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## CRITICAL COMMUNICATIVE METHODOLOGY

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, the authors argue the importance of approaching social research from a critical methodology developed within the communicative paradigm. The authors present a new methodology based on the intersubjective dialogue, and the emergence of an egalitarian relationship between the researcher and the researched. Dialogic societies need dialogic research inquiries that are able to analyze the changes that are taking place. The purpose of this paper is to present in the international sphere the critical communicative methodology and the communicative paradigm that is already being implemented in the European Union in research projects, such as RTD projects, as a research paradigm that responds to the increasing importance of dialogue in today's societies.

## **Introduction**

The critical communicative paradigm goes beyond the positivist perspectives, the comprehensive orientation, the socio-critical approach, and the postmodern perspectives, as it is based on dialogue and information exchange among researchers and researched social agents. It arises from the dialogic turn in our societies, in which dialogue becomes a critical ingredient in helping to define our lives. Family and personal relations, the crisis in traditional organizations, the search for new and more direct ways of participation and the pursuit for the international implementation of human rights are increasingly being approached through dialogue.

Current society is moving towards a more and more dialogic and communicative tendency. By this we mean that dialogic practices, that is, those that value communication and agreement among people rather than strategic actions only guided by self-interests, are becoming more widespread than ever before. This way, current information societies provide a context in which dialogue is spreading and influencing all domains (Castells 1996; Flecha, Gómez & Puigvert 2003; Habermas 2000).

The shift of tendency has been identified by the most referenced authors in contemporary social sciences (Habermas 1981a, 1981b; Beck 1992; Touraine 1997). This orientation, which places human agency at the core of social action, is increasingly shaping the processes of knowledge creation within the social and educational sciences. In the same reference, research into these fields is also turning towards dialogue, with social scientists such as Beck *et al.* (1994) calling for the de-monopolization of expert knowledge.

Dialogic dynamics in our societies affect different social spheres and are generated through very varied dimensions (technological, intersubjective, etc.). In this way, they make up a significant exponent of the new relational, participatory, institutional, inclusive and dialogic paradigms, which transcend the scientific, academic, political and institutional spheres, transversally penetrating a wide social spectrum. For this reason, it is crucial for the social sciences to offer appropriate theories and proposals to the problems posed by today's social realities. In order to keep pace with these demands, social science research should be as dialogic as society is. The role of social sciences must be, precisely, to offer appropriate theories and proposals posed by today's social realities. As a result of this demand we propose the critical communicative methodology.

Therefore we will start by offering an overview of the theoretical framework of the communicative paradigm. Furthermore we will describe in depth the critical communicative methodology and its implementation and finally we will conclude with the reflections in the conclusions section of what does this methodology mean for the field of research in social and educational sciences and in general the research with human subjects. In addition to the

presentation of the communicative paradigm and the critical communicative methodology, as a challenging inquiry methodology of developing research rather “with” than “on”; we have add a comparative summary chart with some of the theoretical conceptions: the objectivism, the constructivism, the criticism and the communicative. In one of each of the four conceptions we examine three key dimensions: the ontological, the epistemological and the methodological.

### **Theoretical framework: The Critical Communicative Paradigm<sup>1</sup>**

In a world in which globalization and the communication and information technologies make us all aware of other practices and cultural contexts, our everyday ways of living and former certainties are questioned. Thus, we face both newness and tradition in a more open, plural and reflexive way. Human agency has become aware of its role in building social reality (Habermas 1981b; Giddens 1990).

On the basis of a dual conception of society, the communicative methodology puts much weight on interactions between the systems and the ‘lifeworld’. This conception helps to recover the situations in social practice that are a result of non-academic abilities and recognizes the capacity of human agency to transform social reality, not stopping at an analysis in which individuals are victims or mere reflections of the structures. Finding the dimensions by which social actors dialogue with the structures provides researchers with a powerful tool to promote the democratization of societies in today’s globalized world. According to this perspective, we have abilities to interact with other individuals, be social actors, using language and communication to

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<sup>1</sup> See annex

mediate with the social structures. An analysis of the dialogic and participatory dynamics that are led by social movements and citizen participation today illustrates the extent to which this is true.

Social actors are not merely self-interested, strategic agents, as in the tradition of methodological individualism. They are social subjects capable of language and action (Habermas 1981a). This helps us to understand people's capacity for transforming their lives and helping to shape history (Freire 1995). Furthermore, it also explains their demands for science to provide them with the tools to support and carry out transformations. Social movements are turning to, and calling for, theories that are socially useful, that is, theories that help in the creation of social change.

Recognizing the role and potential of human agency today means radically changing the perspective of most social science research, bringing social agents back onto center stage. The communicative methodology is based on the direct participation of the people whose reality is being studied throughout the whole research process, so that the research becomes the result of the plurality of voices, disciplines, genders ... that interact and interpret reality within a common framework. This makes it possible to detect problems, add precision to and compare interpretations between researchers and researched, on equal terms and with scientific rigor.

In contrast, some perspectives assert the need for some distance between the researcher and the people who are researched, in an attempt to offer a fully external and rigorous observation of social phenomena. These perspectives maintain that the neutrality of scientific language is the only way to approach social reality, in this way missing the richness of the human lifeworld, the space that is shared by all people and still uncharted ground by the social sciences.

Our work is based on social research that offers dialogic knowledge and methodologies that incorporate people's voices, with the aim of providing dimensions that favor overcoming the social exclusion they face. The communicative paradigm in research takes into account the centrality of dialogue and participation in the construction of knowledge, and does not prioritize the accumulation of information, but its use and results. Drawing on people's capacity to interpret their own reality and to create culture (Flecha 2000), dialogic research provides deep and critical reflexive insights. This is in line with social scientists' observations on forms of knowledge that have been overlooked by the academic world and that, once incorporated in communicative research, allow us to reach new results in a more rigorous and socially relevant scientific process.

### **The Critical Communicative Methodology**

We start from the premise that social research must not only commit to the coherence between theory and practice in research, but also recognize that it is the most effective way of detecting and analyzing specific phenomenon in society today. In many cases, communities at risk of exclusion are objects of a series of research investigations that, once they are concluded, do not benefit the community. Many of these projects do not take into account people's ability to understand their realities, to highlight the relevant information and, thus, contribute to the resolution of social problems that affect them.

Our premise is that people know their reality and have the capacity to reflect on and analyze it, as well as to formulate proposals to improve their situations. Therefore, in dialogic research, the key element of the process from the onset to the very end of the project is the egalitarian participation

of the people who are the target population. In this, there is also the recognition that people carry out dialogic and communicative practices in social reality, which help them to transform their personal and social realities. In our theories and methodological approaches we attempt to identify these communicative practices, and thus promote them.

The communicative methodology allows us to provide the conditions to truly collaborate with the subjects who are living the realities we are interested in researching. This is defined by intersubjective egalitarian dialogue and consensus. Furthermore, the dialogic procedures inherent to communicative research techniques reject any power claims that participants (researchers and researched) might turn to in the research. This principle permeates the whole research process from its onset to the very end. Thus, researchers and participants are equally aware of the purpose of the research and the information needed to carry it out. These dimensions allow all contributions, motivations, and interpretations to be represented, and for all subjects of the research, both researcher and researched, to become active agents committed to the work. The fruit of this process is a more reflexive and rigorous analysis.

Communicative research consists of bringing together the researcher and the researched to create an egalitarian dialogue built on the common need to know. Through the intersubjective dialogue, researchers and participants jointly produce dialogic knowledge and participate in the definition of actions that lead to social and educational change.

This approach opens new perspectives for educational research, since it overcomes the conservative dichotomy between researcher-subject and researched-object. It is possible thanks to the fact that the researcher leaves his or her position of power and becomes well disposed to accept the best arguments. This way, communicative techniques are based on the creation of a

favorable context for communication and understanding, which entails the assumption of the following principles of dialogic research based on the following premises (Gómez 2001):

- The *universality of linguistic competencies* affirms that we all have linguistic communicative abilities, and thus, we are all capable of interacting through dialogue. All people are capable of language and action that is, of interpreting and communicating about the social reality in which they live (Chomsky 1988; Habermas 1981a). Therefore, we all have communicative skills, understood as the capacities that are developed on the basis of dialogue in different natural contexts: workplace, school, social setting, interpersonal relationships, etc.
- The *person as a transformative social agent* recognizes people's ability to reflect on and interpret their reality, create knowledge and build their own practices, having an impact on or modifying the social structures. People are social agents who transform their environment (Freire 1995). Contemporary social theory explains society as a dual interaction between structures and agency (Giddens 1990) or systems and lifeworld (Habermas 1981b). Some conservative views maintain that the current social order reproduces itself as a mechanical action only influenced by systems, without taking into account that people can construct their own reality. Contrary, the communicative approach sustains that subjects have played an important role in the social changes occurred throughout history and that their capacity for reflection has allowed for the formation of practices that can transform the social and educational structures.
- *Communicative rationality* determines the process of understanding as well as action. There are the reasons that motivate an action and the rationality underlying these actions by the interpreter.
- *Common sense* is based on our life experience and consciousness, which is generally developed within the context we grow up in. It is essential to recognize people's common sense to be able to interpret the reasons for an action, because, people might have different interpretations.



- *Disappearance of an interpretative hierarchy* recognizes that people's ontological presumptions can have just as much validity, or more than those of the research team. This is based on the conviction that our subjective meaning depends on the experience of life and consciousness, specially because we give meaning to our own actions. In a communicative process there is *methodological equality*; the researcher lets go of the role of observer and interpreter participating like any other in speaking as well as listening on equal terms. When researchers are interpreting, it is very important to ask participants for their own interpretations. Any form of knowledge can be asserted as true until there is dialogue with the subjects who are the protagonists of the action. In fact, we construct our own realities through interaction and communication. This way, it is attained a horizontal relationship that seeks to become an ideal situation for dialogue.

- The *possibility of dialogic knowledge* is central to communicative research, because through an intersubjective analysis on the basis of validity claims, 'researchers' and 'researched' jointly reach an agreement on interpretations. Through this process they reach *objectivity as intersubjectivity* because it breaks with the notion that arises from the natural sciences that was adopted by the social sciences equating people with objects. Through intersubjective dialogue, researcher and researched reach agreements on what is objective, both acting as subjects in the search for answers to theoretical and practical questions. Communicative methodology becomes more than a list of research methods supported by a particular scientific paradigm. It is instead a holistic approach to research that implies a certain level of commitment to social justice and openness to be challenged by any participant.

Supported by a communicative organization and principles, communicative techniques involve an egalitarian and dialogic interaction with the agents of the target community. This implies that

the researched people know the aims of the investigation and why they have been chosen to participate in it, so that they can undertake an interaction with the researcher on an equal basis. In order to assure the joint interpretation of reality by both researchers and researched, it is essential to carry out a second meeting after the implementation of any technique. In this second meeting, both parties agree on the interpretations made from the information gathered, so that they avoid biased explanations and confirm the validity to the conclusions.

### Communicative Techniques

Communicative or dialogic research does not deny the use of any technique (qualitative and/or quantitative) taking into account that always the research has to be developed following a communicative organization and communicative principles. As we have seen this methodology involves a concrete way of implementing those techniques. Therefore, we briefly describe some of the communicative techniques that we have developed in different educational and socio-economic projects:

- In the *communicative observation*, researchers and participants share and argue meanings and interpretations of actions, events and situations on equal terms, contrasting the information obtained with the subjects that are observed. This technique aims at gathering the joint evaluation of the habitual behaviors of people, their attitudes, motivations, interpretations, communicative skills and dimensions that are characteristic of non-verbal language, etc. The researcher and the researched share meanings and interpretations on equal terms, so that the final conclusions come from and reflect both parties in the research. So for example, in the observation of a marketplace after each observation the researcher discussed their impressions with the person observed.

- *Communicative focus groups* are made up of natural groups that participate jointly in an activity, in which these techniques are implemented with a trusting and comfortable exchange. In contrast to the traditional discussion groups, both the researcher and the participants adopt an attitude of speaker and listener, who dialogue about situations. Interpretations are argued with the intention of reaching a consensus. The researcher is just another person in the discussion group because the interpretations are established and agreed by the whole group, so that all people in the gathering become researchers and actors.

- *Daily life stories* are conversation-narrations that the researcher maintains with the participant, about daily life and in relation to the theme of the research. It is the result of the interaction between that who is investigating and another person who, along dialogue, moves forward the reflection and interpretation of his or her daily life. The focus is set on the study of the current moment and the interpretation that the narrator makes of his/her life, more than on biographic aspects. The aim is to analyze how the narrator of the history interprets his/her daily life through a dialogic relationship.

In this way, we can deepen our interpretations and understanding about people's actions and ways of resolving real and possible conflicts. The participants in the research can have diverse characteristics (different backgrounds, origins, lifestyles, and so forth), depending on the objectives of the investigation. However, in the development of any communicative techniques, described earlier, there is an egalitarian dialogue established in which the importance lies in making joint interpretations through intersubjective dialogue, rather than the differences between the individuals.

Communicative techniques do not finish when dialogue expires, but they always carry on with a second meeting. As researchers have already done the literal transcriptions of former dialogues and have analyzed them, their work is put into question through a debate with all participants involved. Here lays the bases for the joint interpretation of reality that characterizes communicative research, thus avoiding the partial and possibly interested interpretations of researchers.

### Communicative analysis of the information

In the critical communicative methodology the analysis of the information is organized around two type of dimensions: the exclusionary and the transformational. Those dimensions show what hinder or facilitate the transformation and the types of manifestation in people's discourse. Those also show the ways of interaction and interpretation that people and groups have. As well as the levels and degrees of depth of analysis that will be finally represented in the chart or the matrix of analysis of the information. Taking into account that the critic communicative methodology seeks social transformation, the analysis of the information identifies the barriers that difficult the transformation named exclusionary dimension and, the ways that allow overcoming them which is the transformational dimension.

The exclusionary dimension and the transformational dimension are a specific part of the critic communicative methodology and, those are present in all the research. The identification of those dimensions is a prior step to the specification of overcoming actions. In fact, the importance of the research falls in seeking ways of overcoming social inequalities.

We pay close attention to the analysis of situations, phenomena and interactions that create barriers to people's inclusion in certain practices or exclusion from social benefits (exclusionary dimensions) as well as to those that overcome or help to overcome these barriers (transformational dimensions). From the communicative perspective, we have been able to establish that same characteristics as age, sex, ethnicity, culture or SES background...can be exclusionary or transformational dimensions, depending on how individuals interpret and deal with them in their lives.

### **Implementation of the Critical Communicative Methodology**

Our social research is guided by the aim to offer results that will be socially useful. That is to say, in addition to describing our social reality, we seek to contribute to the creation of dimensions that help to transform reality. We have been able to meet this challenge through interdisciplinary and interinstitutional research.

The dialogic research methodology allows us to hear the voices of the excluded groups and individuals that we research with, thus linking theory and practice. We recognize that it is not possible to have rigorous theories without a direct connection to practice, in the same way that it is unlikely to have good practices that are not linked with theories. Dialogic research is grounded in exchanges with different disciplines, institutions and people living the realities we are researching. Research based on the communicative perspective brings together influences that are more than the sum of the contributions. Above all, it presents a fertile ground for providing new, innovative and viable proposals for overcoming social inequalities and exclusion.

In this sense the research that we developed is characterized by interdisciplinarity and interinstitutionality, as well as the development of the communicative methodology, favors direct participation in the research process of people facing the issues that are the object of the study. These characteristics are also creating the conditions that favor egalitarian terms for this participation. The close collaboration with associations and social movements, and thus the link between theory and practice, contributes to the definition of effective and useful forms of identifying and analyzing social phenomena in today's societies. In this way, the inclusion of the voices of groups that have traditionally been excluded from research is making it possible to guarantee the elaboration of quality scientific work aimed at social transformation. This makes it viable to respond to the new challenges of our globalized societies.

#### *Interdisciplinarity and Interinstitutionality*

For example, our research team (CREA) at the University of Barcelona is characterized by the many influences and experiences our members bring to the work. There are people from different disciplines from the social sciences (sociology, education, psychology, economics, political science, etc.), educational, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, ages, genders, sexual orientations and so forth. This multiplicity of views and life experiences comes together to form a rich basis from which to do research aimed at a common goal: to contribute to opening up education to all those who have traditionally been excluded and to provide dimensions for overcoming social inequalities.

Over the years we have also established ties with specialists from different universities, departments and disciplines, collaborating on research projects and exchanging information.

These exchanges and collaborations that we maintain nationally have led to the organization of seminars and conferences, creating spaces to share work, ideas, create joint proposals and new interdisciplinary and interdepartmental networks. Interdisciplinarity matched with interinstitutionality not only provides a rich learning process for everyone involved, but allows for the creation of complex and far reaching theories.

On the other hand, our links with associations and organizations help us to keep ourselves firmly connected to the community and to social and educational practices. Collaboration with them allows us to maintain an ongoing relationship with the groups and collectives within the community that are committed to overcoming educational and social inequalities. Three organizations in the field of adult education that CREA collaborates with on widening access are the following: CONFAPEA is the Confederation of Associations of Participants in Cultural Associations and Adult Education that has been working on gaining educational rights for all; REDA is a network of democratic adult education practitioners who exchange information and work collaboratively to promote an inclusive and social model of education; Group 90 is a group of university professors that works for developing and supporting democratic educational conditions and practices.

Working with the agents in social movements that are leading dialogic and participatory dynamics in society allows us to make specific theoretical contributions to educational and social theory that arise directly from the field of Adult Education. These have led to and support very concrete and practical actions being carried out in adult learning centers and associations today (De Botton *et al. in press*). This demonstrates that the link between research and social

movements provides an exchange that multiplies the possible proposals in order to transform the face of Adult Education.

What characterizes our work within CREA and with all of these associations that we collaborate with is a dialogic and egalitarian way of functioning. The foundation for these collaborations is based on sincerity and solidarity around a common goal: working to provide recommendations for educational and social change (Habermas 1981b; Flecha 1996). This enhances and multiplies the work that is produced. This points to the need to overcome the hierarchies of university departments in order to produce research that is relevant, viable, and cross-cutting in terms of disciplines and social dimensions (gender, race, SES, ethnic, cultural, etc.).

### *Communicative Organization*

Our research with traditionally excluded groups in society is providing contributions that are helping to shape investigations on an international and national level. In the WORKALÓ project (CREA 2001-2004), the direct participation of the Romani Community from the onset of the project has provided rich reflections and analyses. This is also the case of the AMAL project (CREA 2002-2005), with respect to the immigrant community in Spain, especially Arab and Muslim. The needs and interests of the communities that are the target of the research are the guiding point of our joint research.

Egalitarian dialogue and consensus set the stage for bringing together all the different forms of knowledge and contributions, which arise from the multicultural composition of our research team and the research groups of the projects, our joint work with associations and the spaces of



interaction. The objectives and development of the research are agreed upon between the participants of the target communities and researchers. This happens in spaces where all the interpretations are valued on the strength of an argument, not the status of the speaker. Thus, an objective view of reality is reached intersubjectively from the richness of the different rational perspectives.

For this purpose, WORKALÓ has created an ‘Advisory Council’, which is made up of (individuals or members of organizations) Romà and non-Romà individuals. This Council offers its knowledge to a multicultural group of researchers, for the revision of documents, orientation and control of the development of the project in line with the objectives that were stipulated, and evaluation throughout the process, including the assessment of the social utility of its results. The Advisory Council has provided very innovative analyses about the labor market and the Romani Community. A document is not considered to be complete without the agreement and contributions of these members of the research project. The results have significant implications. We have been able to incorporate the untapped potentials of this community, demonstrating that they have skills that meet the requisites of the new occupational profiles. Such results are helping to open the scope of possibilities for the labor and educational inclusion of the Romani Community. This process is also taking place in AMAL, where the results of the quantitative methodology were revised by immigrants, who have been contributing to new and interesting conclusions.

The organization of research is done by creating operative working groups that are specific and flexible. Each group has concrete tasks, which are later brought together in the plenary meetings.

In these sessions there is an analysis and debate about the documents, materials are created and proposals are defined that will be presented to the Advisory Council.

Another example is the BRUDILLA CALLÍ project (CREA 2000-2003), which aims at developing practices and theories to overcome school drop out among Romaní girls. The problem of coexistence between the Romà and non Romà culture, all the agents involved in education are taken into account. Therefore, interviews are conducted with Romà and non-Romà girls, family members, teachers, administrators and others. There are also carried out discussion groups with family Romaní members and communicative observations of the evolution of the Romaní girls in the classroom.

This collaboration becomes possible thanks to the establishment of an egalitarian dialogue among all the agents involved. It leads to a kind of research that does not finish at the analysis of reality, but includes the aim of transformation of a certain exclusionary reality. Again, in the case of WORKALÓ, it pretends to transform the situation of exclusion suffered by the Romaní community and other ethnic minorities.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the critical communicative approach means a step forward within the field of research in social and educational sciences. As it has been shown, it achieves to brake up the conservative methodologically relevant gap between researcher and the reality researched by including the voices of participants. Therefore, dialogic knowledge emerges from the interaction

among the different actors. Nobody is considered to be the object of the investigation, but all participants play an active role as subjects of research. Furthermore we want to emphasize specially the leading role of dialogue for the democratization of society. The more dialogue is present in a certain context, the more democratic it is. This is why the communicative approach uses dialogue as an essential tool. In this reference, the words by Paulo Freire (1995) clarify the closed relationship between dialogue and democratic movements: *dialogue is a fundamental practice to human nature and to democracy*. In addition, Habermas (1998) explains that individuals have the ability of social transformation through communicative rationality. Therefore dialogue is a basic tool that organizes our relations and values like democracy or equality, prioritizing the voice of the voiceless.

We have been able to experience that a dialogic and egalitarian way of functioning sets the ground for collaborations that are based on sincerity and solidarity in our work around a common goal: to contribute to educational and social change. Therefore, we call for a move away from the hierarchies which characterize many of our universities towards the dialogic dynamics that are helping to redefine our societies today. Our aims in widening access research demand a shift in research dynamics, in order to produce proposals that are relevant, viable, and cross-cutting in terms of disciplines and social dimensions (gender, race, SES, ethnic, cultural, ...).

On a European level the European Union (EC 2002) is defining a series of objectives to guide the future of social research. In this regard, the research that is going to be funded is focused on European needs, interdisciplinarity, interinstitutional cooperation, emphasis on networks of excellence and a combination of basic-applied research. The dialogic approach and

communicative methodology incorporate these dimensions, contributing to increasing participation, widening access and guaranteeing the social utility of the research.

We defend a model of democratic social science not in hands of the experts but a kind of inquiry that promotes social changes and offers transformational dimensions in conflictive situations or situations of exclusion and inequality. The critic communicative methodology is not neutral, but it is engaged with the inquiry of the social inequalities with the claim of overcoming them.

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**ANNEX: Synthesis of the four methodological conceptions: basic dimensions**

<b>CONCEPTIONS DIMENSIONS</b>	<b>Objectivist</b>	<b>Constructivist</b>	<b>Criticism</b>	<b>Communicative</b>
<b>Ontological</b>	Reality is objective, independent from the individual who knows it and acts in it.	Reality is a social construction that depends on the meanings that people attribute to things. Constructionism includes the collective generation and transmission of meaning.	Reality is seized and constituted by historically situated structures, and made up of social, cultural, economic, ethnic... aspects.	Social reality is a human construction in which meanings are constructed communicatively through interaction among people.
<b>Epistemological</b>	Scientific statements are based on objective realities.	Scientific statements are a social construction.	Scientific statements are the result of dialectics.	Scientific statements are the result of dialogue.
<b>Methodological</b>	Quantitative	Qualitative	Socio-critical	Communicative- Critical

<b>Social Orientation</b>	Oriented towards describing and explaining social phenomena; facilitates, generates or favours social reproduction.	Tending towards a comprehension and interpretation of reality; it favours or generates social adaptation due to the lack of search for a transformation of the context.	It seeks the transformation of the social structures that restrict humanity through social practice, generating social transformation.	It attempts to transform social contexts through communicative action, generating social transformation
<b>Researched subject</b>	Researched individuals are objects in the research. Meanings are transmitted to subjects.	Researched individuals are subjects in the research. Meanings are constructed by subjects.	Researched individuals are participants in the research. Meanings are mediated by values and ideology.	Researched individuals participate on egalitarian terms in the research. Meanings are constructed through interactions.
<b>Researcher</b>	Centred in knowledge and expertise on methodological	Centred in facilitating the subjects' expression of their interpretations of	Centred in the participation of subjects in order to transform social	Centred in egalitarian dialogue and the transformation of contexts.

	issues.	reality.	reality.	
<b>Subject/object relation</b>	Relation of independence where the subject discovers the meaning of the object.	Relation of interdependence where the subject interprets the object.	Dialectical relation based on reflection and action.	Dialogic relation based on reflection and intersubjectivity breaking the epistemological gap.
<b>Process of meaning construction</b>	Inferential process.	Individual and social process in constructionism	Dialectical process.	Dialogic process.
<b>Learning</b>	Traditional education.	Significative learning.	Cooperative learning.	Dialogic learning
<b>Techniques of information gathering</b>	Quantitative.	Qualitative.	Quantitative and Qualitative.	Quantitative, Qualitative and Communicative.
<b>Information analysis</b>	Quantitative.	Qualitative.	Critical: based on reflection and dialectics.	Communicative-critical: based on reflection and social interaction

**Chart 1. Synthesis of the four methodological conceptions: basic dimensions**



