectively is tucked away in a black box as if irrelevant, or, to use another metaphor, “swept under the rug”. And yet entrenched premises and assumptions around such basic concepts like intelligence itself are being challenged by more exploratory scientific research (Narby, 2005).

In regards to modern philosophical methodology’s influence on values in regards to economic policy, we see leaders who question the reductionist paradigm’s ability to meaningfully address sustainability concerns and core values. For example classical economist Herman Daly:

“Economic policy for sustainable development must no longer seek solutions to economic problems in terms of the modern central organizing principle of

growth, but in terms of the traditional principles of sustainability, sufficiency, equity, and efficiency.”(Daly, 1996)

It’s interesting that Daly defines the values *sufficiency*, *equity*, and *efficiency* as traditional, implying that something morally meaningful had been lost along the journey from early classical philosophy, such as in Aristotelian thought, to its neo-classical derivations (Bottery, 2000).

Similarly, systems scientist Donella Meadows and her research fellows’ state:

“The transition to a sustainable society requires a careful balance between long-term and short-term goals and an emphasis on sufficiency, equity, and quality of life rather than on quantity of output. It requires more than productivity and more than technology; it also requires maturity, compassion, and wisdom.” (Meadows, *et al*, 1996, p10)

Here, Meadows draws a correlation between neo-classical reductionist values with the aspects *short-term*, *quantity*, *output*, *productivity*, and *technology*. The other aspects (essentially the hidden costs that have been swept under the rug or locked in the black box) connect with sustainability values: the terms *long-term*, *quality of life*, *maturity*, *compassion*, and *wisdom*.

As critical of the reductionist philosophy as this review may seem, I appreciate that there continues to be a valid role for rational, quantitative approaches rooted in the classics within contemporary, participative decision-making, so long as the limitations and appropriateness of its scope, relevance, and power implications are acknowledged. Clearly most people within a western context have, if implicitly, learned to automatically operate

within the parameters of this ontology, and so certainly this type of deterministic thinking and associated values formation will be present within any diverse community conversation. For many, this is their comfort zone. They will be challenged to frame a perspective from any alternative lens, or understand the rational purpose in doing so. Many people will not easily recognize the limitations of this orderly paradigm, and this reality must be understood and appreciated when fostering a safe, inclusive, and responsive conversational environment.

### **Spiritual, Alternative, and Indigenous Worldviews**

Within a modern ideological paradigm that is pragmatically rational and secular, religious, spiritual, Indigenous, or alternative cultural beliefs are painstakingly separated from public arenas such as education, governance, and economics (Pepper, 1996). This progressive mindset had an important role in our evolution out of a long history of religious and socio-cultural dogmatism encroaching upon people's freedom and well-being. However, through this progression, have we lost a connection with some deep, integral values that seem almost intangible from the *status quo*, secular perspective? (Kidner, 2001) Concepts such as *sacred* and *holy* are being revisited, not necessarily in tandem with a specific religious faith or belief structure, but as a reflection upon our understanding of value as one species living within a richly diverse biospheric planetary home.

Thomas Berry is a respected eco-philosopher and leader. In his collection of essays entitled *Evening Thoughts; Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community*, Berry approaches the concept of sacred in a universally accessible and non-dogmatic way. He explores the benefit of experiencing life in terms of "modes of being" (Berry, 2006) where we have aspects of self-reference as individuals interwoven with universal-reference as beings living

in relationship within a whole. He envisioned the concept of *Biocracy*, with our relationship with Nature as a “sacred trust” where:

“The resilience of the community of life and well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air.

The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern for all people.

The protection of the Earth’s vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.” (Berry, 2006, p32)

Margaret Wheatley speaks about embracing a sense of sacred as an everyday experience as opposed to a rare, otherworldly one. She expresses it as

“...the feeling of life revealing it’s true nature.” (Wheatley, 2009, p136)

This understanding has inspired her to pose searching, “values” oriented questions within the context of community conversations, such as:

*Do I feel a vocation to be truly human? What do I believe about others? What am I willing to notice about my world? What is the relationship I want with the earth? When do I experience sacred? When have I experienced working for the common good?*

Wheatley reminds us that the word “whole is from the same root as Holy”, suggesting that by deepening our personal awareness of interdependency and holistic relationship we might rediscover that experience of holiness, reverence, and wonder in the world (Wheatley, 2009, p93).

This approach to exploring values is much contrasted with the perspective of neo-classical western philosophy. It will be criticised by those who feel uncomfortable with the

moral and spiritual implications, or those with valid concerns regarding ecocentric ideology potentially leading towards totalitarianism. However, it resonates with the core ethics of growing movements such as permaculture, which has three simple and equally important fundamental values (Hemenway, 2000):

*Care for People, Care for the Earth, Share the excess.*

According to a broad spectrum of Indigenous elders and researchers many of their cultures also embrace a holistic world view, a perspective of interconnectedness, where human needs are addressed and valued in context to the needs and well-being of all life (Pepper, 1996; Kidner, 2001; Nelson, 2008, Turner, 2005). Concepts of balance, stewardship, and reciprocity are intrinsic within the teachings of their cultural myths and legends. Human beings are only one aspect of a greater whole. The Nuu-Chah- Nulth Nation of British Columbia have articulated the philosophy “Hishuk ish ts'awalk' or “Everything is One”.

The Kwakwaka'wakw of the now Canadian west coast expressed their relationship with Nature through the phrase “q'waq'wala7okkw” or “Keeping it living”. This phrase reflects an inclusive approach to living in harmony with the ecosystem and is consistent with historical ecological evidence of careful management of resources, conservation, and gentle, subtle enhancement and cultivation (Turner, 2005).

Perspectives from leaders of over twenty indigenous groups from around the world are shared in a collection of essays, *Original Instructions; Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future* (Nelson ed., 2008). The integral value of interdependency between one another and Nature is one theme of their collective voices. There is certainly much to be

gained by opening the conversation to these different views. These less conventionally acknowledged perspectives regarding humanity and nature combined with concepts such as *sacred* and *holy*, connect well with and potentially enhance the meaningfulness of the values *efficiency*, *sufficiency*, and *equity*.

However, it is also important to recognize that a romanticized view of any culture is naïve and potentially harmful. There is historical evidence of Indigenous cultures having had negative ecological impacts within their regions (Pepper, 1996, p25). In truth, from a socio-historical view, it is difficult to understand with clarity historical and current Indigenous culture unaffected by western and global influence and interpretation. One consequence of colonialization has been the pressure for Indigenous peoples to embrace the dominant economic world view, which leads to obvious contradictions and conflicting interests within espoused traditional Indigenous cosmologies. One such example is with the Cree/Dene First Nation in Fort McKay, Alberta, where the Indigenous leadership in that region is profiting financially from the environmental degradation caused by oil extraction in the tar sands (Stainsby, 2007).

Globally, the Indigenous population exceeds 350 million (Nelson, 2008, p3). There is growing awareness of Indigenous issues through social network movements such as Idle No More and national reconciliation efforts such as the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, coupled with the strong presence of Indigenous leaders and groups in cross-cutting environmental initiatives such as the Yinka Dene Alliance(2012). Given this growing recognition and involvement, it is highly likely that Indigenous worldviews, as well as alternative perspectives that have been influenced in part by Indigenous understandings, will begin to have a stronger presence within our community conversations.

## Cognitive and Neuro-sciences

The conventional and alternative perspectives reviewed above may seem like they've emerged from radically different places. Yet recent explorations in cognitive and neuro-science suggest that they are formed through the same inherent bio-neural process through which our cognitive unconscious creates primary and complex metaphors, allowing us to interpret, understand, and navigate the cosmos. George Lakoff, a prominent cognitive scientist, defines this new understanding as the *embodied mind*, wherein our body-mind experiences are inherently interconnected, our mental operations biologically embodied rather than separate.

The term "cognitive" refers to any type of mental operation or structure that can be studied in precise terms via neural modeling (Johnson and Lakoff, 1999, p11). The neural modeling research involves analysing thought processes using neural-linguistic parameters into core categories, concepts, and experiences. This research has led to Lakoff's theory of two primary metaphors that have co-evolved and strongly inform our current human understanding and interactions, implicitly influencing our relationships with one another and the cosmos. These primary metaphors are the *Strict Father* and the *Nurturing Parent*. These basic metaphorical frameworks develop complexity through their extension from the base familial context to broader arenas such as community and nation. For example, someone who operates predominantly within the strict father framework carries that perspective into to their ideas about politics, education, and crime.

Indeed it is interesting to transpose this theory onto the philosophical perspectives reviewed earlier in this chapter. One can easily reflect upon the parallels between classical western and neo-classical philosophy and a 'strict father' metaphorical framework, and

likewise the 'nurturing parent' imagery within some of the alternative worldviews. But what are the implications of this theory in regards to our values? Lakoff and Johnson assert that this new understanding is extraordinary in all areas of life and applicable to every human endeavour (Johnson and Lakoff, 1999, p512).

“Unless we know our cognitive unconscious fully and intimately, we can neither know ourselves nor truly understand the basis of our moral judgements, our conscious deliberations, and our philosophy.” (Johnson and Lakoff, 1999, p15)

Cognitive theory is important to explore within this enquiry because it deepens the gaze into why and how we, as a plural society, have collectively evolved our diverse philosophies and worldviews. Are we trapped within the boundaries of these existing primary metaphors, or can we co-imagine better metaphors to serve our collective needs? Lakoff and Johnson assert that we can. Their theory synthesises a broad spectrum of beliefs into two familial based underpinnings. Yet they aren't presented as dualistic, rather the theory unifies; we can recognize in ourselves and each other in the primary, yet nuanced, metaphorical frames providing us reference and orientation in the world. By increasing our awareness of this highly influential bio-neural dynamic, we can empower ourselves to co-create more universally beneficial frames through reflection, contemplation, and meaningful conversation.

In a recent study, “Common Cause report: The Case for Working with our Cultural values”(Crompton, 2010) the concept of deep cognitive frames is also explored in relation to social and political communication and rhetoric, non-profit initiatives, and media and marketing manipulation. In this report, deep frames are defined as

“...the cognitive structures held in long term memory containing particular values. They tend to be relatively stable, *but they are not unchanging or unchangeable.*”(Crompton, 2010, p12)

In addition to the *strict father / nurturing parent* frames, two other influential, contrasting metaphorical frames are discussed. These are *self-interest /common interest*, and *elite governance /participative democracy* (Crompton, 2010, p14). Crompton explores how language phrasing and imagery can either reinforce or challenge these deep frames. Increasing the universal awareness of how our cognitive structures are influenced will help to ensure transparency, integrity, and critical thinking when it comes to implicit or explicit values messaging from any source. With time I can foresee the growth of an empowering, accessible vernacular around these concepts, becoming more prevalent within community discourse.

### **3.2 Engaging the Conversations ~ Approaches in the Field**

Margaret Wheatley claims that

‘Curiosity and good listening bring us back together’ (Wheatley, 2009, p40).

She suggests the following principles to emphasize in any practice of meaningful conversation:

- ‘1. We acknowledge one another as equals.
2. We try to stay curious about each other.
3. We recognize that we need each other’s help to become better listeners.
4. We slow down so we have time to think and reflect.
5. We remember that conversation is the natural way humans think together.
6. We expect it to be messy at times.’ (Wheatley, 2009, p33)

These principles seem relevant in any endeavour to foster a safe and responsive discursive exchange. How we can foster this degree of integrity into our challenging community conversations?

This section will provide an account of several potentially beneficial approaches that have been identified and explore how they may and/or not be effective. These are:

- Open Space Technology
- Appreciative Enquiry
- World Café
- An Indigenous model

### **Open Space Technology**

Open Space Technology (OST) was developed by Harrison Owen over twenty years ago through his work experience in the field of organizational leadership. Since then the process has been engaged at least sixty thousand times in over 124 countries (Owen, 2008, p6). According to Owen, the process unites groups of enormous diversity, and thrives where there is conflict and confusion (Owen, 2008, p8).

OST is a whole systems approach to group engagement. It is nested within the concept of self-organizing systems, and “OST works because self-organization works” (Owen, 2008, p187).

There are four principles and one law which serve as guides to the leader and all participants. These are outlined in Table 3.1, p43. The process of OST begins with the facilitator introducing these principles and the law to the participants. There is a pre-established theme, or problem in mind that participants have arrived with. Participants are invited to post their specific questions, concerns, ideas relating to the theme on a central

bulletin board. These become the potential topics for the OST agenda, which is refined by participants marking topics they would be interested in attending. Whoever posted a topic is responsible for hosting and reporting on that topic, and thus, break out groups are formed. People are encouraged to use the law of two feet, given the freedom to respectfully move about groups at their own discretion. According to the literature, this allows for dynamic cross-pollination and germination of ideas and interconnected thinking. At many OST events a bank of computers is set up so that each group can easily synthesize a “topic report” to be shared with the whole. Through this method, a collaborative documentation occurs, establishing a record of thoughts and possible action-plans (Owen, 2008).

OST was an approach explored recently by researcher Nancy McPhee in a neighbouring BC Gulf Island (McPhee, 2006) engaging conversation around long term community planning. She found that despite some preliminary uncertainty with the process, self-organization in co-creating the agenda did emerge. Some feedback from the subsequent focus groups identified: considerations around the parameters for fostering respectful communication; possible limitations to participant contributions due to concerns about ‘being judged’; how to create safety to talk and listen; and, the benefits of the interactive OST process in building relationships (McPhee, 2006, p72). This feedback addressed some of my questions around the OST process in a real, community scenario. Other thoughts that I had included whether participants would hesitate to put forward a topic if they were obligated to be responsible for its contribution and also whether people would really feel and exercise the freedom to move around the groups once the process got started.

## Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is promoted as a Whole Systems approach that has emerged from the organisational leadership and change management sector. Originated by David Cooperrider, it is influenced strongly by constructivist theory (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005; Mohr and Watkins, 2002) and focuses on identifying the 'positive core' of an organization or group. Proponents identify five principles and five generic processes of AI (Mohr and Watkins, 2002, p 4-5) listed on Table 3.1, p43.

According to Mohr, "Change begins the moment we ask questions" (Mohr and Watkins, 2002, p5), yet in reviewing this approach I had some concerns regarding the exclusivity of only asking positive questions as is clearly the promoted AI practice. From the perspective of critical realism, it seems that principles four and five are somewhat contradictory. There are no boundaries; however there are explicit directions to identify the *positive* experience. Power-knowledge considerations surface around *whom*, for example in an organizational or corporate context, is directing the "positive" enquiry and whether participants will ever be empowered to identify implicit or explicit negative realities as well. In a corporate context, the positive affirmation approach could easily foster known public relations realities such as green-washing. This consideration correlates to the "cultural values frames" theory previously discussed, where activating a specifically targeted value serves to implicitly or explicitly affirm or challenge an existing conceptual frame. This lack of open, balanced and critically reflective engagement has been noted by others as well in research scenarios where 'focusing on the positive' results in the oversight of important negative factors (Preskill and Coghlan, 2003).

In a plural community context, it is reasonable to expect that some participants will welcome and embrace the predetermined spirit of positivity; however others will naturally

react to being unilaterally directed. Thus, in my view, AI may not foster the broadest possible responsiveness that is desired in a meaningful community conversation.

Nevertheless, I do appreciate the fresh, creative and visionary methods that AI incorporates, as well as the recommended practices of using commitments, offers, and requests as a way to integrate change through a collective process.

### **World Café**

The World Café is an approach to engaging meaningful conversations initiated by Juanita Brown and David Isaacs in 1995, and collaboratively explored and refined by a growing international community of practitioners (Brown, 2005). The overarching philosophy of the World Café is that conversations are a core process in the cycle of collective learning and understanding living knowledge, or in Juanita's words:

"...conversations as a co-evolutionary force in human systems." (Brown, 2001 p37)

The World Café method is underpinned by seven principles that are outlined in Table 3.1, p43. In a World Café session there is a clear context, central issue, or theme that brings the participants together. According to Brown's research experience, three key elements warrant close attention when setting the context; *purpose, participants, and parameters*. The aim in designing a café event is to foster coherence without control (Brown, 2005, p49). Thus, though it is an open and only subtly directed process, it is valuable to clarify the purpose of the conversation, why it is important, and identify potentially tangible (i.e.: actions and projects) and more nuanced (i.e.: relationship building) outcomes that may occur.

The environment and ambiance of the room is an important aspect of fostering a fruitful conversation. This means that planning and setting up the space is key

consideration for a World Café host (facilitator). In short, creating comfortable, safe, 'café' like surroundings is a central part of the activity.

There is a lot of discussion in Café literature around forming the initial question. Ideally one wants to form questions that are relevant, yet opening; powerful statements of enquiry that stimulate engaging conversation and actually lead towards the emergence of even deeper probing, connectivity, and cross-cutting ideas. Imagery used describes questions as either short or long-levered, prying open a lidded can. A short levered (i.e. yes or no) question will only crack open the can, whereas a long lever can lift the lid more fully so that ideas can be stirred up (Brown, 2005, p91). Another key consideration in forming a powerful question includes contemplating any assumptions or beliefs that are imbedded within its construction (Brown, 2005).

Small groups are created within the larger whole which theoretically allows for more a comfortable exchange of thoughts and ideas. Paper tablecloths are typically used and coloured markers are readily available at each table for participants to jot down thoughts, drawings, mind-maps, and emergent questions. After an established time period, participants move tables, with one person remaining at each table to help nurture continuity.

According to Brown, a different kind of listening is fostered through the World Café model. Phrases that have been used by Café Hosts include *gathered attention, listening "to, with and for," visual language and visual listening* (related to use of writing/drawing, and visual play). The practice of reflection is integral to the process, and Brown indicates that discovering the optimum balance between dynamic engagement and mutual reflection is a key learning edge for World Café hosts (Brown, 2005 p134). From my perspective as a learner and novice facilitator, this speaks to the nuanced art of facilitation that one can

only grow from practice. Whole group reflection is nurtured through the act of “conversations of the whole”, when participants from different tables share what themes and concepts have surfaced, allowing the group to collectively see patterns and deeper queries emerge. Skilled facilitation is also important in this regard as it is their role to capture the authentic collective intelligence of the group by synthesizing input “in the moment”.

Harvesting and sharing relates to how collective learning is compiled and shared during and at the end of a Café session. Practitioners have recognized that harvesting and sharing what has emerged from the conversation is elemental because it provides nourishment for on-going exploration and action.

The World Café methodology is also heavily influenced by living systems concepts and metaphors such as seed planting, living networks and webs, cross-pollination, self-organization, and emergence. It has been engaged (successfully according to practitioners) as a learning method in a diversity of sectors, from corporate strategizing, to global governance scenarios, to grass-roots civil organizing. However the literature is based on feedback from co-creators and practitioners of the method, who are likely highly invested in promoting the approach. I do not doubt the authenticity of their enthusiasm, but it would be reassuring to read a measure of critically reflective input about the process, for example, when the Café style may have been met with resistance or discomfort.

In Browns’ doctoral thesis, based on the Café methodology, it appears that almost exclusive positive feedback is invited. In one case, she writes about input that was gleaned after specifically asking a host facilitator what allowed the Café experience to be successful (Brown, 2001, p267). Yet in the research there is no direct request for constructive criticism around the possibility of where Café circumstance may have fallen short of expectations.

References to experienced difficulties and challenges are limited, in fact I only came across one elusive statement (with no follow up discussion) from the research feedback data that identified an obstacle: “What’s harder to do is develop a communal sense of what’s there that’s really important” (Brown, 2001, p217).

As a researcher this lack of critical evaluation concerned me and the picture painted was unrealistically rosy. I was also curious about how the World Café method would be received in a real world scenario when people would arrive with their own preferred learning styles and personal perspectives, potentially unfamiliar with more fluid, undetermined living systems dynamics.

### **Indigenous models**

Within the course of my studies in EFS I have explored Traditional Indigenous Knowledge in relation to current global and local issues around ecological sustainability, development, and human rights. Many researchers in the fields of anthropology, ethnobotany, and Indigenous studies have noted that ecological values were inherently embodied within a pervasive worldview of interconnectedness (Nelson, 2008; Turner, 2005).

According to accounts of Indigenous elders, these values were transferred down generations through the stories, myths, and legends keeping the people's relationship with the natural world alive and tangible (Turner, 2005). Within these communities there was ongoing decision making around courses of action that would serve the needs of humans and Nature. In the collection of essays “*Original Instructions; Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future*”, Jeanette Armstrong of the Okanagan tribe in the British Columbian Interior explains her peoples’ approach to decision making called *en’owkinwiwx*. It was a process that occurred continuously in an informal way in community, as well as formally

when needed in a community council. Community members were designated to speak for different aspects that would be affected by a decision. There were land-speakers, children-speakers, mother-speakers, speakers for the elders and the medicine people, and visionary speakers. From a young age, these individuals were trained to ask questions about the impact each decision would have upon their specific area of responsibility.

This idea models inclusive community participation in the intent to balance human and ecological preservation (Nelson, 2008, p66-74). Armstrong specifies the strong consideration that was traditionally given to the minority voice, sharing the Elder's teaching that ignoring the minority voice will create conflict that will ultimately break down community (Nelson, 2008, p70).

Sadly I was unable to find more detailed literature around current, practical applications of this participatory approach. Consequently I have many questions around the process and implications of this practice, such as protocols and structural method, as well as the influence of Power-Knowledge dynamics in this context.

Activity	Open Space Technology	World Café	Appreciative Inquiry	<i>En'owkinwiwx</i>
<b>Principles /Laws</b>	<p>1) Whoever comes are the right people.</p> <p>2) Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.</p> <p>3) Whenever it starts is the right time.</p> <p>4) When it is over, it is over.</p> <p><b>Law of Two Feet:</b> Freedom to move around from group to group or elsewhere.</p>	<p>1) Set the context.</p> <p>2) Create hospitable space.</p> <p>3) Explore Questions that matter.</p> <p>4) Encourage inclusive contribution.</p> <p>5) Cross pollinate and connect diverse perspectives.</p> <p>6) Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions.</p> <p>7) Harvest and share collective discoveries.</p>	<p>1. The Constructionist Principle: systems evolve in the direction of images we create based on questions we ask.</p> <p>2. Simultaneity: Change begins during enquiry.</p> <p>3. The anticipatory principle: present behaviour is influenced by the future we anticipate.</p> <p>4. The Poetic Principle: that there should be no creative boundaries and constraints.</p> <p>5. The Positive Principle: more positive questions will be more long lasting and effective.</p> <p><b>Five generic AI Processes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose the positive as focus of enquiry.</li> <li>2. Inquire into exceptionally positive moments (collect stories/interviews).</li> <li>3. Share stories and identify life-giving forces (collective meaning-making via focus groups, and summits).</li> <li>4. Create shared images of a preferred future (songs/skits/collages/writing).</li> <li>5. Innovate and Improvise ways to create that future (commitments/offers/requests).</li> </ol>	<p>All possible aspects and perspectives are represented and have opportunity to be heard.</p> <p>Occurred continuously in community as well as formally in councils.</p> <p>Special consideration is given to <i>minority and marginalized voices</i>.</p>

**Table 3.1 Activity Principles ~** compiled by S.Cottell

## 4.1 Methodology

This action research is qualitative in nature, engaging a case study approach that is exploratory and inductive rather than explanatory. In the style of grounded theory, where a central theory or concept emerges from the research process itself (Palys, 1997, p79), this reflexive approach is strongly indicated for enquiries that focus on subjective themes such as pluralism and values (Palys, 1997). Grounded theory methods rely on various processes of conceptual ordering (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2002, p378), extracting typology, patterns, and relatedness from a broad spectrum of generated data, and, through induction, ideally arriving at a crystallization of key concepts. These findings may provide a direct answer to a central question with clear recommendations for integrating the research; they may uncover the prevalent need for deeper or more expansive enquiry, or they may present some degree of both outcomes.

### Validity

Validity concerns whether the research measures what the researcher thinks it measures (Palys, 1997, p428). The quality and integrity of this action research will be measured within the parameters of qualitative research *Trustworthiness* as discussed by Malcolm Plant (*in the EfS Unit 8 study guide, 2005, p117*). The four components of research trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability:

**Credibility:** This correlates with the concept of internal validity and the believability of the findings. In this scenario, the survey, observational, and feedback data is recorded and filed, thus the findings can be readily substantiated and supported by the data. Also, there

is an aspect of personal accountability, having engaged this research project within my home community where the final thesis will be made available to project participants.

**Transferability:** Similar to external validity, this component relates to how well a body of research can be applied to other contexts. Despite this being a case study, the findings could be used to inform other EfS type community or organizational learning initiatives with similar aims. Transferability also connects to the concept of *ecological validity*, referring to the “representativeness of the treatments and measures used in relation to the particular milieu to which you wish to generalize” (Palys, 1997, p414).

As this research unfolds in a real world scenario, it provides a unique opportunity to assess the conversational activities within ‘the milieu’ of a contemporary pluralistic community, thus it is “...representative of the ecology of our situation of interest.” (Palys, 1997, p259)

**Dependability:** Affiliated with the conventional research term *reliability*, this considers whether the same outcomes would happen if the same research process were followed in the same context but at a different time. In this regard I acknowledge that there are variables involved in this research which could affect the outcomes, such as the attitudes and energy levels brought to the sessions by the participants, facilitator, and myself that could fluctuate depending on conditions both objective (weather) and subjective (grief or frustration). For example, at the time of this research I am recuperating from a severely fractured leg which has influenced the research session planning and delivery process in several ways. Due to such variables, I feel a qualitative, experiential case study such as this is impossible to replicate.

**Confirmability:** This relates to the objectivity of the research, to confirm that the findings have not been influenced by the bias of the researcher. As transparency is the most effective approach to maintaining objectivity, I am confident in the confirmability of this project in that I have acknowledged my own theoretical perspective and orientation early in the thesis. Though I have my own worldview, my aim in this endeavour is not invested in a particular outcome, but rather to maintain an open-minded enquiry with critically appreciative intent.

## **4.2 Methods**

### **Engaging Participation**

To initiate this action research project the Thetis Island community was invited to attend three facilitated activities designed to stimulate conversation around common waste values, as well as independently complete a written survey around the topic. The invitation letter (Appendix 2, p76) was distributed as broadly as possible by means of manual delivery into resident's post office boxes, posting on our local email network, as well as our community blog. Interested community members self-selected as volunteer participants in this project. All participants were asked to sign a letter of informed consent (Appendix 3, p77), and questions in regard to the background, purpose, and design of the research were warmly welcomed.

I chose the method of self-selection because the participation required a time commitment, therefore interest in the theme. It was likely that a random selection process would have resulted in few participants. However, rather than selecting individuals in the community that I felt might be interested, I wanted to invite as much diversity to the project as possible. This part of the research presents the greatest limitation in that there

were certainly more polarised perspectives in the community that were not involved in the conversation. Within this small community there is an awareness of my personal commitment to sustainability, perhaps contributing to an assumption that less likeminded voices wouldn't be welcomed.

That being said, I was pleased with the spectrum participants. There was a full range of ages and backgrounds, from a high school student to a retired professional forester. Congruent with the concept of ecological validity, self-selection is the most realistic way in which people would engage in activities such as this in a democratic pluralistic context.

Other areas of weakness and limitation regarding participation included the small size of the group and thus a limited range of feedback, as well as clarity in communication around the *purpose of the research* as opposed to the *theme of the conversation sessions*. Though I was proactive in clarifying my aim whenever possible, some of the participants continued to interpret that actually establishing consensus around local community waste values, or providing direct recommendations to the local waste management body, was the primary purpose of my research. Rather than being problematic, this aspect allowed for my own deeper learning in regards to clarity, subjectivity, and the wide spectrum of interpretation around communication.

#### **Activity Selection Rationale and Planning:**

I selected three approaches to be engaged within the sessions because my time was limited to two afternoons. A session outline can be found in Appendix 5, p81. The following points summarize my reasoning for selecting the World Café as an opening activity, followed by Open Space Technology, and ending with a Circle Council informed by the traditional Okanogan tribal process, *en'owkinwiwx*.

### 1) World Café

- it's social and conversational style, which was appropriate for initial community engagement with the theme;
- the balanced approach of small group and whole group interaction;
- the integration of drawing and writing as modes of expression for participants;
- familiarity, as I have participated in *similar* small group processes, but always with likeminded people who enjoy new learning methods. I was curious about how it would unfold in a more plural context.

### 2) Open Space Technology (OST)

- It's established 20 year history fostered confidence in the method;
- Philosophical association with systems thinking concepts such as self-organization and emergence. I was interested in seeing this in action;
- OST was used in a similar research scenario on a neighbouring island, as discussed in the literature review. It seemed beneficial to compare and build upon existing knowledge and field experiences.

### 3) Circle Council

- Connection and integration with my past work in EfS exploring traditional knowledge, human development, and ecological issues;
- The "simulation game" concept in adult and community learning is innovative and experimental, whereas the other approaches were more established;
- The potential to engage and observe an alternative cultural/values mindset with a group of contemporary western, non-indigenous participants;
- The opportunity to bring other voices and perspectives into the conversation. There was a strong representation of similar values within the group of voluntary

participants, and this activity allowed for the inclusion, contemplation, and appreciation of less compatible views.

### **Data Management Process**

From the outset, the data collection, analysis, and evaluative process was cyclically reflexive and iterative (Plant, EFS Unit 8 Study Guide, 2005 p111), beginning with feedback generated from the survey and informing the subsequent phases of the action research. Participants' responses to the survey provided insight into the different levels of understanding around the research aims and process and the relationship to the contextual theme, Waste Values, of the community conversation itself. This insight influenced my attention to the type of data collected during the observation of the conversation activities. Subsequently, what I observed during the activity sessions informed the direction of my questioning in the interviews and feedback questionnaires. Also the planning of the sessions themselves informed the scope of my analysis, as I began to develop an interest in not only how the different approaches compared to each other in efficacy, but also to consider how they worked together as integrated activities in regards to order and flow.

The following provides an account of the data management methods used in the survey, observing the sessions, and gathering and coding the feedback.

### **Waste Values Survey**

The Waste Values survey (Appendix 4, p78) was sent to all participants several weeks in advance of the activity sessions. The purpose of this survey was to establish a baseline of overall and waste related values, as well as to get participants thinking about their ideas around values and waste. There was also a word connection question to explore how people responded to the proposed core sustainability values of efficiency, sufficiency, and equity in regards to waste.

In order to strengthen the reliability of the baseline data, the survey design included a variety of questioning styles including attitude and Likert scales, word associations, and open ended questions. It should be noted that there is an inherent margin of error in what people report in a survey compared to their actual behaviour.

The information gathered from the attitude and Likert scales were coded according to the Swartz Values system, each response possibility corresponding with one or a combination of the base value categories: Achievement, Benevolence, Conformity, Hedonism, Power, Security, Self-direction, Stimulation, Tradition, and Universalism. The data was tallied and scaled into charts that demonstrate the levels of base values and waste associated values of the respondents.

### **Observation parameters**

In the process of designing the activity sessions, ideas began to surface around concepts and themes to look for as indicators during activity observation. Participation, inclusion, clarity, and responsiveness in pluralistic conversational environments became conceptual themes that informed the design of my observation sheets (Appendix 6, p85) used during the sessions. Through the process of analysing the observation data, the following four categories of efficacy emerged.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>Inclusivity</b>	<b>Clarity</b>	<b>Responsivity</b>
<b>INDICATOR</b>	volume, tone, energy level, movement,	Openness, listening capacity, monopolization, polarization, overt conflict, subtle conflict	General comprehension, repetition, uncertainty around process	Generative and creative capacity/output, reflective capacity, change dynamics
<b>REFLECTING</b>	The ease of involvement, the interest expressed, and the range of contribution (verbal, written, visual) from the participants in each activity.	The feeling of safety and the acceptance/tolerance/appreciation of differences within the group in the context of a specific activity.	How well people understood the process of the activity, as well as the perception around the purpose or point of the activity.	The generated outcomes of the activity, in plans for follow up action; changes/impact participants may have experienced.

**Table 4.1 Categories of Efficacy**

This led me to the process of colour coding each category as a method to analyse the observation data, enabling me to create a visually accessible scale and chart through which to present the findings. Repurposing the back side of chart paper from the sessions, I charted the colour coded data as either a high, moderate, or critical comment in regards to the efficacy of the approach in the relevant category. For example, if my observation scale read in the 4-6 range for 'general comprehension' during the World Café session, it would be quantified as a moderate efficacy input for "Clarity" in relation to that approach.

### **Participant feedback**

Feedback from the participants was invited either in the form of an interview or a questionnaire, as chosen by the participant. In both cases I asked open ended questions to encourage the authentic voice and experience of the respondent. Over the two weeks after the sessions I met with seven of the participants, some in pairs and some individually. I took notes during these interviews and they were recorded with permission. Five participants filled out feedback questionnaires (Appendix 9, p93).

Some quantitative data was also requested in order to provide a demographic snapshot of the research group, such as age range and career/background.

As I began to review the feedback data, I found myself looking at the responses connected with the categories of participation, inclusivity, clarity, and responsiveness. It made sense to continue the colour coding process as a consistent method to analyse the participant feedback. While carefully reading and listening to the feedback, I would mark comments with the appropriately related thematic colour. I then followed a similar analytical process as used with the observation data, qualifying each color coded input as either a high, moderate, or critical comment in regards to categorical efficacy.

## Overview

The research findings will be presented in two ways. Through the process of coding I have charted the subjective data in a quasi-objective fashion. This method allows for a clear, general picture of the results. I will also present data in the form of quotes and interpretations from the interviews and questionnaires. Throughout this section, please refer to the data compilation found in Appendix 10, p96. The following provides a summary of the findings and an evaluation of the results.

### 5.1 Survey findings and evaluation

**Swartz Values Inventory:** According to the data, the sixteen respondents demonstrated the following predominant base value levels:

Level	Base Value
Very High	Universalism
High	Universalism, Benevolence, Self-direction
Mid	Achievement, Conformity, Security, Stimulation
Mid-low	Power
Low	Hedonism, Security
Very Low	Hedonism, Tradition

Values are repeated at different levels when they present as even or closely distributed between levels.

**Table 5.1 Base Value levels**

**Waste Values:** The survey data indicates that the most influential base value on respondent's waste values was Benevolence, closely followed by Universalism, and then Achievement (Appendix 10, p96).

I was unable to effectively code and graph the data from question 3 of the survey because respondents answered in different ways. Eleven respondents out of sixteen rated “when considering waste issues I try to balance my own needs, wants, and interests with community economic and environmental issues” as most similar to their thinking. Six respondents rated “environmental impact is my primary concern regarding waste issues, followed by economic factors, and then my own needs, wants, and interests” as most similar to their perspective.

The most selected words connected to waste values were reduce, reuse, recycle (15), followed by responsibility (13), efficiency (12), resourceful (11), and ecological (11). Equity was selected five times (out of sixteen), and Sufficiency had four selections.

## **Discussion**

Initially the purpose of the survey was to stimulate participant’s thinking about the connection between their values and waste prior to the activity sessions rather than provide significant data for the research. However, the results do substantiate the themes discussed earlier regarding values, pluralism, and perspectives as well as the concept of core sustainability values. The findings indicate that people who voluntarily engage in a research initiative such as this demonstrate strong value levels in Universalism, Benevolence, and Self-direction. Moderately invested in Achievement, Conformity, Security, and Stimulation, the respondents do not report to overtly value Power, Hedonism, or Tradition. These results are supportive of the findings of Garvill and Nordlund (2002) that claim people with strong collective or self-transcendent values are more likely to engage in cooperative, pro-environmental activities.

In relation to waste values, the data suggests that respondent’s value of Achievement surpasses their expressed value for Self-direction. Waste is a sustainability

issue, and the value trade-off presented between achievement and self-direction could conceivably carry through to broader sustainability concerns.

In general, strong sustainability themes were consistent in the survey responses. However, the words *efficiency*, *sufficiency*, and *equity* (proposed core sustainability values) did not resonant strongly with the participants. This suggests an opportunity within the EfS field to expand the awareness and understanding of these proposed values, and/or to explore other more appropriate terms having affinity with a broader number of people. It is interesting to note the strong presence of the three R's, indicating a degree of success in campaigns over the past two decades to promote these as norms in western society. This suggests to me that conformity may have a stronger influence on respondents than they are aware of or profess, and also speaks to the power of social marketing on our cognitive unconscious. Engaging conversation about "the why" (*value*) behind these new behavioral norms may serve to deepen the meaningfulness informing their actions, enabling people to think beyond superficial short term solutions such as recycling to contemplate more implicit factors such as the dominant consumer paradigm.

## **5.2 Activity Sessions ~ Observation Findings**

A descriptive narrative of the sessions can be found in Appendix 10, p97 along with the data charts. My observations speak to the efficacy of each approach in the four thematic categories, on a scale of low to high efficacy.

### **World Café**

**Participation:** moderate to high

**Inclusivity:** high to moderate

**Clarity:** equal range of low, moderate, to high

**Responsivity:** high

### **Open Space Technology**

**Participation:** high

**Inclusivity:** high

**Clarity:** low to moderate      **Responsivity:** high to moderate

### Circle Council

**Participation:** high to moderate

**Inclusivity:** equal balance between low and moderate to high

**Clarity:** moderate      **Responsivity:** high

### **Discussion**

The observation findings indicate that each activity presented unique strengths and weaknesses in regards to efficacy. Often one weakness was counterbalanced by increased strength in a different area. I perceived differences within the participants around their reception to the activities in connection to their apparent preferred learning styles. It stimulated contemplation about the relationship between our learning styles and our cognitive value-frames. Does someone with a 'strict-father' metaphorical framework tend to also possess a more deterministic learning style, and how does this impact the efficacy of more open and subjective group activities?

**Participation:** Overall the approaches engaged the group in different ways: World Café was broad and conversational, Open Space motivated more specific, action-oriented brainstorming, and Circle Council was provocatively playful, emotional, and more embodied due to the role-playing. In general participation level seemed dependent on the nature of the individual and their willingness to engage. Even a small measure of hesitance

from one or two people had a strong influence on the indicator scales. In World Café, participation was affected somewhat by one or two individuals uncertainly questioning the process, even though the majority seemed open to it. During Open Space there was a hesitance for people to commit to championing a topic, though overall participation in discussing potential topics was high. Ultimately there were only three discussion groups into which participants were disproportionately distributed. According to the OST principle “whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened” this outcome is fine, however I observed that it was actually unsettling for the group. The problem seemed to be commitment to a topic, leading me to wonder whether this prerogative is essential. In the Circle Council, participation was high because everyone had a role. Though the activity was quite animated throughout, it was clear that some people were more comfortable with role playing than others.

**Inclusivity:** Both World Café and Open Space indicated strong levels of inclusivity. I observed that participants were appreciating one another’s contributions in a safe and respectful way. This included not only listening and reflecting on different perspectives, but also patience with those with recurrent uncertainty with process and purpose. I observed this as an expression of self-organisation in that participants helped each other connect conversation themes and intentions, working together to find their own process rather than requiring specific transmissive instruction. The facilitator was subtly involved in this as well, but more as a floating participant than as an instructor. Inclusivity within the Circle Council was more nuanced. As previously noted, some participants seemed slightly intimidated by the activity. There was also more overt and subtle conflict between the role players as they were often speaking from perspectives other than their own, which heated

up the conversation. However, afterward the group reflected that it was a good challenge to practice inclusion, respect, and consideration for other voices and values.

**Clarity:** My observations around the clarity of purpose and process of each activity suggest that people understand and value a process in relation to their own cognitive framework and life experience and learning style. For example, someone who is familiar with a very structured and objective process will have a difficult time getting the point of a more open and fluid activity. This was clearly a real challenge for some of the participants, because the approaches in this research were open-structured, self-organizing, and without a specific set of objectives beyond conversing around waste values. As a practitioner in the field of EFS working to foster universally empowering interactions, this was an important piece of learning for me. In co-creating inclusive and effective spaces for community conversation every effort must be taken to appreciate the needs of all potential participants. This was also at the heart of my criticism when reviewing the approaches; however it became more tangible when enacting the sessions. It is pivotal to recognize that what is an exciting and clear concept to oneself or even a group may not be so easily understood or appreciated by others.

In the context of the Circle Council, clarity was implicated as not all participants understood, or were able to meet, the request to really take on their role's perspective without filtering it through their own lens. This of course, is a huge challenge to anyone's self-awareness.

**Responsivity:** The most indicative documentation of responsivity is the conversation synthesis slides I compiled directly after the sessions (Appendix 7, p86) and in the Circle Council creative contributions (Appendix 8, p92). The slides show that through the

conversation processes the group was able to identify common and conflicting values around the topic of waste. The secondary questions arising from World Café were provocative of short term and long change, locally and globally. OST then zeroed in on action towards that change. The Circle Council contributions demonstrate creative responsiveness in looking at the topic from other perspectives. My observations revealed a high to moderate level of responsiveness in all activities, indicating each approach demonstrated the capacity to generate unique and valuable contributions, promote reflection around conceptual frames, and broaden ideas and perspectives. This was particularly evident in what was arguably the most challenging activity, Circle Council. As that session ended, participants spoke about how the activity changed them; reflecting on how they react and respond in different circumstances, as well as how easily we overlook and implicitly disempower perspectives when they aren't present. Another noteworthy aspect in this regard is that though there were obviously different cognitive frameworks and preferred learning styles involved in the sessions, the generated outcomes show there can be congruence of sustainability values between very different people and views.

### **5.3 Feedback findings**

This section will summarize and discuss the findings gleaned from participant and facilitator interviews and questionnaires. Please refer to the data in Appendix 10, p101) and note that only 10 of the 16 participants completed an interview or questionnaire, which will influence the results. As with the observation data, the feedback is scaled in terms of high, moderate, to low efficacy indicators in the four thematic categories. I have also included some quotes and excerpts from the questionnaires in Appendix 11, p103.

### **World Café**

**Participation:** high

**Inclusivity:** high

**Clarity:** low

**Responsivity:** high

### **Open Space Technology**

**Participation:** high to moderate

**Inclusivity:** balance between high, moderate, and low

**Clarity:** moderate      **Responsivity:** high

### **Circle Council**

**Participation:** equal high and low

**Inclusivity:** equal high and low

**Clarity:** low to moderate      **Responsivity:** high to moderate

### **Discussion**

**Participation:** There were surprises in the interviews as some people who seemed very comfortable in group situations professed to be initially uncomfortable with public speaking and participation. However, respondents reported that sitting in circles and small groups diminished their discomfort and the movement during World Café kept the energy up and interactions fresh. OST was also strong in regards to engaging participation, as people could choose their topic of interest. However, some participants did speak to feeling obligated to stay at tables because they wanted to be supportive, and/or they had suggested the topic. This was consistent with my earlier analysis that some of the principles in OST are unrealistic if individuals are directly associated with topics, as our

social norms are very powerful. This dynamic shouldn't be dismissed because of a methodological ideal.

The distinct split between low and high efficacy in participation in Circle Council indicates that some people were very intimidated by role-playing, while others were very inspired by a creative opportunity.

**Inclusivity:** The feedback indicates that World Café was felt to be highly inclusive to participants. Often expressed was the feeling that they all had the chance to listen, be heard, and respond to each other. For OST, the range in spectrum of efficacy is connected to reasons previously discussed. Not everyone felt empowered to choose or abandon topics and move around freely as espoused by the OST law. Respondents did indicate that within the topic groups, however, the exchange of ideas was very inclusive. In Circle Council the response to inclusivity was influenced by the fact that participants were charged with challenging roles, stimulating some conflict that didn't surface during the other sessions. In fact the respondent who played the role of industry shared an experience of automatic defense mechanisms triggered by other speakers who were heavily blaming that sector, even though an industry perspective was very different from her own. In this regard, I assert that this experience of seemingly *less* inclusivity is actually a transformative learning opportunity for all involved, challenging participants to be aware of when, where, and with whom we are inclusive, or not. It also demonstrates, in a safe environment, how different communication styles can lead to emotional reactions and/or appreciative responses.

**Clarity:** The low indicator for World Café is somewhat misrepresentative in that most respondents didn't comment at all on this category, suggesting that they had no issue with clarity of the process. But where there was criticism it was very strong, as there was a

contingency of three to four participants who were very uncertain about the unstructured process and open-ended nature of the sessions in general. This corresponds with my observation findings in the same category, and I reiterate the significance of this learning. Further exploration should happen regarding the consideration of objective/mechanist - oriented learners when initiating more subjective approaches. This also has a bearing for the results in Circle Council, as participants shared that they would have liked clearer expectations around their roles. As role playing and simulation is uncommon in our adult learning experience, more time, attention, and encouragement may be required when introducing the approach.

**Responsivity:** Respondents were clearly impressed by the generated ideas from the World Café as they spoke strongly to the multi-dimensional and diverse threads culminating into the final conversation synthesis regarding values and waste. For OST, participants were excited to generate actionable ideas and plans for the community, which satisfied their group commitment to establishing next steps. In fact one of the OST topics grew into collaborative community-led initiative for a local waste reduction challenge.

Despite the reported apprehension of some of the participants, all put effort into the role play exercise. One respondent who expressed being initially terrified by the activity also reflected that it was a great and illuminating way to see from another perspective. This activity also inspired creative contributions, for example a poem as well as a sketch drawn during the activity by the speaker for industry which can be found in Appendix 8, p92. Though the respondent professed to have been highly challenged to think from that perspective, the sketch is empathetic to the burdens of and demands upon industry.

## 5.4 Facilitators feedback

To complete the findings of the study it was highly important to gather Donna's professional reflections, as her perspective will be informed and nuanced by her experiences facilitating with other styles and in other contexts. Within a day of the sessions we engaged in a conversational style interview, exploring her experience facilitating these new approaches. Donna's input was reviewed and colour coded within the same parameters as the observation and participant feedback.

Appendix 10, p102 shows the four categories of efficacy.

**Participation:** From Donna's perspective, participation was highest in World Café, followed by OST, and then Circle Council. Overall, participation was generally strong, people engaged quickly and easily.

**Inclusivity:** In this category, the strongest approaches were World café and Circle Council because of the interactivity and balanced engagement of the whole group. Small, rotating conversations in World Café empowered equal opportunity, and the fundamental premise of the Circle Council provided everyone a role. On the other hand, inclusivity in OST was somewhat more limited due to the process of topic generation, as well as the principles and law. She felt that social norms around not wanting to offend others, as well as personal measures of success and rejection, were real factors in the outset of this activity. Once the groups got started the dynamics were quite inclusive, although there was no movement between tables.

**Clarity:** In Donna's view, this was the weakest category of efficacy across the board; the most effective being World Café, followed by Circle Council, and then OST. Preparing ahead to clarify the opening question in World Café would have benefited those with uncertainty around the broadness of the theme. She was also interested in exploring better ways to establish group consensus around

second questions arising from the conversations of the whole. This aspect of consensus building around topics also carried through to OST. As participants were hesitant to champion specific topics, it fell on the facilitator to pull thought threads together and form cohesion. In Circle Council, she felt that more guidance and preparation was required regarding roles, as well as clarity of expectations and the role of the Speaker for the Council in moderating the conversation.

**Responsivity:** Overall, Donna was impressed by the generative power of all the activities and felt all were a welcome addition to her repertoire. In World Café, she noted unique verbal expressions emerging through the conversations, such as “legitimate and non-legitimate waste”. In her experience, the café conversation cycle built upon itself as a good generative process with a diverse mix of ideas. The outcomes of OST were great and there was a high degree of group excitement about follow-up action plans. In Circle Council, the potential for personal transformation was strong, as it inspired a fresh new way of looking at an issue, especially the personification of the “entity” voices not usually present in our conversation.

## **chapter six** --- *Conclusion and Recommendations*

Revisiting the primary question of this study, what are some effective approaches to help diverse communities or groups identify their common values within an EfS- type learning context? The results demonstrate that World Café, OST, and Circle Council each have the capacity to be effective approaches provided that the design and facilitation of the learning experience makes room for social complexities that will undoubtedly be present. These complexities include factors such as:

- the potential range of perspectives, worldviews, and personalities involved;
- understanding the spectrum of learning styles and formats that participants may feel comfortable with,
- the participants energy and personal circumstances of the day, which will influence overall dynamics, and
- subtle and overt differences between responsivity and reactivity in communication.

The findings in the four categories of efficacy show that the basic methodologies of each style helps to navigate these complexities, however, appreciative and mindful design and facilitation are also essential. All of the methods are integrally subjective and open. For the purpose of clarity and inclusion, those who are uncertain about subjective approaches will be better served by simply and directly naming objectives in an agenda at the outset, such as:

- 1) Converse around our waste values;
- 2) Identify specific topics of interest and action;
- 3) Practice thinking from, listening to, and responding to other values and perspectives.

**World Café:** This method's strength was the capacity to engage dialogue around a broad theme, and via the conversation cycles, draw out the common threads within a diverse spectrum of values frames and personalities. Be clear about the purpose of this activity for the benefit of participants with a strong affinity to structure. Also, refrain from emphasizing impractical parameters within the context of the group, such as "find a new table of people in each round" as it will frustrate numbers-oriented participants if it is impossible to achieve.

**OST:** This approach has strong capacity to generate action-oriented outcomes, emerging from the group and energizing the participants towards on-going initiatives. However, in this case findings

show that having fixed expectations around committing to a topic was an inherent limitation to actually empowering the OST principles and Law of Two feet. It makes sense to me that topics could be generated without an individual's commitment and assigned to a table if there was collective interest. If no one attended the table, it would not reflect directly on an individual's idea. That would eliminate a personal connection and obligation to a topic, and thus encourage topic generation. This may be more or less relevant depending on the context, and should be mindfully considered in relation to EfS initiatives.

**Circle Council:** An attempt to co-create a quasi-Indigenous village council scenario, this approach had strong capacity to stimulate reflective thinking beyond both the individuals and participant "group" lens. Thus it became inclusive of minority and marginalized voices and values beyond those in the room. Though challenging for both participants and facilitator, it was also reportedly one of the more powerfully impactful activities. The feedback suggests that the introduction to this activity could be made clearer by including specific examples, modeling, or practice rounds. With ongoing methodological development, this activity shows potential as a creative yet direct method to explore personal and cultural value frameworks; a safe place in which to experience emotional triggers, become more aware of reactivity, and practice appreciative responsiveness. This enquiry focused on the theme of promoting inclusive conversations amid contemporary pluralism. In this regard Circle Council has the capacity to bring a more inclusive mindset into a context where the values of voluntary participants are aligned and possibly *exclusive*. This is good practice for change agents and early adopters of sustainability values as it increases their awareness of responsive and appreciative communication.

### **Ancillary questions**

- ❖ *In which circumstances might a specific approach be more effective than others?*

The observation data and feedback from both the participants and facilitator indicate that some of these activities may be more or less effective in certain circumstances. OST was an active way to get down to details; and especially effective as a follow up activity to the opening conversation. As a stand-alone activity it may not be as effective if the group is coming together to explore the theme for the first time. On the other hand, World Café was a good method to introduce a new group and theme, but the activity may seem redundant for a group that has already had this initial exploratory conversation or a pre-established goal.

Circle Council was a participative challenge for some. My recommendation is that a role playing activity like this be introduced once participants are familiar with each other and the theme, perhaps in an organizational team or class, or in the middle or the end of a multisession event.

❖ *What, if any, are the benefits of engaging a variety of approaches?*

As each method has unique strengths and weaknesses, engaging a variety is highly recommended. Participants clearly supported the use of multiple activities in their feedback, stating that the diversity kept conversations fresh and active. There was some discussion in the interviews regarding the benefit of scheduling Circle Council in between World Café and OST, as consideration of the Speakers voices may have contributed to the topics and generative out-put of OST.

Through this research, I have come to see the possible integration of these approaches as mutually reinforcing learning cycles, metaphorically conceptualized as an on-going germination and growth process, with initiation at the center:

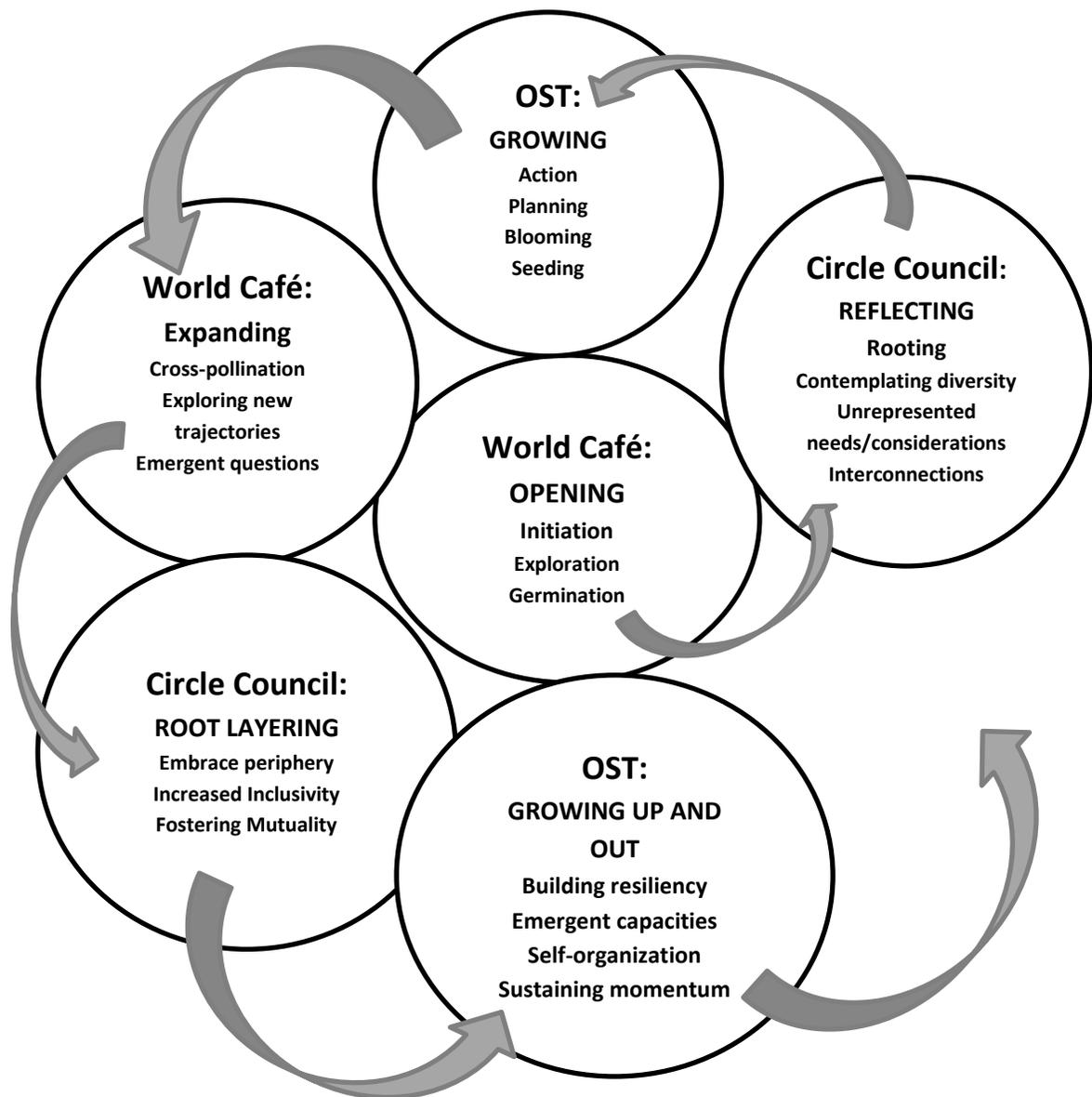


Figure 6.1 Integrated Process created by S.Cottell

More objectively, these approaches could be described as purposive components of a whole systems process:

**1. World Café: Opening**

**2. Circle Council: Reflecting**

**3. OST: Action**

I plan to explore this integrative approach as I continue my work in the field of EfS.

In this research scenario, there was an existing context for the conversation. In other circumstances, it would be important to establish a context. This could be done by hosting

a special guest speaker or documentary to introduce a theme, which would be followed up by the integrated process.

❖ *What are some common conditions that foster purposeful community conversation?*

The sessions embodied a number of conditions that fostered meaningful conversation. Primarily, these were:

- The circular set-up of the room. Participants felt this was an important contribution to inclusivity and appreciative engagement.
- Skillful and experienced group facilitation. Self-aware and flexible responsiveness with each group is an important attribute in this regard. I strongly recommend mentorship initiatives for practitioners new to facilitation. As a less experienced facilitator, I believe that learning relationships between new and skilled facilitators is of utmost importance.
- Blend of whole group and small group components. This created safe and comfortable conversational hubs, while also providing opportunities for whole group threads and ideas to surface for broader discussion and synthesis.
- Diverse modes of contribution: listening, speaking, writing, and drawing, role-playing. There is a wide range of preferred learning styles. Inviting a diversity of contribution enhances the experience and outcomes for all.
- Refreshments as needed and freedom of movement. These activities are hard work, and hard work requires nourishment as well as the ability to come and go when personal breaks are required.

## Directions for further learning

In addition to exploring an integrative approach as mentioned above, I am keenly aware of the need to more deeply understand the personality dynamics present within diverse groups so as to better appreciate and respond to each unique contributor. I perceive that there are strong links between a person's nuanced metaphorical framework, their personality, and their preferred learning style. I would like focus on this relationship in my on-going research.

Engaging this study has reinforced the importance of being alert to my own assumptions in both research and practice. Being a passionate learner inspired and excited by innovative methods, I was caught off guard when others didn't catch the bug or see the point. However, even though in the minority, those that were uncertain and more critical about the sessions provided rich input for informing this study, demonstrating the weaknesses and inspiring creative thinking around how to strengthen the methods for EfS learning initiatives. This outcome resonates with the Okanogan concept of *en'owkinwix*, wherein hearing the minority voices is of utmost importance. Increasing my awareness of Meyers Briggs and similar personality research, as well as exploring their relationship with cognitive value-frameworks and learning styles, would improve my capacity to share and learn with a wider spectrum of people, empowering my ongoing work in EfS.

## *Finale*

This research was an invaluable experience resulting in three creative methods for my practitioner's toolbox. World Café, OST, and Circle Council are all effective approaches to engage conversation around important EfS themes and issues in a community learning context, with the capacity to propel dialogue beyond polarised, ideological positions, and helping participants become more self-aware of their own values and conceptual framework in relation to sustainability

concerns. My recommendations are meant to enhance these already highly useful methods, particularly for EfS in community learning and participative decision-making. I want to express my deep appreciation to the originators of World Café and OST for their unique contributions to life-long learning, as well as to the culture, the people, and the ancestors of the Okanagan tribe for informing the Circle Council process.

## References

- ASUN, J. and FINGER, M. (2001) *Adult Education at the Crossroads: Learning our Way out*. Zed Books, London.
- BABBI, E. and BENAQUISTO, L. (2002) *Fundamentals of social research*. Thomson and Nelson, Canada.
- BERRY, T. (2006) *Evening thoughts: reflecting on Earth as sacred community*. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco
- BOULANGER, P. (2010) *Three Strategies for Sustainable Consumption* [Online] Available from: <http://sapiens.revues.org/1022#abstract>. [Accessed February, 2014]
- BOTTERY, M. (2000) *Education, policy, and ethics*. Continuum, London and NY.
- BROWN, J. (2001) *The world café: Living knowledge through conversations that matter*. PhD Dissertation in Human and Organizational Management submitted to The Fielding Institute.
- BROWN, J. (2005) *The world café: shaping our futures through conversations that matter*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. CA
- COGHLAN, A. and PRESKILL, H. ed (2003) *Using appreciative inquiry in evaluation* in *New directions for evaluation*, no.100. Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
- COOPERIDER, D. and WHITNEY, D. (2005) *Appreciative inquiry: a positive revolution in change*. Berrett-Koehler, Inc. San Francisco
- CROMPTON, T. (2010) *Common cause report, a case for working with our cultural values*. World Wildlife Fund-UK [Online] Available from:
- DALY, H. (1996) *Beyond Growth*. Beacon Press, Boston
- DESCARTES, R. (1637) *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting one's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/cartes1637.pdf> [Accessed May 1, 2014]
- GARVILL, J. and NORDLUND, A. (2002) *Value structures behind pro-environmental behavior*; [Online] Available from: [http://www.rug.nl/gmw/psychology/research/onderzoek\\_summerschool/firststep/content/papers/3.3.pdf](http://www.rug.nl/gmw/psychology/research/onderzoek_summerschool/firststep/content/papers/3.3.pdf). [Accessed February 27, 2014]
- HAWKEN, P. (2007) *Blessed Unrest: How the largest movement in the world came into being and why no one saw it coming*. Viking Press.
- HEMENWAY, T. (2000) *Gaia's garden, a guide for home-scale permaculture*. Chelsea Green, Vermont.
- HODEL, B. and WALLACE, B. (2008) *Embracing mind: the common ground of science and spirituality*. Shambala, Boston and London.
- JAMES, S. and LAHTI, T. (2004) *The Natural Step For Communities, How cities and towns can change to sustainable practices*. New Society Publishers.

- JONSSON, A. and NILSSON, A. (2013) *Exploring the relationship between Values and Pro-environmental Behaviour: the influence of locus of control*. Forthcoming in *Environmental Values*, White Horse Press. [Online] Available from: <http://www.ericademon.co.uk/EV/papers/Nilsson.pdf> [Accessed February 25, 2014]
- JOHNSON, M. and LAKOFF, G. (1999) *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought*. Basic Books; Perseus Book Group, New York, NY
- KIDNER, D. (2001) *Nature and psyche, radical environmentalism and the politics of subjectivity*. State University of New York Press, Albany.
- MASLOW, A. (1966) *The psychology of science, a reconnaissance*. Gateway Editions, Indiana.
- MCPHEE, N. (2006) *Opening space for community conversations*. MSc thesis in Organizational Leadership; Royal Roads University, Canada
- MEADOWS, D.H. et al. ((c)1992, 1996) *Beyond The Limits To Growth: A new update to The Limits to Growth reveals that we are closer to "overshoot and collapse" - yet sustainability is still an achievable goal*. Context Institute [Online] Available from: <http://www.context.org/iclib/ic32/meadows/> [Accessed February 7, 2014]
- MOHR, B. and WATKINS, J. (2002) *The essentials of Appreciative Inquiry: a roadmap for creating positive futures*. Pegasus Communications, Waltham, MA.
- MOLINA, M. et al (2014) *What we know; the reality, risks, and response to climate change*. The American Association for the Advancement of Science, USA. [Online] Available from: <http://whatwewknow.aaas.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/AAAS-What-We-Know.pdf> [Accessed March 23, 2014]
- NARBY, J. (2005) *Intelligence in nature: an inquiry into knowledge*. Penguin Books
- NELSON, M. ed. (2008) *Original instructions: Indigenous teachings for a sustainable future*. Bear and Company, Vermont.
- O'SULLIVAN, E. et al (2002) *Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning*. Palgrave Press, NY.
- OWEN, H. (2008) *Open Space Technology; a user's guide*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. San Francisco.
- PARKER, J. (2008) *Education for Sustainability Unit 1 study guide*. London South Bank University Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, UK.
- PALYS, T. (1997) *Research decisions, quantitative and qualitative perspectives*. Harcourt Brace, Canada.
- PEPPER, D. (1996) *Modern environmentalism, an introduction*. Routledge, London and NY.
- PLANT, M. (2005) *Education for Sustainability Unit 8 study guide*. London South Bank University Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, UK.

- ROBINSON, H. (2012) *Dualism*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), [Online] Available from: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/dualism/>>. [Accessed February, 2014]
- REY, G. (2013) *The Analytic/Synthetic Distinction*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), [Online] Available from: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/analytic-synthetic/>>. [Accessed February, 2014]
- SCHROEDER, M. (2012) *Value Theory*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) [Online] URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/value-theory/>>. [Accessed February, 2014]
- STARHAWK (2011) *The empowerment manual: a guide for collaborative groups*. New Society Publishers, Canada.
- STERLING, S. (2001) *Sustainable education, revisioning learning and change*. Green Books Ltd. UK
- STERLING, S. (2005) *Education for Sustainability Unit 7 study guide*. London South Bank University Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, UK.
- SWARTZ, S. (2009) *Basic Human Values*. [Online] Available from [Accessed February 19, 2014]
- TURNER, N. (2005) *The earth's blanket, traditional teachings for sustainable living*. Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver/Toronto
- UNEP (2013) *The Emissions Gap Report 2013*. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi [Online] Available from: <http://www.unep.org/publications/ebooks/emissionsgapreport2013/> [Accessed March 23, 2014]
- WHEATLEY, M. (2009) *Turning to one another: simple conversations to restore hope for the future*. Berret and Koehler, San Francisco.
- WILBER, K. (2000) *A brief history of everything*. Shambala, Boston.
- YINKA DENE ALLIANCE (2012) [Online] Available from: <http://yinkadene.ca> [Accessed May 11, 2012]

### **Extended Bibliography**

- MCKENZIE-MOHR, D. and SMITH, W. (1999) *Fostering sustainable behaviour*. New Society Publishers, Canada.
- MELCHERT, N. (1994) *Who's to say? A dialogue on relativism*. Hackett Publishing Inc. USA.
- PHIPPS, C. (2012) *Evolutionaries: Unlocking the spiritual and cultural potential of science's greatest idea*. Harper Perennial.
- GASTIL, J. (1993) *Democracy in small groups: participation, decision making, and communication*. New Society Publishers, Canada.

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1. Swartz values definitions** *excerpt from Basic Human Values, 2009, p 3.*

**“Self-Direction.** Defining goal: independent thought and action--choosing, creating, exploring. Self-direction derives from organismic needs for control and mastery (e.g., Bandura, 1977; Deci, 1975) and interactional requirements of autonomy and independence (e.g., Kluckhohn, 1951; Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Morris, 1956). (creativity, freedom, choosing own goals, curious, independent)[self-respect, intelligent, privacy]

**Stimulation.** Defining goal: excitement, novelty, and challenge in life. Stimulation values derive from the organismic need for variety and stimulation in order to maintain an optimal, positive, rather than threatening, level of activation (e.g., Berlyne, 1960). This need probably relates to the needs underlying self-direction values (cf. Deci, 1975). (a varied life, an exciting life, daring)

**Hedonism.** Defining goal: pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself. Hedonism values derive from organismic needs and the pleasure associated with satisfying them. Theorists from many disciplines (e.g., Freud, 1933; Morris, 1956; Williams, 1968) mention hedonism. (pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgent) 2

**Achievement.** Defining goal: personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards. Competent performance that generates resources is necessary for individuals to survive and for groups and institutions to reach their objectives. Achievement values appear in many sources (e.g., Maslow, 1965; Rokeach, 1973). As defined here, achievement values emphasize demonstrating competence in terms of prevailing cultural standards, thereby obtaining social approval. (ambitious, successful, capable, influential) [intelligent, self-respect, social recognition]3

**Power.** Defining goal: social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources. The functioning of social institutions apparently requires some degree of status differentiation (Parsons, 1951). A dominance/submission dimension emerges in most empirical analyses of interpersonal relations both within and across cultures (Lonner, 1980). To justify this fact of social life and to motivate group members to accept it, groups must treat power as a value. Power values may also be transformations of individual needs for dominance and control (Korman, 1974). Value analysts have mentioned power values as well (e.g., Allport, 1961). (authority, wealth, social power)[preserving my public image, social recognition]

Both power and achievement values focus on social esteem. However, achievement values (e.g., ambitious) emphasize the active demonstration of successful performance in concrete interaction, whereas power values (e.g., authority, wealth) emphasize the attainment or preservation of a dominant position within the more general social system.

**Security.** Defining goal: safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self. Security values derive from basic individual and group requirements (cf. Kluckhohn, 1951; Maslow, 1965; Williams, 1968). There are two subtypes of security values. Some serve primarily individual interests (e.g., clean), others wider group interests (e.g., national security). Even the latter, however, express, to a significant degree, the goal of security for self (or those with whom one identifies). The two subtypes can therefore be unified into a more encompassing value. (social order, family security, national security, clean,

reciprocation of favors)[healthy, moderate, sense of belonging].

**Conformity.** Defining goal: restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. Conformity values derive from the requirement that individuals inhibit inclinations that might disrupt and undermine smooth interaction and group functioning. Virtually all value analyses mention conformity (e.g., Freud, 1930; Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Morris, 1956; Parsons, 1951). As I define them, conformity values emphasize self-restraint in everyday interaction, usually with close others. (obedient, self-discipline, politeness, honoring parents and elders)[loyal, responsible]

**Tradition.** Defining goal: respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides. Groups everywhere develop practices, symbols, ideas, and beliefs that represent their shared experience and fate. These become sanctioned as valued group customs and traditions (Sumner, 1906). They symbolize the group's solidarity, express its unique worth, and contribute to its survival (Durkheim, 1912/1954; Parsons, 1951). They often take the form of religious rites, beliefs, and norms of behavior. (respect for tradition, humble, devout, accepting my portion in life)[moderate, spiritual life]

Tradition and conformity values are especially close motivationally; they share the goal of subordinating the self in favor of socially imposed expectations. They differ primarily in the objects to which one subordinates the self. Conformity entails subordination to persons with whom one is in frequent interaction—parents, teachers, bosses. Tradition entails subordination to more abstract objects—religious and cultural customs and ideas. As a corollary, conformity values exhort responsiveness to current, possibly changing expectations. Tradition values demand responsiveness to immutable expectations from the past.

**Benevolence.** Defining goal: preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the 'in-group'). Benevolence values derive from the basic requirement for smooth group functioning (cf. Kluckhohn, 1951; Williams, 1968) and from the organismic need for affiliation (cf. Korman, 1974; Maslow, 1965). Most critical are relations within the family and other primary groups. Benevolence values emphasize voluntary concern for others' welfare. (helpful, honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal, true friendship, mature love)[sense of belonging, meaning in life, a spiritual life].

Benevolence and conformity values both promote cooperative and supportive social relations. However, benevolence values provide an internalized motivational base for such behavior. In contrast, conformity values promote cooperation in order to avoid negative outcomes for self. Both values may motivate the same helpful act, separately or together.

**Universalism.** Defining goal: understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. This contrasts with the in-group focus of benevolence values. Universalism values derive from survival needs of individuals and groups. But people do not recognize these needs until they encounter others beyond the extended primary group and until they become aware of the scarcity of natural resources. People may then realize that failure to accept others who are different and treat them justly will lead to life-threatening strife. They may also realize that failure to protect the natural environment will lead to the destruction of the resources on which life depends. Universalism combines two subtypes of concern—for the welfare of those in the larger society and world and for nature (broadminded, social justice, equality, world at peace, world of beauty, unity with nature, wisdom, protecting the environment)[inner harmony, a spiritual life]"

## Appendix 2: Participation Invitation Letter

Dear Community Member,

November 7, 2013

I warmly invite you to participate in an action research project that I am designing as my master's thesis for the Education for Sustainability (EfS) program, London South Bank University, UK. The intention of the research is to explore different approaches and activities for a group/community to converse about and perhaps identify common values. I will be observing the activities and gathering feedback about people's thoughts and experiences around the processes (as opposed to the content) via questionnaires and interviews. Feedback data will be strictly confidential.

As it is a relevant and timely theme for our community, the focus on common values will be in regards to waste. The question: What are our common values around waste? This is a great opportunity to respectfully share your perspective and listen to your neighbour's thoughts around this often polarized issue. All are warmly welcome, and it would be fantastic to have a real diversity of perspectives represented in the conversation.

To be clear, this is an independent research project **that has not been** commissioned by the Thetis Island Residents and Rate Payers Association (TIRRA), although the work is supported in principle by the TIRRA Solid Waste Management Committee. The research findings and 'conversation syntheses' will be shared openly with TIRRA and the community at large.

Participation details:

- self-identification as a part of the Thetis Island community;
- attendance and participation in three community activities focused on this theme;
- completion of a survey regarding your waste values;
- provision of feedback via questionnaires and/or interviews;
- signed written agreement of understanding and informed consent regarding your participation.

Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

**I am excited to get started organizing and scheduling these activities, and request that folks who are interested in participating get back to me by December 1, 2013.** I anticipate that the activities will be scheduled in January and/or February 2014, although this timeline may evolve as I hear back from the community.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Steph Cottell

250-246-5269

[stephanie.cottell@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.cottell@gmail.com)

**Appendix 3. Research Consent Form**

**RESEARCH PROJECT CONSENT FORM**

**Title of research project:** Common Values: researching strategies for identifying commonality within contemporary pluralistic communities

**Name of researcher:** Stephanie Cottell

**Name of participant:** .....

I have been given information about the research project and the way in which my contribution will be used, and had any questions I have answered. It has been explained to me how the information that I give the researcher or anything else that I tell them will be kept confidential, and that my identity will be protected when the researcher uses the information that I give them.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent to take part in the research at any time.

I give my permission for the information that I am about to give/have given the research for the above project to be used for research purposes only.

**Signed** .....

**Date** .....

## Appendix 4. Waste Values Survey

Hello! The purpose of this survey is to get a sense of participant's preliminary ideas about values, values associated with waste, and waste related behaviours. To keep this survey anonymous, please print out and submit a hard copy to Stephanie Cottell, PO Box 18-2 (separate from your consent form).

This is a short version of the Swartz's Values Inventory. Please circle how you identify with the following descriptions of people.

<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Very much like me</b>	<b>Like me</b>	<b>Somewhat like me</b>	<b>A little like me</b>	<b>Not like me</b>	<b>Not like me at all</b>
It is important to this person to think up new ideas and be creative; to do things one's own way.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to this person to be rich; to have a lot of money and expensive things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Living in secure surroundings is important to this person; to avoid anything that might be dangerous	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to this person to have a good time; to "spoil" oneself	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to this person to help the people nearby; to care for their well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Being very successful is important to this person; to have people recognize one's achievements.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
It is important to this person to always behave properly; to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Looking after the environment is important to this person; to care for nature.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tradition is important to this person; to follow the customs handed down by one's religion or family.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Please read the following statements and circle your most appropriate response.

1. I feel that dealing with waste responsibly is very important to human and environmental well-being.

*strongly agree*      *agree*      *undecided*      *disagree*      *strongly disagree*

2. I feel that the cost of waste management and disposal is more important than ecological concerns.

*strongly agree*      *agree*      *undecided*      *disagree*      *strongly disagree*

3. The purpose of waste management is to keep our built environments clean and more pleasing to live in.

*strongly agree*      *agree*      *undecided*      *disagree*      *strongly disagree*

4. I consider waste management and disposal in my purchasing decisions.

*strongly agree*      *agree*      *undecided*      *disagree*      *strongly disagree*

5. I consider both the cost of waste management and ecological concerns when making purchasing decisions.

*strongly agree*      *agree*      *undecided*      *disagree*      *strongly disagree*

6. I would choose to dispose of my waste (both garbage and recycling) sooner rather than store it at home even if storing it meant a more ecologically responsible management process. Personal convenience takes priority over environmental factors.

*strongly agree*      *agree*      *undecided*      *disagree*      *strongly disagree*

Please rate the following statements from one to six, one being the *most similar* to your thinking:

\_\_\_ When considering waste issues I first think of meeting my own needs, wants, and interests, followed by my family's needs, wants, and interests, then community economic interests, and then environmental concerns.

\_\_\_ When considering waste issues I try to balance my own needs, wants, and interests with community economic and environmental interests.

\_\_\_ I never consider any but my own immediate needs, wants, and interests regarding waste related choices.

\_\_\_ Environmental impact is my primary concern regarding waste issues, followed by economic factors, and then my own needs, wants, and interests.

\_\_\_ The perception of my community has an important influence on my waste behaviours. When those around me change their waste behaviours I am more likely to change mine.

\_\_\_ Government and industry are responsible for managing waste issues; it is not my problem.

Please circle *any* of the following words that you think are connected to your waste values:

*Utility*

*Resourcefulness*

*Minimalism*

*Aesthetics*

*Reuse*

*Reduce*

*Convenience*

*Mutuality*

*Equity*

*Efficiency*

*Sufficiency*

*Responsibility*

*Frugality*

*Ecological*

*Pragmatism*

*Recycle*

*Complacency*

*Apathy*

Can you think of any words you would add?

---

---

Please compose a brief statement that speaks to your waste values:

---

---

---

Do you have any other thoughts or comments you'd like to share?

---

---

## Appendix 5: Research Session outline

### Saturday Feb 8

**Room set-up:** 'World Café style' 4 round tables/4 seats per table (in periphery); Paper table clothes/coloured felts; Electric candles; Plants around room; soft music; center circle of chairs; easels/chart paper for facilitation; coffee/tea/snack table

#### 1pm start:

- Group energizer exercise: "Get to Know Bingo"
  - Welcome/overview/introductions / "check in" around the circle.
- 

#### **Activity 1 (1:30): Conversation Café** (modeled after world café)

**Overview:** participants start at a table. The whole group is given an opening question to stimulate the conversation. There is no specific right or wrong answer that is being sought. New emergent questions are especially valuable. People are encouraged to write/draw/ on the tablecloths throughout. After round one (15 mins), one person is asked to stay at the table as a host. Others get up and travel to other tables. After 2<sup>nd</sup> round we draw everyone's attention to have a "conversation of the whole". One table starts by sharing what has filtered up to the surface at that table. Facilitator records and synthesises threads into themes. Other tables respond to threads/themes (focusing specifically on apparent commonalities and differences). Does a common new question emerge from the wisdom of the group? This could become the question for the next 2 rounds.

**Initiating question** (draft): "What is (or is there) the relationship between our values and waste?"

**Potential second question** (draft): "What is your thinking around the idea of common waste values?"

After another two 'second question rounds' we have one more "conversation of the whole" as described above.

During the break, think about any topics/gaps/questions/keywords that you feel require further conversation. Write them down for our next activity.

#### **Break**

---

#### **Activity 2. Open Space**

## **Collaborative Agenda setting for Open Space**

Revisiting our Theme: Personal and Common Values around waste

**What are the topics around our theme for which you are passionate and are willing to take genuine responsibility for in our session today?**

*'During the break you were asked to consider a pressing issue or topic related to our Waste Values theme that you are passionate about. Is this a topic that you are willing to be responsible for in Open Space session? This means you will host a small group and record/share notes on the topic. You are now invited to put your topic on the paper provided with your name, stand and announce your topic, and post it on the easel.'* Time is given as needed for all to have an opportunity to post (at facilitators discretion). (suggestion 5-8min)

Folks are then given time to look over the board. Some topics may merge. If there are many, we can divide them up into two shorter sessions.

---

**Closing circle:** everyone has a chance to “check out”, sharing general thoughts etc. “Roles” for the Circle Council activity are handed out for the following day. Participants will become “speakers” for these roles in regards to issues around waste and waste values. Folks are encouraged to consider their roles during the time before the next session, making notes/sketches/etc. regarding concerns/themes/concepts to “speak to”.

## **Day Two**

**Sunday Feb 9**

---

**1pm. Opening circle check in and overview.**

**Open space continued.**

**Review the Principles and Law of Open Space**

**Intro of four principles and one law of Open Space:**

There are Four Principles and One Law which serve as guides to the leader and all participants. The principles are: 1) Whoever comes are the right people. 2) Whatever happens is the only thing that could have. 3) Whenever it starts is the right time. 4) When it is over, it is over.

**The Law of Two Feet:** every individual has two feet, and must be prepared to use them. Responsibility for a successful outcome in any Open Space Event resides with exactly one person -- each participant. Individuals can make a difference and must make a difference. If that is not true in a given situation, they, and they alone, must take responsibility to use their two feet, and move to a new place where they can make a difference. This departure need not be made in anger or hostility, but only after honoring the people involved and the space they occupy. By word or gesture, indicate that you have nothing further to contribute, wish them well, and go and do something useful. ([http://www.openspaceworld.com/users\\_guide.htm](http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm))

Session leaders announce where they will be meeting for their topic. They will be responsible to host the topic, record, and share with the whole. People can start at any topic they want, and are free to move around at their own discretion. If the weather is fine, groups can meet outside. If there are two very similar topics, they can merge as negotiated by the Hosts.

Groups are given one hour to meet and then reconvene as a whole. The facilitator will give each host the chance to briefly share and submit the notes from their session. Common threads/recurring themes will be drawn out during the sharing and recorded by the facilitator at the front.

Break

---

### **Activity 3: Community Circle Council simulation**

#### **Convene the Council Circle**

**Facilitator:** *“ I am Donna, Speaker for the Community Circle Council. We have convened this community council to discuss a pressing issue: Our values and issues around Waste. As is our custom, you are each responsible for thinking about issues in relation to a specific consideration. You are tasked as speakers for different aspects within the diversity which together co-creates our Living Community. At our council today there are speakers for the children, speakers for the elders, for the working folks. We have with us speakers for community volunteers, speakers for our industry and business community, as well as for the elected leaders. Also we have speakers for the Air, for the Land, and for the Waters; aspects of the natural world which collectively compose an environmental home in which we can exist.*

*As is our way we will begin the council by traveling around the circle and sharing our initial thoughts. We will introduce ourselves as Speakers for the aspect which we have been charged. We will bring forward the effects and impacts that waste has upon that*

*for which we speak, and how and why the concept of our waste values has meaning in this regard. Each Speaker will have their turn. Everyone will listen respectfully with their whole heart and mind.”*

**Facilitator (After one round):** *“We have now all shared and listened to one another. We now have the opportunity to travel around the circle again and respond to what we have heard. What commonalities of concerns have we discovered? What challenges of diversity? Are there any insights into how we may transform a conflict into something of mutual benefit? Please remind us for whom or what you speak. If you have nothing to share at this time you are free to simply pass.”*

**Facilitator (after second round):** *“At our third travel around the circle we are focusing on clarity and resolution. From the perspective of whom or what you Speak, what would resolution in regards to waste and waste values look like? Is there clarity in that vision? Is there a measure of balance with the views from the rest of the Community Speakers? What could help us move towards that resolution?”*

**Facilitator (after third round):** *“Are there any last thoughts? If so please silently raise your hand and we will speak in the order of the circle.”*

**Facilitator (after final round):** *“This circle council is now closed in the spirit of appreciation for all that has been shared.”*

**Closing Circle:** Questions and follow-up interview plan. Check out.

**Appendix 6:****Observation Sheet****Activity:****Number of participants:****Indicator scales:**

level of participation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Volume of room	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Tone of room:	<i>positive</i>	<i>balanced</i>	<i>negative</i>	<i>fluctuations: moderate/extreme</i>
---------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	---------------------------------------

Energy level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Monopolization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Openness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Change dynamics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Generative cpty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Listening cpty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Reflective cpty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Polarization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Overt conflict	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Subtle conflict	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

**Miscellaneous Notes:**

**Appendix 7: Conversation Synthesis** created by S.Cottell

*Recently a group of Thetis Islanders gathered to talk about values and waste...*

A Polaroid photograph of a handwritten sign. The sign is on a piece of paper with a white border. The text on the sign is written in black and red ink. It reads: "Welcome to The Conversation" where "The Conversation" is in red. Below that, it says "VALUES + WASTE" in black capital letters.

Welcome  
to  
**The Conversation**  
VALUES  
+  
WASTE

## *Opening Question*

*What is the (or is there a) relationship between our values and waste?*



## Conversation synthesis...

### Common threads:

- ❖ *Disconnect*
  - ~ birth to end of product / we are disconnected
- ❖ *Incongruence*
  - ~ with our own internal and external values
  - ~ with our individual and societal values
- ❖ *Conditioning*
  - ~ needs vs wants
- ❖ *All waste is not equal*
  - ~ legitimate vs- illegitimate waste

### Shared Values:

- Sense of Responsibility*
- Desire for Community Solutions*
- Human and Environmental Health*
- Do no Harm ~ Connectedness*
- Up the Standards*
- Awareness ~ and letting go of ego and shame around ignorance*

### Divergent / Conflicting Values:

- Independence*
- Focus "big" vs "small" stuff*
- Safety policies and regulations*
- Entitlement and Convenience*
- Political and Economic influences*

## Important secondary questions emerged:

*What is legitimate waste?*

*What is a realistic goal for our community?*

*How can we effect significant change; locally and globally, small and large scale?*



## What would it take?

**A DRASTIC PERSONAL  
EVENT**  
**INVESTING IN YOUTH**  
~ action oriented skills  
~ education  
**COMMUNITY EDUCATION**  
~ demonstration  
~ financial incentives  
~ disincentives  
~ "How to's"  
**REDUCTION CHALLENGE  
AUDITS**  
**FIND BUY-IN**  
**COMMUNITY CONSENSUS**  
**WAYS TO MEASURE and  
CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENT**



## Day 2: Opening reflections

**What are some challenges to being a  
change agent/early adopter  
(adapter?)?**

- ❖ perceived "righteousness"
- ❖ Insecurity
- ❖ Am I right? (constantly changing info and practices)
- ❖ Do I want to be in the "active promotion of change" position?
- ❖ Unexpected Consequences
- ❖ Exclusion of ideas of others
- ❖ "Divisiveness" possibility
- ❖ Burnout
- ❖ Am I seeing the whole picture?

### Strategies / Ideas

1. Revisit and enlarge the conversation on waste reduction.
2. Look at where solutions might be possible.
3. Use metrics for continuous measurement of improvement (Reduction Challenge!).
4. Visitor's solutions: be open to all input!



*Open Space: our collaborative agenda both deepened the conversation and catalysed us towards actionable ideas...*

*Topics:*

- *The dominant consumer culture and waste*
- *Realistic local waste reduction initiatives and planning*
- *Education and engagement*



## *Dominant Culture...*



## Realistic Local Waste Reduction...

Waste Type	Solution Education /Reduction challenge/ ongoing research
Building materials (wood/drywall/asphalt)	Bigger free store (fee supported?)
Food Scraps (meat/veg) Garden/yard waste	Biodegradable: pig food/compost / anaerobic digesters (home and community)
Plastics(contaminated/recyclable/ not recyclable)	Education about the differences
Glass (refundable / non-refundable)	Glass crusher
Metal	
Paper	
Misc.garbage (diapers, feminine hygiene, "sharps", pharmaceuticals, toxic waste)	Education/Diaper delivery/ bans/pharmacy return program/

*A snapshot of  
group  
brainstorming...*

## Education and Engagement...



## Circle Council

*In circle council, we adopted roles as Speakers for different people and entities that are all an important part of our diverse community; giving voice to those who may not have been represented in our conversation.*

*It was a challenge to take off our own 'worldview lens' and try and see the issue from a different perspective.*

*There were Speakers for working people, for elders, for the marginalized, Speakers for the Air, Water, and Land. There were Speakers for elected leaders, community volunteers, and waste system employees. There were Speakers for industry and for visitors; Speakers for our history and traditions as well as for our Future.*



*The conversation continues and all are warmly welcome...*



## Appendix 8: Circle Council creative contributions *(with permission from participants)*

### Ode to Air

I am air.

O-two.

Two free radicals of oxygen twinned to give life instead of wreak havoc with biological systems.

I am part of water, earth, and fire – the most abundant chemical Element (by mass) in the Earth's biosphere, air, sea, and land.

I was here at the beginning of Life on Earth.

I am vital – to every living cell, organism, biological system.

I enable independence of every living creature yet intimately interconnect all life – past, present, and future.

Scientists tell us that the same molecules of air you breathe this moment were once breathed by dinosaurs.

In many Indigenous cultures, I am the first medicine.

We are relatives, Kin who look after one another.

I am the ultimate Commons, absorbing and diluting out molecules and particles, natural and not so natural, safe and not safe.

Ten seconds without me is uncomfortable.

Ten minutes without me is permanent brain damage.

Every one of you holds me as your highest value, even though if you were asked you likely would not say so.

Because I am invisible, and weightless.

I have no taste or smell.

I am so integral that I am taken for granted. I will always be here, Right?

One of you asked "What if one day there was no clean air to breathe"

And of course there was laughter at the preposterousness – of course

I will always be here!

I have been here since the Beginning.

I will be till the End.

I will always be here for you.

Because when I am no longer here, you will not know, as you will not be.

We are air.

Sketch: Voice of Industry



## **Appendix 9. Feedback Questionnaire**

**Please feel free to answer in whatever form you prefer (ie paragraphs, bulleted notes, mind maps...) and add as much space between questions as required. Feel free to email or submit a hard copy to: PO Box 1-2, Thetis Island.**

### **Individual Activities**

**Day 1. World Café: We played musical tables engaging conversation around an open question.**

**What were/are your initial thoughts on this process?**

**In your opinion, what were the most positive aspects of this activity?**

**What constructive criticism and suggestions would you offer for this approach?**

**Day 2: Open Space: We co-created an agenda of specific topics to be explored in small, potentially fluid groups.**

**What were/are your initial thoughts on this process?**

**In your opinion, what were the most positive aspects of this activity?**

**What constructive criticism and suggestions would you offer for this approach?**

**Day 2: Circle Council: We role-played as “Speakers” for various aspects of community in a Circle Council simulation.**

**What were/are your initial thoughts on this process?**

**In your opinion, what were the most positive aspects of this activity?**

**What constructive criticism and suggestions would you offer for this approach?**

**Integration**

**What do you think about the dynamics of using multiple approaches? In your opinion, what are the strengths and the weaknesses?**

**Was there an activity or approach that you would have liked to have more time for, and why?**

**Do you have any thoughts on the order of the activities?**

**How do you think that the facilitation influenced the activities?**

**How did the overall experience compare with other types of community or organizational processes you've been involved in?**

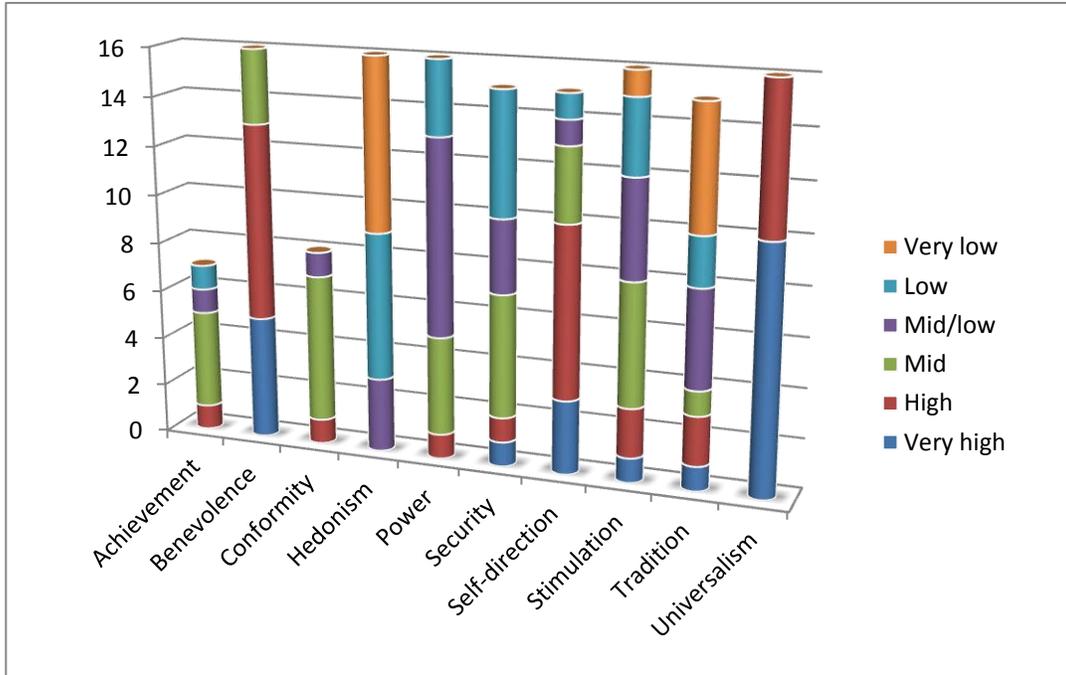
**Please feel free to add any other thoughts.**

**Thanks once again for your valuable time!**

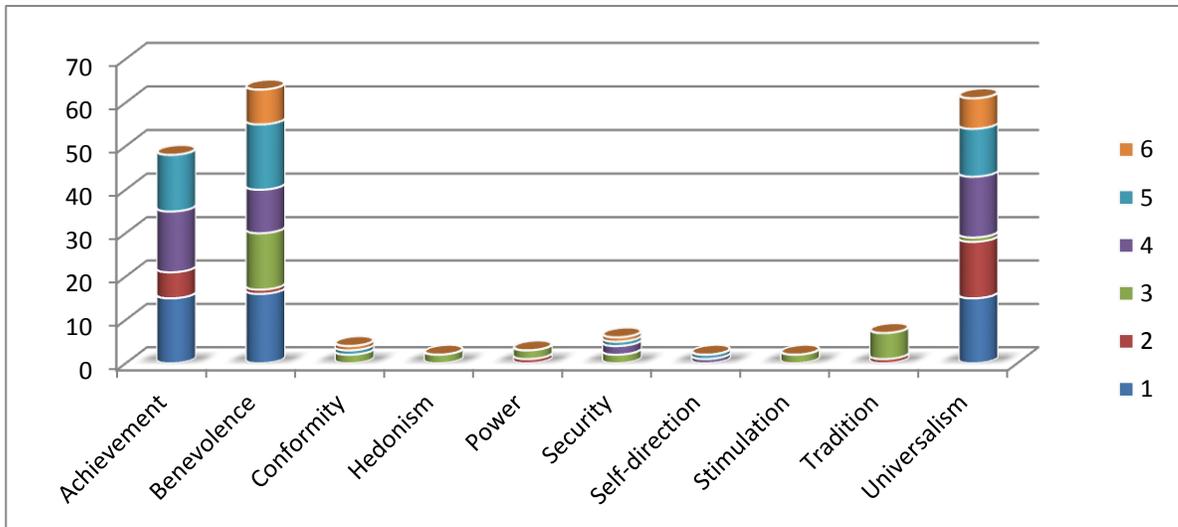
## Appendix 10: Data Analysis Charts

### 1. Waste Values Survey Data: 16 respondents

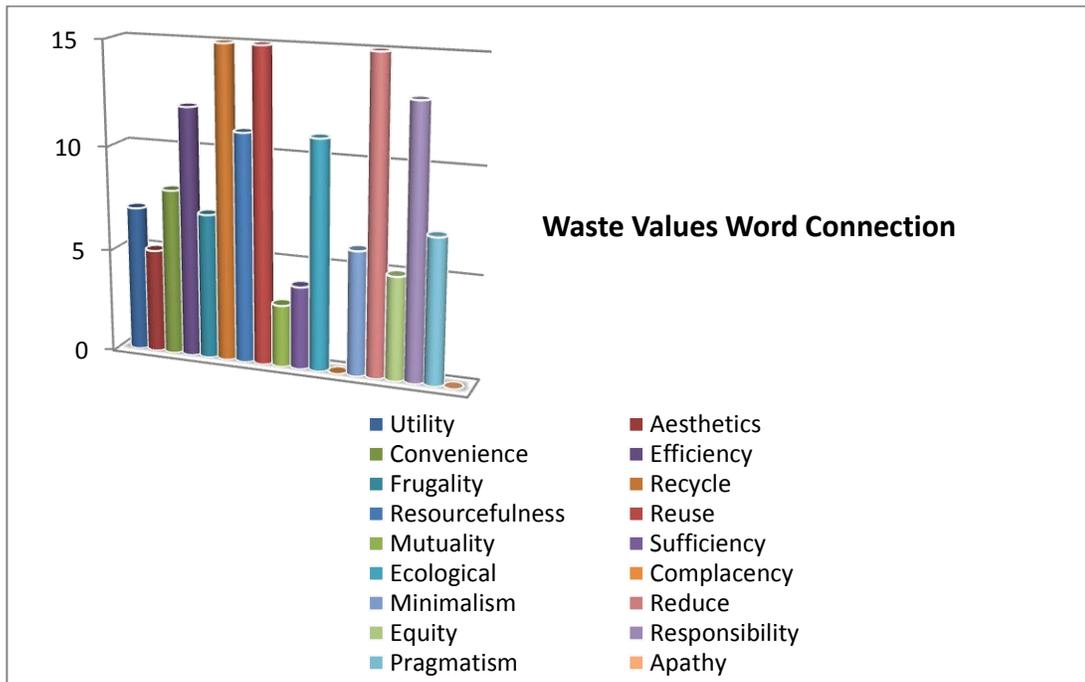
#### 1.1 Base Values: Swartz Values Inventory (short version)



#### 1.2 Waste values: Six questions reflecting the influence of base values on waste values.



### 1.3 Respondents selected words connected to their waste values.



**Additional words suggested by respondents:** Sustainability/Fairness/ Development/flexibility/fluidity/Reasonable/Safe/Accountable/Local/ Consensus-based/ Logical/Simple/Scaled/Adaptive/Cumulative/Health and wellness/Mindful/ Dynamic/ Toxicity/Systematized/ Awareness/ Knowledgeable/Repurpose.

## 2. Observation Data Analysis

### 2.1 The Sessions: a descriptive narrative

The activity sessions occurred over two days at our local community hall. As I was in a cast, setting up and managing the sessions became a team effort under my grateful direction with generous support from my family. We closely followed my set up plans identified in the Session Outline, Appendix 5. The session facilitator Donna and I collaborated on final touches of the room. Healthy snack food was prepared as well as coffee, tea, and water. This nutritional support was set up on a table in the back corner of the room so that participants could partake as wanted.

I was very open to input from my professional and competent facilitator, Donna Cottell. She suggested opening the sessions with an informal, fun activity to build up the energy of the room. Participants played a sort of bingo where they had to circulate the room and find out fun information about each other, for example: “find someone who has eaten a very exotic food. “ After this, I briefly introduced Donna and reviewed the

aim of my research as well as the theme of the community conversation. At that point I handed the sessions over into Donna's capable hands and became the inconspicuous observer. Donna took a few minutes to engage the group in collaboratively establishing their own "group agreements". Similar to Wheatley's communication principles discussed on page 34, Donna had suggested that when a group co-creates their own agreements around communication, these become more deeply owned and thus enacted. This is what the group agreed upon:

1. Let go of the outside and be present.
2. Listen with care.
3. Equal air time for people to speak.
4. Spirit of open-minded and non-judgemental respectfulness.
5. Flexibility for coming and going.
6. Identifying next steps for the community around waste values.

Donna proceeded with the World Café activity. I continued to quietly observe using the indicator sheets as well as taking notes. One thing that was immediately clear was that not all participants had the same understanding of the purpose of the sessions. Though most participants seemed comfortable with a new and open process, those few who were less comfortable with the limited structure were quite vocal about their uncertainty.

After the first day all of the generated content from the facilitator's chart and tables was collected. That evening I cut up and consolidated thoughts and ideas from the cafe conversations into a large, concept mural that was hung up in the hall the next day. During this process I came across a fragment of printing on an overlapping part of the paper tablecloth reading "i cant chan", which I immediately interpreted as "I can't change". I was curious to find the rest of statement, imagining it to be about powerlessness within a consumer paradigm or the like. When I came across its counterpart I was bemused. The complete statement was actually "significant change". So randomly playful language can be when 'I can't change' is embodied within significant change! It's an interesting visual contribution to the concept transformational learning. I shared this discovery with Donna and she, in turn, shared it with the group during the second session.

Day two rolled out according to the session outline with the exception of Donna engaging a whole group conversation at the beginning around being change agents. This

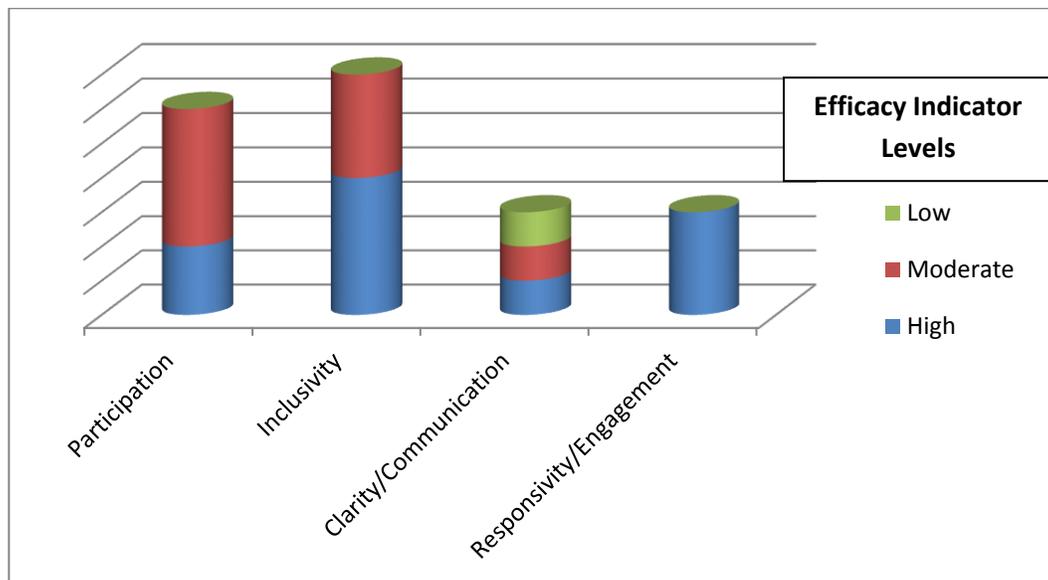
was a great way to get the energy up again. The OST activity followed, which kept the group busy for about an hour and a half. There was a short break and Donna led the group in the Circle Council simulation activity, which was recorded with the participant's permission.

As we closed the sessions, I reiterated my commitment to synthesize the content of their conversation and deliver it to the group for their feedback. This was accomplished through the compilation of slides which can be seen in Appendix 7.

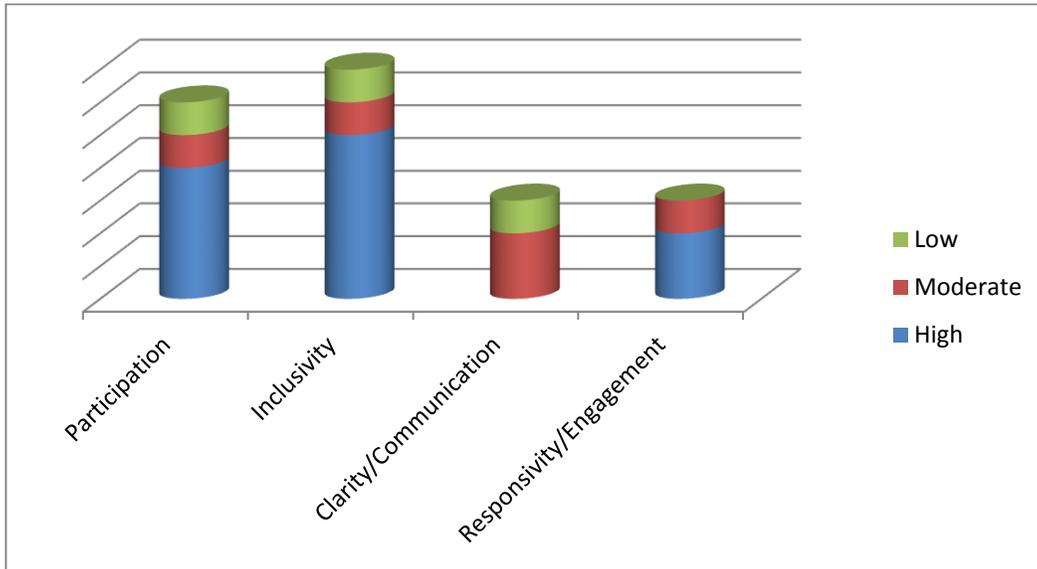
An unanticipated yet welcome outcome of the sessions has been the formation of an ad-hock community group meeting regularly to discuss community waste reduction strategies. This demonstrates how the group lived up to its own agreements, as on-going action and next steps had been identified as important.

## 2.2 Observation data charts:

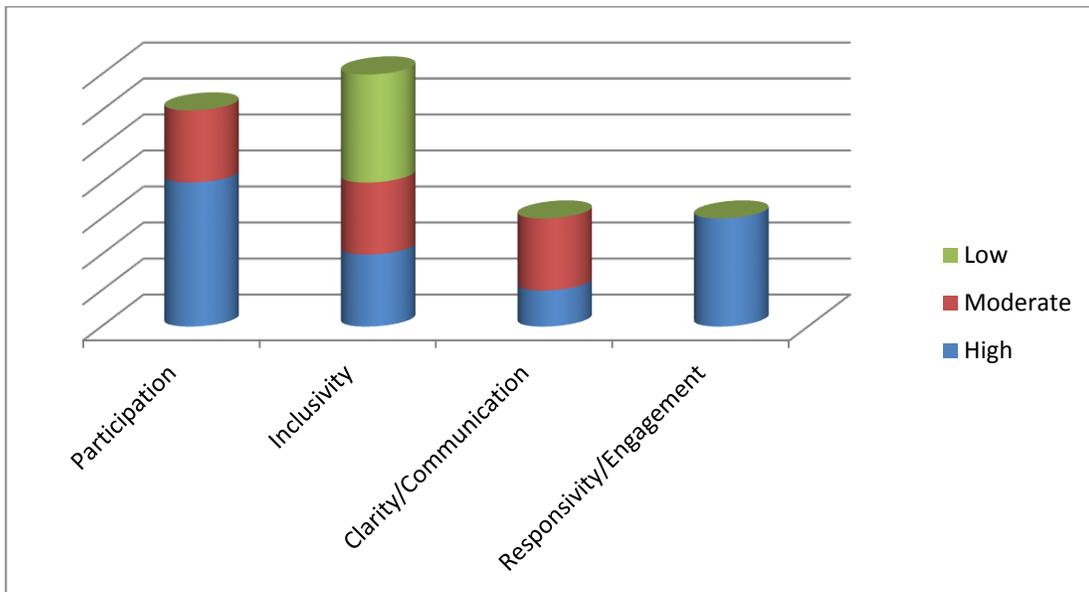
### World Café



### Open Space Technology

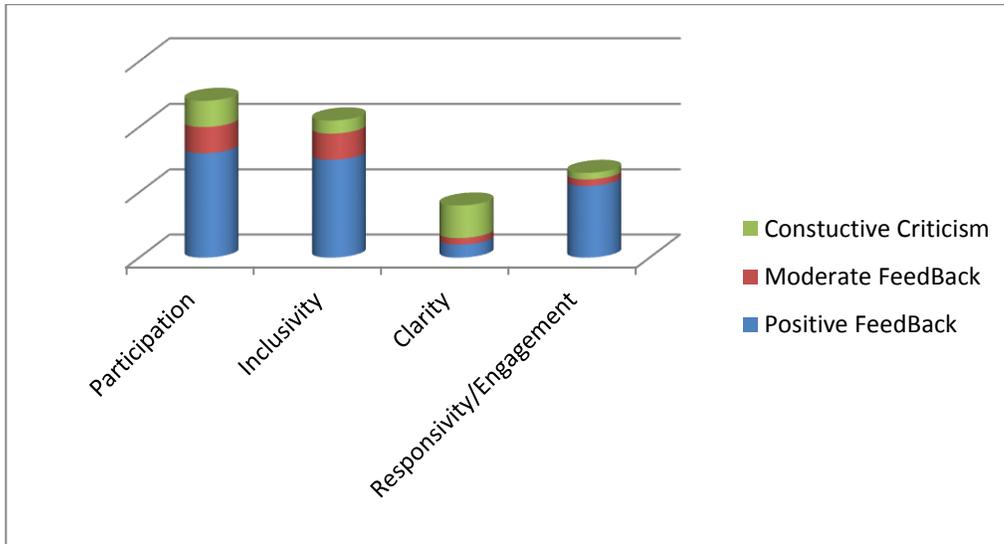


### Circle Council

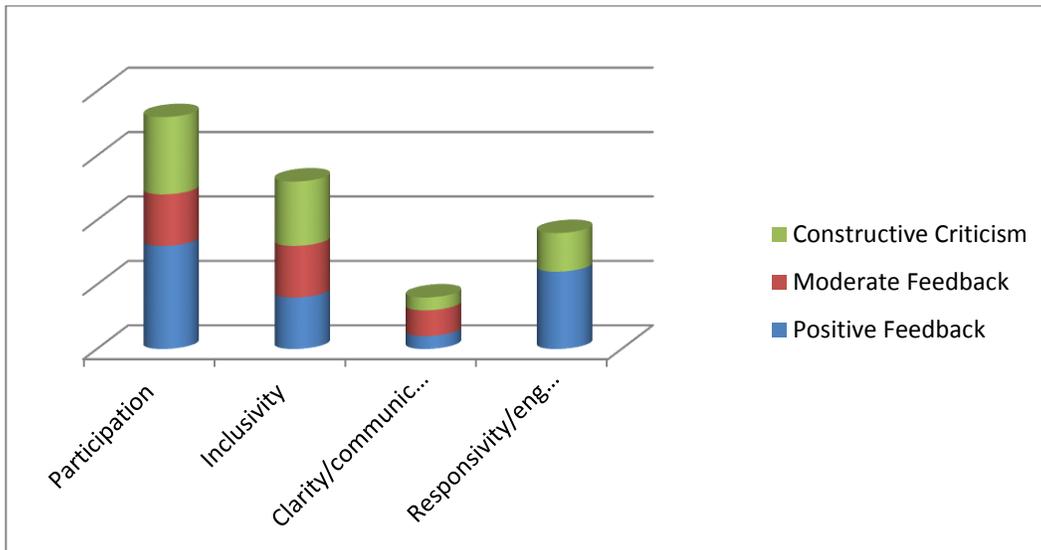


### 3. Feedback Data Analysis

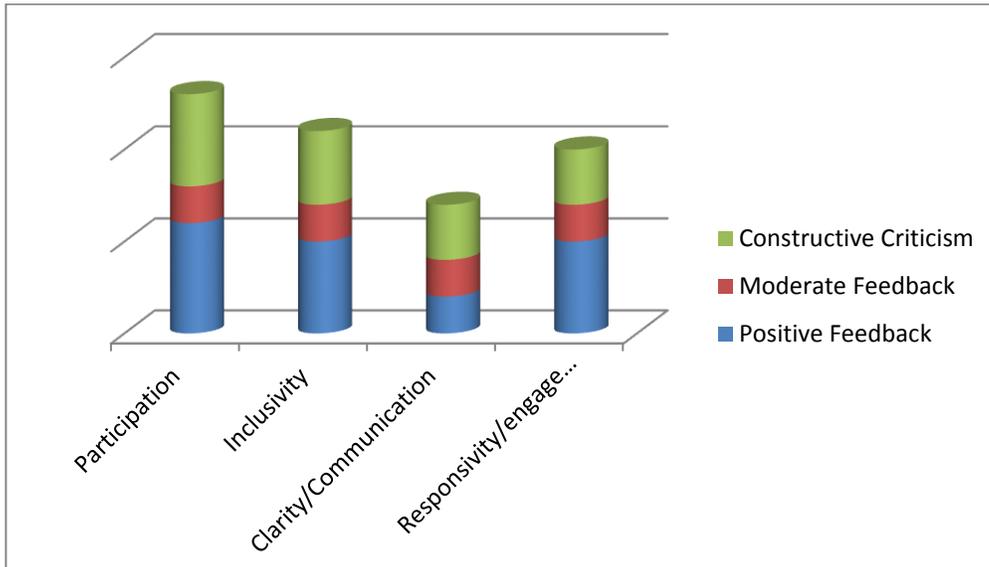
#### World Café



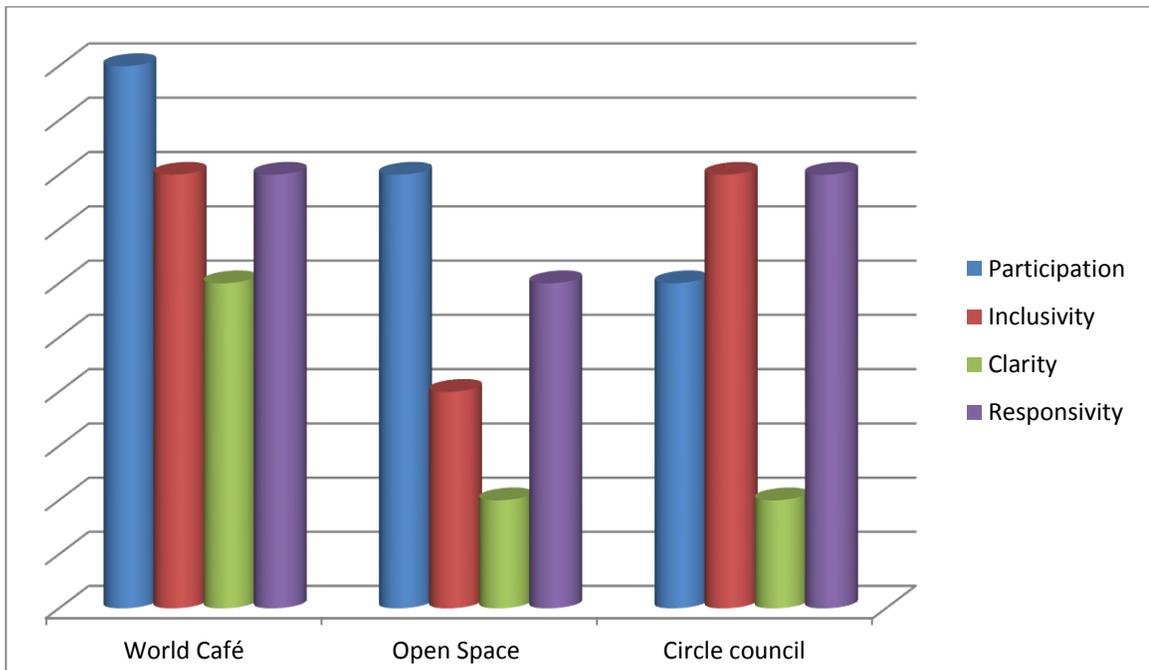
#### Open Space Technology



### Circle Council



### Facilitators Feedback



## **Appendix 11: Participant Voices: quotes and excerpts**

### **World Café: Positive**

*'Excellent! Energetic!'*

*'I liked the idea of semi-structured process that still left room for serendipity in terms of who ended up at what table and the dynamics that emerged.'*

*'Because the question was fuzzy, each of the table's initial discussions seemed to take off in quite different directions. So this was an effective way of brainstorming the question.'*

*'Having an open question created continuity of the conversation, there was both diversity and commonality ~ or commonality within diversity.'*

*'It was amazing how multidimensional the conversation was, and the many directions in which one question could lead.'*

### **World Café: Critical**

*'I felt at sea and uncomfortable without a well-defined set of objectives.'*

*'People aren't used to not being told what to do.'*

*'Warn the table hosts of the danger of directing the new conversation into a repetition of the first with too long an introduction to the table.'*

*'The use of table covers to take notes was beneficial but not specifically suggested by the facilitator.'*

*'There was still a small capacity for individuals to monopolize the conversation.'*

### **Open Space Technology: Positive**

*'I was very engaged in the topic.'*

*'Small group work appeals to me as an inclusive process, allowing time for all to participate.'*

*'It was actionable and directly related to our community'*

*'We got concrete and were able to really focus our conversation around what we felt was most meaningful or highest priority.'*

*'I liked the OST rules, they allowed for fluidity and flexibility.'*

### **Open Space Technology: Critical**

*'I think this approach is successful only to the degree that agenda topics draw enough participants or a strong champion for the topic.'*

*'Choosing where to go was awkward, and I questioned how realistic the law of two feet and four principles were.'*

*'I would have liked more time.'*

*'I was invested in the topic, but only two others felt compelled to stay.'*

*'I was reluctant and regretted contributing to the agenda because I was the de-facto champion for the topic. I would have preferred to float around and kibitz ~ offering suggestions for other tables.'*

### **Circle Council: Positive**

*'This turned out to be a great way to see another perspective. The honest efforts of many to present a viewpoint that may have been anathema to them was very illuminating to all.'*

*'It was a powerful way to illuminate the issues.'*

*'It was awesome; I was really able to sink into the role.'*

*'The role playing clarified issues we hadn't yet thought about.'*

*'The role playing allowed a more physical and emotional response to the issue.'*

### **Circle Council: Critical**

*'I didn't see that it added much value to the groups output.'*

*'Through the role playing participants went more to extremes.'*

*'A little more opportunity to get into the role (for example group brainstorming) may have helped those who had tougher roles or were inhibited...'*

*'My terror overwhelmed my ideas. My preference would have been not to proceed in order but to allow those prepared to begin to do so.'*