

## A PROGRESSIVE SELF-STUDY COURSE ON COMPLEXITY THINKING: FIVE STEPS FOR LEARNING THE DIALECTICAL THOUGHT FORM FRAMEWORK (DTF)

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### Abstract

This course comprises a progressive training sequence for learning complex thinking in the sense of Bhaskar's *Critical Realism*, designed by Otto Laske, Director of the Interdevelopmental Institute (IDM). The course offers increasingly agile ways of holistic and integral thinking based on empirically validated dialectical thought forms collectively referred to as DTF. The main course objective is twofold: (1) increasing one's level of agile thinking; (2) diminishing the gap between one's thinking and what is known about how the real world works. The course is customized for average to good logical thinkers in all professions, especially those based on the social sciences.

The course is based on Laske's DTF, the *Dialectical Thought Form Framework*, found on this site under Publications. It comprises 5 individual modules that follow the steps indicated on the left of the table below:

<i>Action</i> → <i>Approach</i> ↓	<b>Identify</b> [others' TFs]	<b>Reflect</b> [on own TFs]	<b>Use</b> [in speech and/or texts]
<b>Moments of Dialectic</b>	<i>Begin to build an internal model of dialectic by understanding the nature and relationship of Bhaskar's four moments of dialectic (1M, 2E, 3L, 4D) and their unfolding in the mind as dialectical thought forms.</i>		
<b>Simple</b> (4 TF classes <i>CPRT</i> )	<i>Analyze/ classify</i> pictures/texts	<i>Reflect</i> on a problem	<i>Ask</i> questions, describe and illuminate
<b>Medium</b> (12 TFS <i>p,e,l</i> )	<i>Compare</i> texts [on same topic]	<i>Reflect</i> on a personal goal	<i>Rethink</i> a problem
<b>Complex</b> (28 TFs)	<i>Analyze</i> a structured interview	<i>Reflect</i> on values; <i>evaluate</i>	<i>Coach</i> a process
<b>Expert</b>	<i>Analyze</i> the TF structure of speech flow in real time	<i>Reflect</i> on TF constellations heard or self-formulated in real time	<i>Model</i> TF constellations for others in real time

The five steps followed in the course are:

1. Module 1: Acquiring a “feel” for Bhaskar’s four moments of dialectic, called MELD (1M, 2E, 3L, 4D)
2. Module 2 (Simple): Understanding MELD as classes of thought forms
3. Module 3 (Medium): Acquiring  $4 \times 3 = 12$  simple thought forms
4. Module 4 (Complex): Extending dialectical thinking to  $4 \times 7 = 28$  thought forms
5. Module 5 (Expert): Using dialectical thinking in real time based on listening.

Each module has its own duration and exit exam. Learners obtain certification in the use of DTF by passing at least three of the first 4 modules. An advanced certification for DTF Experts requires a short written as well as auditory exam (interview with Otto Laske). Each module is purchased individually by registering for it at [www.interdevelopmentals.org](http://www.interdevelopmentals.org) under Services. Those paying up-front for the course as a whole receive a 12% discount. Course materials consist of 5 sets of slides and supporting texts, in part taken from blogs published on the IDM site.