

Holistic Reflection Strategies

- **Capturing thinking in the moment**
- **Reflecting on learning**
- **Making values explicit**
- **Capturing and exploring tensions and questions**

The following reflection activities use holistic intelligences to help learners access their “meta” capacities. These include highly visual or kinaesthetic activities as well as thinking, talking and writing. They were all developed and trialled for the Tools for Learning Design project and The “Who” of Teaching workshop. As you try these you will want to refine them and make them suit you and your learners.

Good reflective tools should:

- lift people into a space where different conversations are possible
- help people investigate more deeply and critically into the “behind the scenes” principles, dynamics or processes of their domain
- help people to better understand their own values, thinking, learning, ways of framing and relating
- help people access the deeper wisdom within.

Different people will be comfortable with different tools. It is helpful to give a choice. Reflection can stir up surprising memories and emotions, so give people an option of opting out or “passing” and coming back in when they are more comfortable. It is important for the facilitator to consider the community of practice they wish to create to support reflective practice and to build in time for reflection.

Going “Meta”

REFLECT

- Reflect on practice.
- Surface assumptions, values and paradigms.
- Build language or models to better understand what is happening.

EXPAND

- Change perspectives and explore alternatives.
- Draw on holistic intelligences.
- Look for larger wholes.
- Re-frame questions.

CREATE

- Create new meanings, values, connections, and ways of conversing.
- Try out new practices, tools or innovations.
- Develop new indicators and sources of feedback.

1. Appreciative inquiry

Would you like to build your students' discernment and ability to develop greater understanding of the processes that they can draw on?

A key challenge in Singapore is the culture where students do not want to be critical in class because of their respect for the teacher. This can often prevent good conversations that would enable deeper exploration of an idea or process.

Appreciative inquiry is based on people selecting and highlighting those things that they value. It is done within a climate of respect and appreciation for others and what they offer. By bringing to attention the things that are valuable, appreciate inquiry reinforces the insights or processes that you want to draw on in the future. Because the negatives are not highlighted these drop away.

By everyone sharing what they value, students get to hear different perspectives, opening up to other possibilities. The next time they become more attentive to picking out what is valuable and are able to see greater nuances.

Activity: Appreciative inquiry circle

- After a class or activity.
- Get in a circle with everyone able to look at each other.
- People offer one thing that they appreciated about the activity to the group one after each other, with the option of passing and coming back in.
- No discussing.
- The listeners affirm with a nod and smile.

Advantages:

People are able to:

- Be more discerning.
- Judge the value of things for themselves and become empowered in creating learning or new situations that suits them.
- Develop deeper inquiry skills.

Example:

"I appreciated the opportunity to talk about this issue that has been bothering me and to see alternative ways of thinking about it."

"I appreciated being able to see another side of my colleagues."

Activity: Feedback to the teacher about the value of an activity

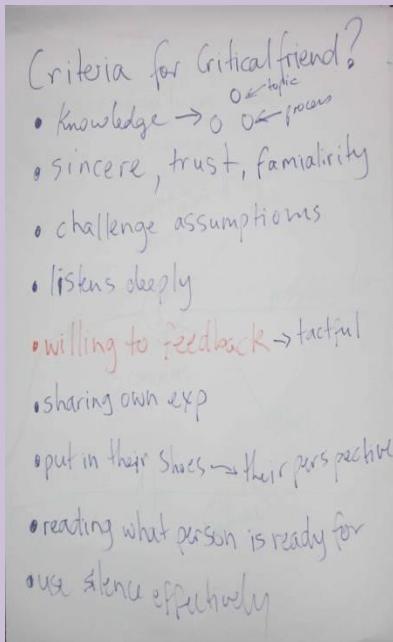
Ask students to think of several things that were useful or that they valued in an activity and how they might value-add their experience for next time. *“Next time I would like to do more of this... I would try it this way...”* This could be written or shared with the group.

Activity: Unpacking the processes that we value – developing guidelines

- After everyone has engaged with an activity or problem solving task ask what were helpful processes that they used or the things they valued.
- Collect these in dot points.
- Give people an opportunity to further discuss and pull out nuances.
- Can these be used as guidelines in the future? Can we develop a visual model or representation if appropriate?
- Could they be used as criteria to make judgements? What might be indicators – sounds like, looks like, feel like?

Note: if students are uncomfortable sharing in class this could be set as a short written activity. The value of doing it as a whole group is that together more nuanced and broader strategies might be determined.

Example: At the Tools for Learning Design project people brainstormed what they valued about the critical friend process that they had just used. These were then used to develop a guide.



Critical friends:

- Reflect back and help us to articulate and expand what we mean and value by respectful questioning or attending to key comments or body language. Capture our key thoughts through pictures or focus words (mid-wife role).
- Develop a relationship with us that has sincerity, trust and builds familiarity. Discussions are in confidence.
- Have knowledge about our specific topic, the processes we are using, or are skilled in being a critical friend.
- Listen deeply and use silence effectively.
- Put themselves into our perspective and walk in our shoes.
- Provide tactful and timely questions that help us to review our own thinking and processes, surface our assumptions, consider other perspectives, imagine, develop a deeper orientation to what we value, and greater awareness and connection to bigger wholes, so that we can frame new questions and directions coming from these insights.
- Sense what we are ready for and share their own experience or knowledge appropriately to provide alternate perspectives and understandings, so that we can both inquire dialogically.

2. Thinking clouds

Capturing fuzzy thinking in the moment

Are there times when you would like to know what your learners are thinking?

Activity: Following or during a learning activity where you consider your learners might be doing some hard thinking, ask your learners to capture what they are thinking on cut-out thinking clouds, even if they are tentative thoughts, or feelings. We can deliberately capture those things that are fuzzy and in tension, that are yet to be birthed. Ask your learners to explain their clouds to a partner.

Thinking clouds (below) can also be used to imagine what others might be thinking. This is useful in learners sharing what they imagine someone in a case study is thinking, and why they might be acting in a certain way.

Example: At a difficult moment of hard thinking people were asked to represent their thinking/feeling in the Tools for Learning Design project. When people shared their thinking clouds with each other it generated a whole new level of conversation. Others were keen to understand what was behind the clouds. It enabled people to see into some aspects that might not be normally publicly available.



3. Pause, stand back, reflect

Reflection for moving out of the trees to see the forest

Is it important in your industry that people take time-out from action to reflect on whether it is the best action?

The ***pause–stand back–reflect*** process is about giving ourselves time to ask whether we can bring different ways of thinking, being, relating, valuing to what we are currently doing. It does not mean that what we are doing is wrong, rather that with deliberate pauses we can recruit other aspects of ourselves and others.

This is a practice that the teacher can use in class with their learners, and then encourage their learners to do it in their work contexts.

There are many questions that we can ask to help us lift our thinking from the trees to the forest. Try starting simply with one or two questions.

What sort of reflective questions might help?

An analytical approach:

- What processes am I bringing to this and can I bring others? What height am I at?
- What are the consequences if I continue in this way?
- What assumptions am I making?
- Where does the power lie and what are the cultural norms? How does that influence how we are thinking?
- What are other perspectives?
- What values am I bringing?
- Do I have a vision or intentional field that is shaping this?
- What might be more imaginative wholes?
- What is good, true and beautiful in this?
- How can I bring my own practical wisdom?

An intuitive approach (from Insight Dialogue):

- Pause and notice any tensions of my body and emotions
- Relax and allow breathing to release tensions
- Open to new possibilities
- Allow for emergence, noticing what comes
- Listen deeply to new insights
- Speak the truth from deep inside you.

Example: When we first did this process in the Tools for Learning Design project, we interrupted an activity; shocking people as they thought that they had done something wrong. We interrupted not because we knew an answer that we wanted to move people to, but rather because we could see the potential for extending the existing thrust of the thinking. We felt a ***pause–stand back–reflect*** might enable new insights, which it did.

4. Guided visualisation

Relaxation and clearing

Are there times where you would like to settle your class, and encourage clarity and openness before an activity?

Guided visualisations are powerful tools for helping people to relax, provide space from everyday thoughts and distractions, refocus, and move into more imaginative states which allow them to be open to possibilities. Some people will see strong images and smells, some might have a vague sense of something, and others may just benefit from the quiet time. They are often useful after lunch or in the afternoon when people are tired, acting to revitalise the body and the mind.

In designing a guided visualisation it is important to use present tense to help people immerse themselves in the experience. Close your eyes and breathe when giving the instructions to ensure you do not go too fast. Be careful of any suggestions that might trigger an experience that will be fearful, use words that give the person the power to associate or dissociate as needed. Sometimes visualisations lend themselves to debriefing, and often people will see things with strong metaphoric meaning. However, be careful of encouraging thinking or analysis too soon.



Instructions for clearing visualisation:

Preparing: Close your eyes. Become aware of your bottom on the chair and your feet on the ground. Notice your breathing and take some clearing breaths. Feel your body begin to relax.

Mountain visualisation: Imagine a beautiful mountain before you. There is a path that goes up through trees and ferns. The air is crisp and cool and you can smell the plants. Soon you come out of the trees and find yourself walking among rocks and small shrubs. You continue walking uphill and you find yourself at the summit. The view is clear and you find yourself standing taller and breathing deeply of the refreshing air. You look out at the view and allow the space to fill you. Breathe it in.

Coming back to the room: When you are ready, notice your bottom on the chair and your feet on the ground. Wiggle your fingers and your feet, and when ready, open your eyes, look around, and smile.

5. Questions for reflecting on learning

Are you interested in helping your learners to be more reflective of their learning and their learning journeys?

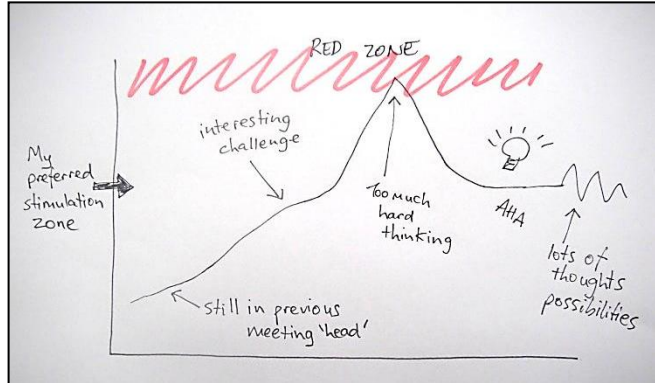
The following reflection questions are drawn from different teaching paradigms and have different uses. Different ones will appeal to different people.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS	USE	SOURCE AND INTENT
SET 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What inspires you? • What intrigues you? • What surprises you? 	<p>Great journal or reflective diary questions to help build appreciation.</p> <p>After a group discussion ask each person to report back about the discussion using one of these.</p>	<p>From <i>Holistic Education</i> and <i>Teaching as drawing out</i>. Connecting with inner knowing/being and helping to awaken to what might be possible. Connecting to deeper humanity.</p>
SET 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What past influences have become visible to you? • How have your ideas changed? • What dilemmas have surfaced? • What has this experience been like for you? • What has challenged you? 	<p>Useful as deep self-inquiry questions that can be done through reflective writing or talking with a critical friend.</p>	<p>From <i>Curriculum as Currere</i> – reflecting on past, present and future. From <i>adult transformative learning theory</i> – helping to reflect on the initial stages of transformation which begins with a disorienting dilemma.</p>
SET 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn? • What ideas or practices did you find useful? • How might you apply these to your own practice? • What ideas did you have difficulty with? • What would you like to know more about? 	<p>Good questions to put on the end of worksheets or assignments to encourage development of self-assessment and self-regulation.</p>	<p>From <i>Teaching as training, instructing, facilitating. Constructivism</i>. Checking what is known, helping transfer of ideas, encouraging ownership in continuing learning.</p>

6. Learning edge chart

Are you interested in helping your learners become more aware of their learning and become more responsible for their learning?

There is a trend by assessors of courses to chart effective learning during the course of a workshop. However, this is problematic, as often the impact of the various aspects of learning is not known until much later. However, perhaps there is a different concept that might be useful for learners to consider – **their learning edge**.



The learning edge is where people are not too comfortable; they are taking risks, being vulnerable and stretched. Being poised on the right place of your learning edge can be deeply engaging – you are open, intrigued, ready to learn, ready to deploy your existing resources and capacities, and you feel yourself growing. However, too much challenge can create frustration, overwhelm – which is indicated by the red zone. Too little might be comfortable, yet familiar and boring. Some people will prefer lower learning edges to others, and a mixture between high and low (to recover).

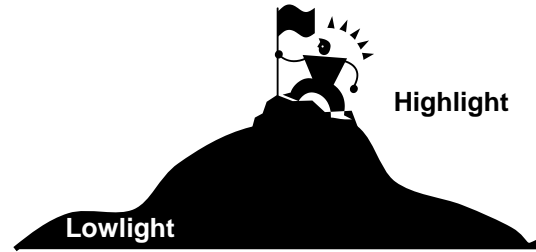
By helping learners reflect on where they might be, and share that with others gives them a sense of power in their own learning. They are better able to navigate their own learning. They can speak up, asking for more help, or for more challenge. “I think I am in my red zone and need some help here”, “I am right on my learning edge here but it is OK for the moment.”

In the Singaporean culture, where often school learning experiences have been highly stressful due to the pressure of exams, grading and expectations of family and teachers, this can act to demystify the nature of learning, name the issues and assist towards lifelong learning cultures. In the Tools for Learning Design project, a key moment was when a person who had been saying “It is too much hard thinking,” threw away her learning chart, saying “I am out of the red zone now.” Doing an actual learning edge chart is not essential as the mere idea or concept of one can be just as liberating to the learner.

7. Highlight/lowlight of the learning journey

When might it be useful for your learners to reflect on their journey through your training programme to create a collective picture of the learning? How might this help your learners celebrate gains made, reflect on self-learning strategies and share what works for the next learning journey?

This is an activity to help participants reflect on a learning journey. It is based on a poster sketch of a mountain to which all participants contribute, building up a sense of both the common issues they face as well as the diversity of experience and strategies found. It is an acknowledgement that learning journeys are difficult and helps to build skills for lifelong learning.



Instructions for mountain poster:

Consider your journey through this course. What was the highlight of that journey? What was the lowlight? Place them on the sketch of the mountain, drawing a connecting line between them. What enabled you to get over the low points to the highlight? Place that somewhere between the two points.

- What are we noticing in common?
- What can we learn about the things that help us?
- What are we valuing?

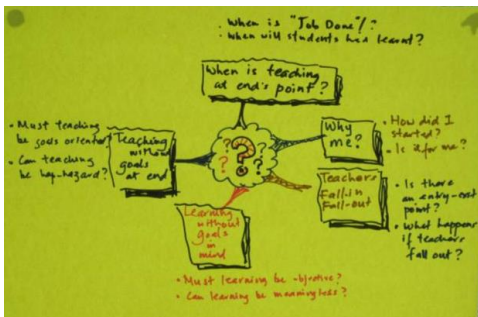


8. Question cascade

Would you like your learners to be more reflective about the questions they ask and where they come from?

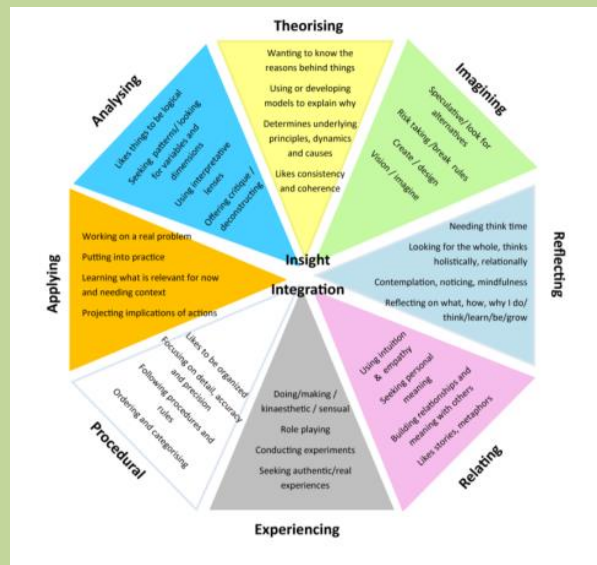
Brainstorming questions can be a useful way of seeing how you are thinking about something. Where do the questions come from? Are they pragmatic (how to), trying to understand the reasons behind things (why), imagining new possibilities (what if)? Are you asking them from particular perspectives, paradigms or stances?

When people start looking at the style of questions they are asking they might see familiar learning patterns or habits of thinking. These questions could be compared to the **dialogical inquiry model** for example. What questions are missing?



Instructions:

1. Consider an issue or question you have. Write it down.
Brainstorm follow-up questions – you write them freely or consider creating a mind-map. You can use the dialogue inquiry model to jog your thinking about different sorts of questions.



2. Meta – level
Pause and look at what you have written. What do you think these questions reveal? What might be a category scheme for these questions? What might be an over-arching question? What stance or paradigms are you coming from? What alternative perspectives might yield new questions? What questions are missing?

9. Personal outline

Capturing personal journeys throughout a workshop

Would you like learners to capture significant points of their learning visually so that others can also see their learning journeys?

When learning is occurring we may expect to see changes in thinking, new insights, past assumptions becoming visible, shifts in what we might be valuing, new tensions. The process of learning is often a tentative one and requires a certain vulnerability and openness. This activity is about valuing those tentative insights that are part of the learning journey, and capturing them, so we can see where we have been.

By putting them on a visual poster at different times during a workshop, everyone can get a sense of the evolving nature of learning in their colleagues, and can also give feedback through the use of sticky notes that encourages and appreciates what they are doing and sharing.

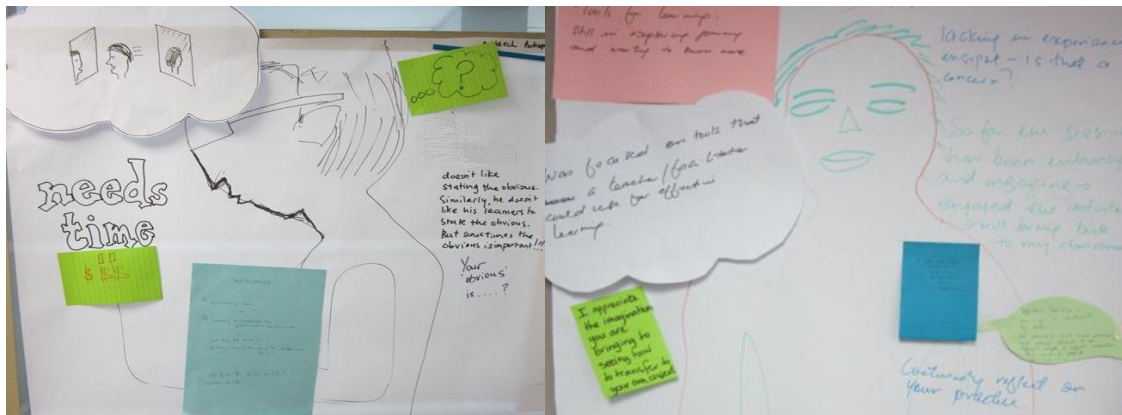
Instructions:

Get your partner to draw an outline around yourself onto a large sheet of paper. Draw in your features.

After different activities add something to your profile – capture an observation about your learning process, any insights, unresolved tensions, questions or goals and add them onto your profile.

You may also stick onto it different artefacts that you create in different activities that relate to your personal learning journey.

Others can give feedback through the use of sticky notes.



10. Magazine collage

Accessing the sub-conscious to find hidden values and deep wisdom

What deeply held values might your learners be bringing? How might you make these visible? What assumptions, experiences and aspirations lie underneath?



This activity aims to bypass the rational mind and allows the deep knowing or feeling within a person to express itself through metaphors. The person centres themselves and asks a key question (e.g. What do I value as a teacher?). They hold this firmly in their mind while flicking through magazines and tearing out pictures or words that speak to them. They then rearrange these into a collage. In the process of doing this or talking with another about their work, they begin to see the meaning of the metaphors.

The collages are something that can be gone back to again and again and deeper meanings are found in the

Instructions:

1. Think of a big question that you have regarding teaching and learning. For example, How can I make learning more meaningful for the students? Who am I as a teacher? Hold that question firmly in your mind.
2. Now look through magazines quickly and pull out images which appeal to you. Do not judge. Once you have a pile of images create a collage with your question on it.
3. Stand back and reflect what some key messages are coming out of images. What story can you tell? What surprises you here?

selection of language and pictures. They can act as powerful signals about what is important, as well as alerting to the underpinning ways of seeing an issue based on particular assumptions.

We found this activity to be one of the most powerful activities in the Tools for Learning Design project and for the subsequent “ecology room” workshop that we ran, because it opened up people to a different conversation. One that was unexpected. It enabled people to talk about their deep values which may have been about bringing greater heart, justice, or ecological-awareness to what they were doing. It began to make the tensions more evident and also heartfelt.

The collages had the most feedback and the most comments – they were colourful, visual, intriguing (requiring conversation with the creator to understand them) and were visual reminders of what we valued.

Example: What does it mean to be a teacher?

This is Anne’s journey as teacher. Forty years ago when she took a position as a teacher her idea of a teacher was old, sage-like, the knower of it all. This gave way to a new idea of being a teacher, balancing on a tightrope, with all these things going on. Now there are so many roles we need to juggle all at once as a teacher and, in fact, you become the Indian Chief to your learners. Something has to give way.

Anne says teaching looks like a nicely manicured lawn, as in this golf course, but you know there are holes and sand traps in there. You don’t quite know where you are heading. She said, previously, she had an idea that learners were like cows in that you could say “do it that way” or train them to do it that way. But now, she says, learners are so diverse and here she even gets to meet CEOs of companies who are learners.



11. Accessing what we value by recalling our heroes and role models

How can you draw out what your learners deeply value in what they do?

This activity helps learners to access those things that they value, by selecting people who inspire them and determining those qualities that most speak to them. These “heroes” act as a mirror to the self, reflecting what is true, good and beautiful in oneself, or one’s own aspirations.

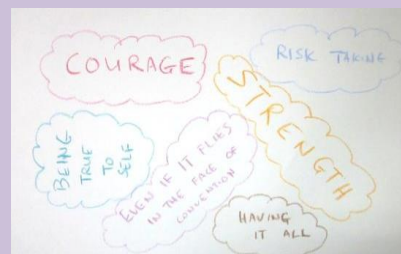
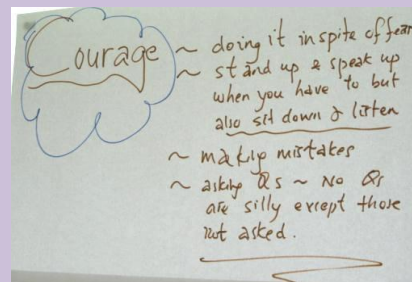
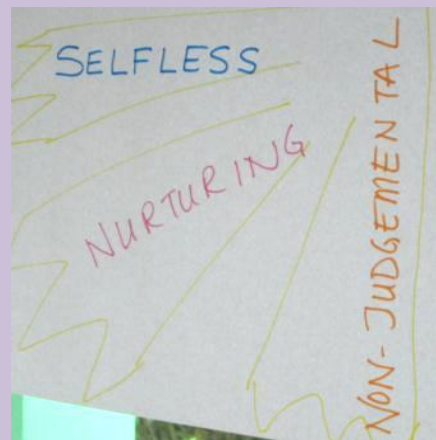
Instructions:

In reflecting about the qualities that you want to live in your work practice, remember a person who was a key person in your learning, work or life; a role model who inspired you on this path.

Think of a situation where you deeply valued what they did or said. What are the qualities of this experience that you want to bring forward into your own work practice?

Example:

In the Tools for Learning Design project participants were asked to think of a teacher or mentor whose qualities inspired them, and to capture those qualities.



12. Reflecting on challenging and surprising incidents

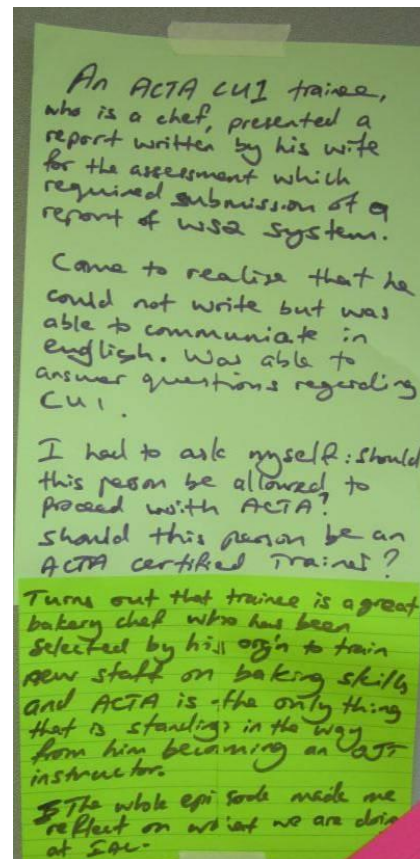
Are you interested in helping your learners think about past incidents in their workplace, for further learning?

There are key incidents in our work careers that stay with us because of the emotion involved whether it was tension, surprise or joy. By exploring the ones that tug on us we can excavate deeper issues, assumptions or values conflicts and articulate more clearly what we stand for as well as gain new insights to put into practice.

The incidents that surprise us may not be as emotional yet give us opportunity for pause, perhaps offering new thinking and directions that otherwise would not have happened. It is interesting to see what stories are waiting to be told. Often they act as drivers to our future passions and projects.

Instructions:

1. Remember a time in your work where something happened that surprised you and caused you to think about something in a new way, possibly challenging closely held ideas you have. Start writing about the incident in a way that captures the emotions, the uncertainty, and the discoveries.
2. Now sit and read what you have written. What more can you learn from the incident about yourself, your role and your understanding of your role? What does it reveal about what you value? What assumptions might you have that could be challenged?
3. Consider using a critical friend or group discussion to share and further tease out the implications.



Example: From the Tools for Learning Design project

A student whom I was facilitating during her clinical learning made a complaint about me – that I was “physically” harsh on her for not keeping up with her objectives for clinical learning. Though my approach with her has been basically intellectual discussion and not a “physically harsh” approach I was asked to apologise to the student.

On reflection, the student could have done this to hide her incompetence or she might have perceived me to be too demanding. I am more cautious now of students’ feelings and doing my best to understand them better.

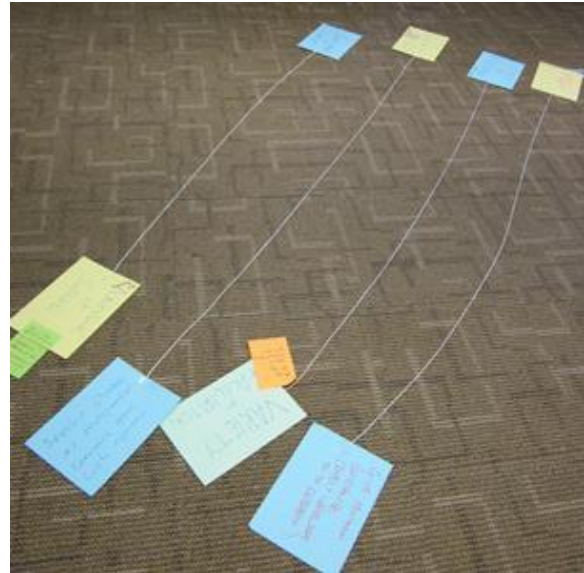
Comment: A reflection like this might seem simple, but the fact that it was pushing to be told is interesting. Later the participant chose a project that focused on how other clinical practitioners could improve the way that they gave feedback to their students.

13. Walking the tensions

Reflecting on dilemmas

What are typical tensions that are experienced in your industry context? How do people navigate them? How can you help your learners make these more visible and come up with solutions?

Many issues are complex, with competing values or perspectives. We are often walking a line between two different values – some may be our own preferences, others might be what we are required to do by the system or the organisation. This often creates emotional tension as a compromise between them does not allow us to express our integrity.

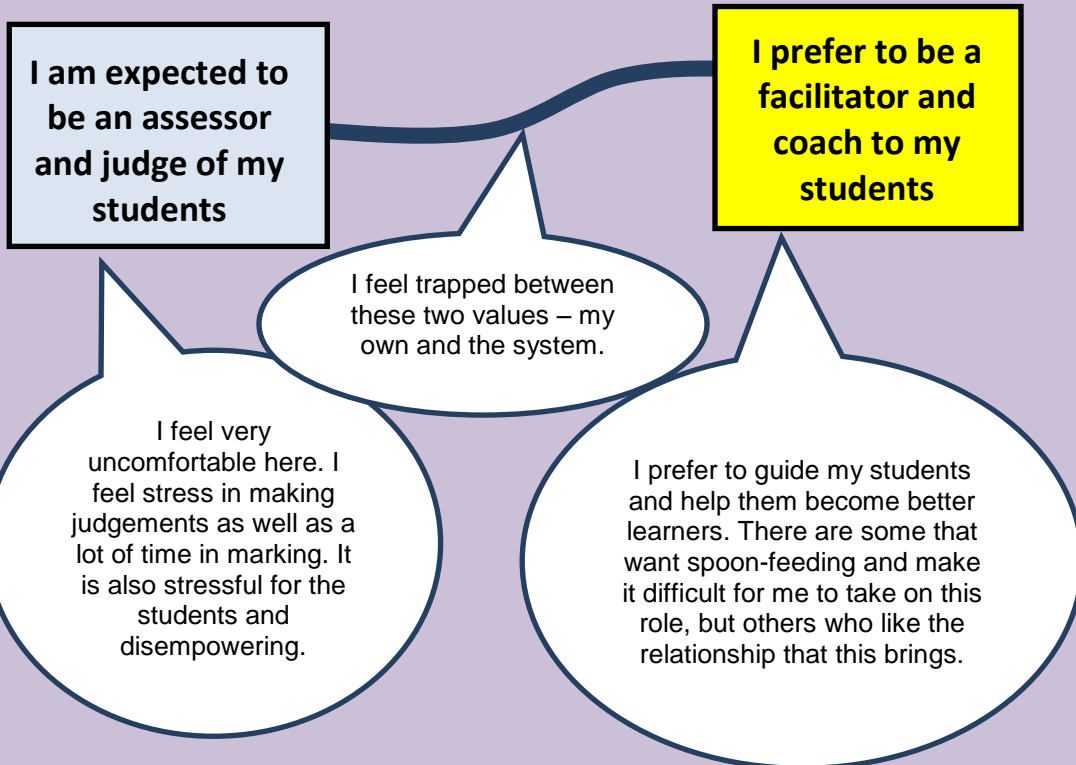


This activity helps people to walk their tensions. The props are two A4 sized sheets of paper attached by string on the floor, enabling people to walk between the two extremes. The physical act of walking can activate new insights, and help people move into the perspectives of others. Another person can act as a critical friend, helping the walker to gain deeper insights.

Instructions:

1. Consider an issue that you are experiencing in your work context. Write it as an opposite of two extremes – a tension – filling out the sheets on each side of the string.
2. Now walk the path of this tension and see what it is like to experience the issue from different standpoints. What new things can you see by framing the issue in this way? Who are the people involved in this issue and what is their experience at either extreme?
3. Can you find another way, off the piece of string that enables new ways of framing and seeing the issues, with possible solutions? This is the third space.

Example – Tools for Learning Design



Third space:

Can I invite my students to share assessor and judge role with me?

How can I build their capacity for self and peer assessment?

14. Roles that we juggle

Naming tensions and dilemmas as a result of role conflict



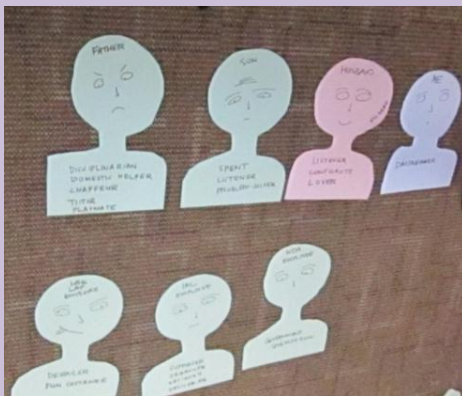
What roles do your learners need to play in their work context? Will juggling or navigating these roles create tensions? How can you make these roles more visible?

Activity: using human shaped cut-outs ask people to write down the different roles that they are experiencing in their work or in broader lives. They then tell a story around how they navigate these different roles. This can help surface issues of fragmentation, tensions between roles, and problems with being authentic, clash of values or system constraints.

Discussion questions might include:

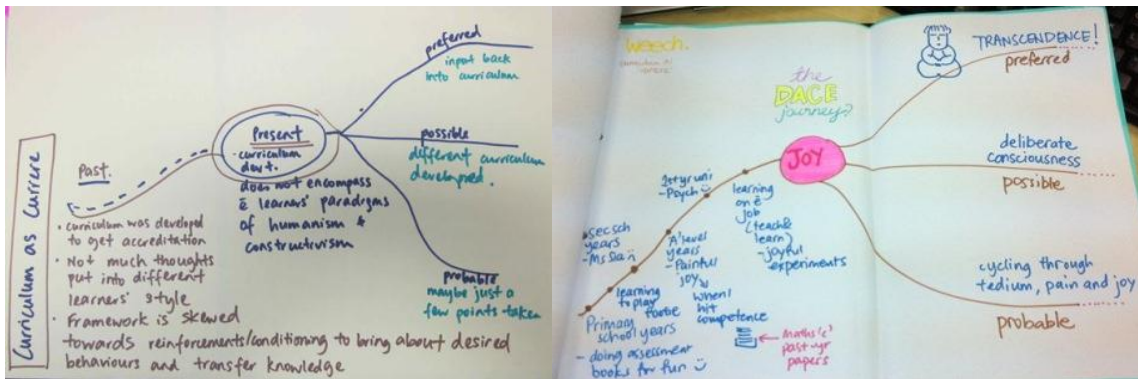
- What are we noticing here?
- Are these tensions arising from the way we do things or think we need to do things?
- What assumptions about our work practices could we challenge?
- Where would we like to be?
- What might be ways to get there?

Example: These roles were generated in the Tools for Learning Design project. What was surprising were the different ways people tackled this, what roles they named, and how the final role that they ended up with was the one that was most like who they saw themselves.



15. Past-present-futures

Are there times in your teaching where you would like to orient people beyond the present to the future?



Sometimes it is valuable to re-contextualise our current intent, understanding or values by considering key moments in our past that have shaped these. Often we project our actions into the future based on an unquestioned view of what has happened. When projecting into the future we often tend to think of *probable* futures, rather than imagining beyond this to something we would prefer. This activity helps people to see the “past-present-future” of one issue as a map.

Instructions:

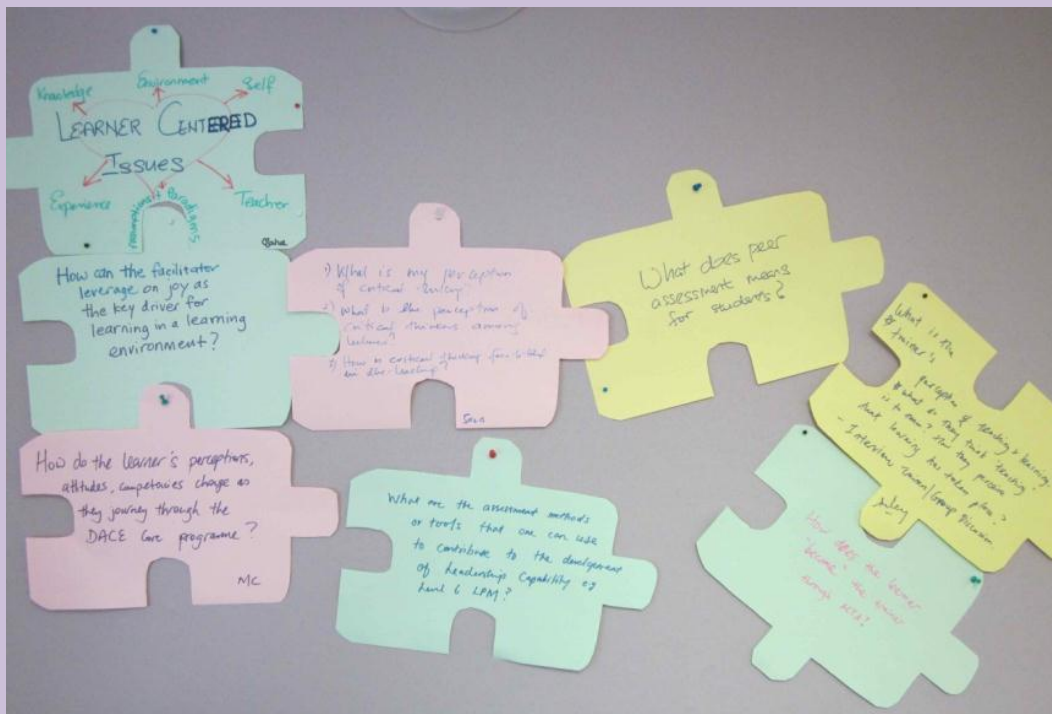
1. Select a key question/intent/value that you would like to explore and put that in a circle in the middle of an A3 sized sheet of paper.
2. Draw a line going into the past and put some key events or thinking on it that you think shaped this view, or fore-fronted this as an issue for you. Does this cause you to think about your current view in different ways? What are the deeper values that are giving passion to your question?
3. Draw three lines projecting into the future – preferred, possible and probable. As you think of potential futures decide how you would categorise them. What do you need to do to make your preferred future happen?

16. Jigsaw – goals

When is it useful for your learners to create key goals or questions that will be a focal point for their learning? How might these be captured to give a sense of a larger class whole?

Activity: Each person puts their goal or question on a jigsaw cut-out and the jigsaws are put together to provide a strong visual metaphor of the group's collective intent.

Example: The questions below were produced in one workshop for the Tools for Learning Design project. In a later workshop we brought them out again and put on the wall. People re-connected with their original questions and could see how they changed. The cut-outs provided strong visual cues that these were our goals.

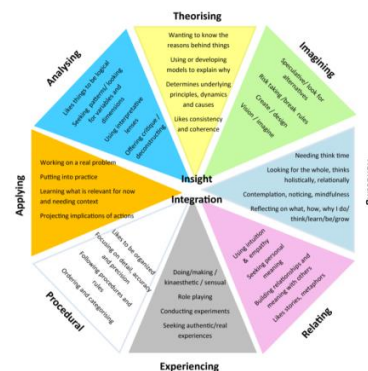
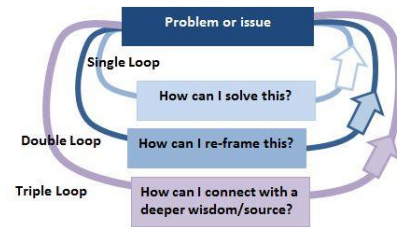


17. Metaphors

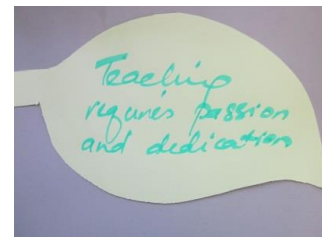
Are there key metaphors that are used in your industry? Are there useful metaphors that might act as memorable learning aids for your training context?

Underlying our ways of seeing or framing our world are metaphors. Some come from our bodies (e.g. binaries – left hand, right hand), some are archetypal images with meanings across cultures, and some are specific to our culture or our own experiences. Some are unquestioned explanations that come from philosophic standpoints (e.g. clockwork mind comes from assumptions about how the brain works). Metaphors can by-pass the rational mind and speak to us deeply and memorably. Metaphors are often used as analogies to help people understand new concepts.

We might define issues in terms of categories, processes, flow diagrams, cycles, perspectives, levels, networks or dynamic interactions with different ways to represent them. These are all metaphoric representations which can provide insight in seeing aspects within a situation, yet they can also limit what we see. Sharing our mental and visual models helps people to get on the same page and begin conversations. Working out visual models together are powerful ways of helping us to reflect on what we value and mean. However, we need to be open that they have limits of explanation and we need to turn to other ways of inquiring. If we are trying to fit everything to one model it is a symptom of being seduced by it!

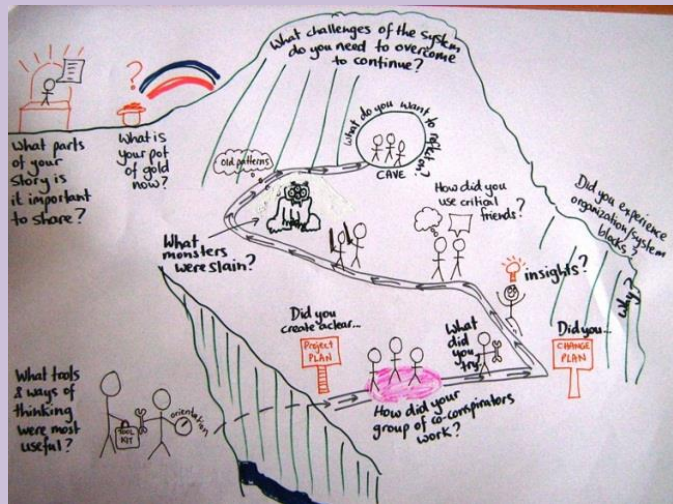


Metaphors can be present in the paper-shapes (assumptions leaves [right], jigsaws, thinking clouds), the props that are used, the space that we are in, creating collages from magazines, in the stories we tell. Stories can act as powerful “metaphors” that enable people to have a shared language. Rich stories enable multiple interpretations and stimulate ongoing thought.



Example: The heroic journey

We used the “heroic journey” as an analogy for the action research project in the Tools for Learning Design project. The story unfolded as a result of input from all the “actors” and the “terrain” that they navigated.



We asked the group to stand in a circle and one person was the hero represented by their two fingers. The rest of us put our hands out and were the terrain that the lone hero had to cover, walking his fingers across. The first part of the terrain turned out to be a chasm which represented the leap in finding the right question and intent for the project. It was too far for the hero to traverse alone so they needed a mentor to help them get over it. The mentor helped them, giving them tools and courage, but left the hero on the other side of the chasm.

The hero decided they needed to ask for friends to accompany them, and two more people joined in. Just as well because a monster reared up (representing obstacles, old habits and assumptions) and had to be slain.

The next obstacle was a big one – the system mountain. But the band of brothers were tired and needed to rest in a cave before tackling the mountain. They could see the pot of gold on the other side, but wanted to take time to reflect on their understandings. They argued about whether to bother to tackle the system mountain or to stay in their nice cosy cave. Finally they decided with all of them together they might make some impact. It was hard and difficult to get over the cliffs and when they got the pot of gold, it had changed, it was no longer what they intended when they started. However, it was an elixir of truth and in their final scene they shared it with others.

This became a very powerful metaphor for the group that was more memorable than standard flow diagrams for practitioner research of this nature.

Acknowledgements & Background



This resource was put together by Dr Sue Stack (pictured, top) based on activities she developed with Dr Helen Bound (bottom) and Renee Tan for workshops for the Tool for Learning Design project and The “Who” of Teaching workshop. Some of these activities are ones that have been adapted or value-added from



other authors over time. They are shared here so that they can be continued to be used and adapted.

Thanks to all the participants of the Tools for Learning Design project and participants of The “Who” of Teaching workshop who provide examples for these activities. Many of the activities were designed in response to their needs, their willingness to try new things and their creativity. Clarification and value-adding of the activities since then has been possible because of the willingness of the participants to experiment and give feedback.

This and other content related to the Tools for Learning Design project can be found on the Tools for Re-imagining Learning website, a resource for trainers, curriculum and learning designers, and training leaders in the Singapore Continuing Education and Training sector interested in deepening understanding of their practice to create innovative and enlivening possibilities for their adult learners.

The Tools for Re-imagining Learning website and the Tools for Learning Design project overview can be found at www.ial.edu.sg.

For more information on the Tools for Learning Design project or the Tools for Re-imagining Learning website (content), please email Dr Stack at susan.stack@utas.edu.au or Dr Bound at helen_bound@ial.edu.sg.

We welcome questions or feedback on this publication, the Tools for Learning Design research report or the Tools for Re-imagining Learning website (layout or technical issues). Please email research@ial.edu.sg.

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The Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) aims to contribute to the competitiveness of Singapore by developing an effective, innovative and responsive Continuing Education and Training (CET) sector that is able to meet the needs of industries and the workforce. It achieves this by raising capabilities, catalysing innovation, and leading research in workforce learning.

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The Centre for Research in Learning (CRIL) undertakes research that seeks to understand and develop the processes and practices of learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum design in the CET sector from multiple perspectives, settings and contexts. We work with those taking part in research projects, engaging practitioners in the research process and thereby developing communities of practitioner researchers.