

Reflection Methods

Practical Guide for
Trainers and Facilitators

- 1 Reflective learning
- 2 Learning concepts, theories and models
- 3 Facilitation
- 4 Reflection Methods

Tools to make learning more meaningful

Femke Gordijn with Natalia Ernstman, Jan Helder and Herman Brouwer



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Reflection Methods Practical Guide for Trainers and Facilitators

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This handbook summarises methods that can be used
to facilitate the process of reflection on the knowledge
and experiences people acquire during a capacity
development trajectory or training event. We believe
that by explicitly integrating reflection in the learning
process the learning will become clearer and better
articulated and will contribute more strongly to
meaningful change. Therefore we advise facilitators to
deliberately include reflective learning sessions in their
process design and implementation. This handbook
can inspire you to do so and provides many methods
which help to facilitate this.

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Online videos of reflection methods:

www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection

Preface

'Learning' seems to be the talk of town nowadays. Once the exclusive domain of the educational sciences and learning psychology, often restricted to formal education for young and old (adult education), learning has become a key mechanism for realising things like change, adaptation, innovation and transitions in the context of meeting the grand sustainability challenges of our time, including rapid loss of biodiversity, disaster management, food and nutrition security for all, and runaway climate change, to name a few.

Apparently dealing with such complex, even 'wicked' and inevitably interrelated challenges, above all, calls for learning individuals, learning organisations, learning networks and even a learning society. But not just any kind of learning, the kind of learning that is able to make explicit and question our assumptions, values and ways of seeing the world, learning that invites us to continuously reflect on the tensions and contradictions between them, learning that reveals the powers and inequities that tend to keep things the way they are or force us in directions we may not want to go. In other words, learning that questions the taken for granted, the normalised, the hegemonic and the routine. But also learning that enables us to make change and to transform others, and ourselves while learning from trying to do so. And all this needs to happen in a world that is in constant flux, a world where what we thought to be true yesterday turns out to be quite different today, a world where what we think works well in rural Uganda may not work at all in rural Vietnam. We might call all this learning reflective learning or even reflexive learning when such learning

has a critical and even disruptive quality, disruptive in the sense of transforming and transgressing stubbornly resilient patterns and systems that in their essence - at their core, at the level of the foundations and values on which they are based - are deemed undesirable.

The authors write: 'By explicitly integrating reflection in the learning process the learning will become clearer and better articulated and it will contribute more strongly to meaningful change in a complex context.' They rightfully point out that being reflective, let alone being reflexive, is not something that always comes easily or naturally. In fact people have a tendency to avoid the deeper questions and to steer away from the feeling of unease that is caused by friction, disruptions or dissonance. Yet it is these tensions and (inner) conflicts that create the kind of energy and questioning that is needed to actually learn, that is to actually re-think the way we think and, when the conditions are right, co-create new ways of thinking, seeing and doing.

This book offers a range of valuable tools that can help people develop their reflective capacities and thereby strengthen their possibilities to contribute to not just doing what we do better or more efficiently but also and foremost to doing better things altogether. The latter requires going a little deeper to the foundations of our practices and enabling participants in multi-stakeholder settings to re-design and co-create new practices that, at least for the time being, are more sustainable than the ones they seek to replace.



Finally, nowadays it is quite common for people to use a laptop, tablet and smart phone as tools to support their learning process, and since it is standardised in our courses to provide participants with a tablet instead of printing all the materials, the authors have also included a number of reflection tools that are specifically suited for tablets. But a word of caution might be in order here. As people get 'connected' to the digital world and are becoming, literally, hooked on information and communication technology, spending sometimes up to 90% of their waking hours behind a screen of various sizes, they risk becoming disconnected from the people and places where meaning is made, wisdom is created and where reflective learning is needed most.

Arjen E.J. Wals



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Also a special thanks to Herman Brouwer, who shared his valuable insights of the content and writing process of the MSP Guide and provided me with critical and appreciated feedback. The same holds for Cecile Kusters, who inspired me to keep going and improve the text of this book towards a higher level of content, and for Jan Brouwers, who provided me with some final editing comments and strengthened my motivation to finish this book.

Methods are partly designed by us, partly inspired or designed by others, and I am thankful for all those colleagues and resources that inspired us.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Jan Helder, who came up with the idea to design and facilitate these methods as part of his courses. He initiated the development of this manual in combination with the videos.



Table of contents

Preface	6
Introduction	11
1 Reflective Learning	12
2 Learning concepts, theories and models	16
3 Facilitation	26
4 Reflection Methods	36
Getting started	40
Formulating a 'lesson learned'	41
Reflection ball	42
TV news report	43
Networking and interaction	44
Collaboratively answering questions	45
Interviews in pairs	46
Colour, shape and number	47
Networking cards	48
Pieces of the puzzle	50
Reflection committee	51
Margolis wheel	52
Forming opinions and starting debate	54
Debating statements	55
Debating rounds	56
Turntable discussion	57
Fishbowl	58
Soft Shoe Shuffler (or 'dynamic dialogue')	59
Two-sided discussion	60
Gaining an overview	62
Heart, hand and head	63
ORID Focused Conversation	64
Learning web	65
Individuals, pairs, four of a kind, plenary	66
Video synthesis	67
Structuring and analysing	68
Reflection with symbols	69
Kolb learning cycle	70
Mood and lessons learned meter	72
Mind Map	73



Reflection cards on own performance	74
Hang out the washing	76
Online Socratic quiz	77
World Café	78
Contemplating	80
Free writing	81
Memory Game	82
Find an object/symbol outside	83
Reflective Meditation	84
Walk & Talk	85
Talking stick	86
Open Space for Reflection	87
Metaphor map	88
Stimulating creativity	90
Reflection with images	91
Collage and Gallery	92
Reflection with proverbs	94
Write a haiku	95
Reflection poem or song	96
Comic strip	97
Paired Poem	98
Body sculptures	99
Video animation	100
Energising the participant	102
Quiz	103
Lucky dip	104
Storifying Domino	104
The chair game	105
Future application	106
Future me	107
If you had to explain to your boss	107
High five – desire for the future	108
Making a manifesto	109
Developing a personal action plan	110
The context in which we work	112
About the Authors	114
References, Resources and Organisations	116
Appendix 1 - Content of the physical Toolbox	117
Appendix 2 - Reflection Questions for inspiration	118
My Own Notes	122





Introduction

This guide has been written for facilitators, teachers and trainers who regard reflection as an important element in learning processes they facilitate. It presents a number of methods that can be used to guide a reflection session, which enables people to review and digest an experience and the knowledge acquired during a training course, a workshop or a longer-term capacity development process. The aim is to make learning more explicit and meaningful, thereby contributing to improved professional performance of individuals and (multi-stakeholder) teams. We believe that ultimately reflective learning will contribute to more meaningful change processes.

In the first chapter, reflective learning is defined and its importance is explained. In the second chapter, different concepts, theories and models are described so as to better understand learning to inform you as a facilitator. The third chapter provides more specific advice on the facilitation aspects in general. The fourth chapter provides an overview of a variety of methods that can be used to facilitate reflective learning. We conclude this guide with a brief description of the work context of Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation and the international practice in which these methods have been developed.

Each method is described in detail, listing the materials necessary and notes that will help the facilitator implement the method. A special (physical) toolbox has been developed for staff of Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation with all the materials needed.

And to demonstrate some of the methods 'in action' we made short video impressions. The tools and videos can be found here:
www.mspsguide.org/tool/reflection

More details on relevant theories and models related to facilitation of multi-stakeholder collaboration, and managing for sustainable development impact can be found in our MSP Guide and M4SDI Guide,

- www.mspsguide.org
- www.managingforimpact.org

This handbook mainly gives an overview of different reflection methods.

This guide is not meant as a blueprint but rather to serve as a basket full of inspiration, so use your own creativity and that of your participants when applying the methods.

We hope that you will get inspiration from this handbook and can strengthen reflective learning processes for a better world.



1 Reflective learning

Recognise this?

Are you organising a training but wondering what people will do with what they have learned? Do you facilitate a workshop where people exchange experiences and you puzzle how to help people integrate this into their work? Are you teaching students and wondering what happens with the new knowledge they gained as soon as they leave the classroom? Are you struggling how best to organise learning in a way that it will contribute to meaningful change and sustainable impact?

Too impatient to reflect

With globalisation and ICT on the rise, people get exposed to a wealth of information, concepts, world views and experiences. This can be stimulating but also cause confusion and the feeling of being overwhelmed. Learning events are appreciated in the short term, but do not always lead to lasting impact. We have often seen the natural tendency of people to quickly move ahead towards designing and implementing their favourite strategies for change, without allowing for a thorough reflection to better contextualise lessons learned and apply these in their work environment. We tend to stay 'in our comfort zone' – i.e.

After a learning event people wish to quickly move ahead towards designing and implementing their favourite strategies for change without allowing for a thorough reflection to better contextualise their strategies and integrate their lessons learned.

do what we already know. By doing so, we risk coming up with interventions that tackle symptoms rather than causes or generate short-term solutions for long-term problems. In this handbook we share our insights and answers to these questions and provide a set of practical methods which can be used to stimulate reflective learning.

What is reflective learning

We see reflective learning as a sensemaking process. Reflective learning promotes 'deeper learning' as it involves consciously thinking about and analysing a new experience. It enables learners to activate prior knowledge and to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct their own knowledge. Reflective learning involves stepping back from an event or experience to analyse it from different perspectives. In doing so you relate it to past experiences in order to draw out what it means. It is about taking time to think, feel and digest. It is about identifying lessons learned,

discussing and prioritising, and integrating what has been learned into a strategy for action to improve future performance. Reflection stimulates people to 'own' their learning, which again stimulates the intrinsic motivation to apply lessons learned.

People are invited to question, explore and share their

underlying assumptions about the problems they see, and analyse the reasons as to why they favour particular strategies for action. Does this make sense? Does it 'fit' with what people already know? Through reflection, the outcome of learning will become more clear, more explicit and more meaningful.

In the first place meaningful change refers to the individual professional performance. But reflective learning can also help teams, or even organisations to increase their awareness, fine-tune strategies and improve performance.

Core questions include: 'From what you have heard, seen and experienced in the learning process so far, what was most meaningful to you? How does it relate to your existing knowledge and experiences, and how can you apply it in your professional work context?' Of course these more open questions can be specified and adjusted to fit the learning context.

In critical reflection and sensemaking you question what is normally taken for granted. Taking time to think critically and make sense will therefore help to understand experiences and data in a more in-depth way, create new insights and agree on further action. You can find more about critical reflection and sensemaking in our M4SDI Guide, Chapter 8, page 189.

This approach is based on the idea that people are open to learning and willing to change. But of course there can also be resistance to change. People have many (sometimes unconscious) reasons to resist change. It requires courage to explore the unknown. Being in a reflective mode doesn't always happen by itself, so it can be very helpful if there is something offered to trigger that mode. The methods described in this handbook are exactly meant for that purpose.

“

We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience

John Dewey

What literature tells us

The effectiveness of reflection for deeper learning and meaningful change is in the first place based on our own extensive experience in capacity development and the feedback we received from our participants. This feedback on the reflection sessions suggests that it helps them to put their thoughts together, and highlights the most meaningful elements of their learning they can put into practice.

Insights from literature tend to support this argument. There is a universal application of reflection in experiential learning and widespread practitioner acceptance and positive learner perceptions. The experiential learning cycle is a useful framework where reflection is part of the learning cycle, and thus critical to learning (Kolb). John Dewey is one of the most frequently quoted: 'We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience.' This quote reflects Dewey's approach to reflective practice and its relationship to learning. In his view reflective thought serves as a way to 'train' thinking to make it a 'better way of thinking' (Lagueux, 2014).

Moon (1999b, 138) highlights that the ability to carry out meaningful reflective learning is indicative of the highest level of deep learning, which she terms transformative learning.

Dr Roger Greenaway says that reflection, reviewing and debriefing will help people to learn from their experiences and by using interactive methods it is possible to achieve more engagement, focus, learning, change and impact (Greenaway, 2013).

Surinder Hundal also writes about the value of reflective practise for partnership brokers and calls it a new discipline which fosters professional development (Hundal, 2016).

Boud et al. (1985) suggest that structured reflection is the key to learning from experience, and that reflection as such can be a challenging part of the learning process, and is often overlooked in a formal learning setting.

Harvey et al. (2016) conclude in a literature review that 'a number of authors argue that reflection may be required to elicit the rich learning potential from an instance of experiential learning and, if managed well, reflection will support students in bringing to the surface tacit knowledge about their practice, thus adding to their work-based learning.'

Wals et al. (2012) argue that more dynamic competencies are needed to meet the challenges in our rapidly changing world of today. Those competencies include facilitating multiple stakeholder processes and developing interactive strategies. In their matrix with eight educational principles they also mention (self-)reflection as one of the key aspects in competence-based education and training.

As indicated above, reflection is critical to learning, no matter the context, provided the facilitation approach and methods are adapted to this context.

More about this can be found in the next chapter.

What it is not

Reflective learning is not primarily meant to evaluate learning events or trainings, although it can enhance the sense making processes in evaluation. Though there may be overlap, it is not about measuring or investigating. Neither is it directed to reproduce or assess existing knowledge. The outcome of the reflection should serve the learner in the first place, not the facilitator. Furthermore, the methods are not meant as a tool to attain a very specific learning objective, such as the development of a skill - like riding a bicycle or improving one's presentation skills. For such types of more concrete competence development one might choose a different type of structured 'debriefing' including more focused feedback on performance. The type of reflective learning that is referred to in this handbook suits a more open-ended learning process, in which people generate their own meaning from the multiple aspects of their learning. By doing so in a group they also inspire each other, thereby learning collaboratively.

We urge facilitators who intend to use these reflection methods to be explicit about their own intention and objectives and to be aware of the choices they make when using the methods – what do you want to attain, stimulate or facilitate by using these methods? It is important to carefully select the most appropriate reflection tool considering your objectives, the context, timing or process and participants.

Additional benefits

In addition, when appropriately applied, reflection sessions can have the potential to strengthen group dynamics and foster a conducive learning environment. It increases the possibilities for interaction and creates a fertile ground for new ideas and relationships to emerge. For more background on fostering participatory learning in partnerships, see the MSP guide, p.109.

*Last but not least:
it can be energising and fun!*

So we enthusiastically invite you to integrate reflection sessions into the learning process you facilitate. In the next chapters we give you more perspectives on learning and a lot of very practical methods.

“

The Reflection session was very important to remember and identify the different learning points . It's creative, activating and fun. The reflections made us remember the former days' learning, structure our thinking and link it to the current days' work.'

Feedback from a participant



② Learning concepts, theories and models

Reflective learning features in various important mainstream learning theories. In this chapter we refer to the main learning concepts, theories and models we consider useful to better understand reflective learning. Together they inform our approach of capacity development and adult learning.

The three most important concepts and models we use include: the experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1984), triple-loop learning (Argyris and Schön, 1991) and the conscious-competence learning model (Burch 1970). As a trainer or facilitator you can use these models to inform your facilitation practice and deepen your understanding of reflection as part of learning.

Subsequently in this chapter we elaborate on adult learning principles and the importance of interactive teaching, on defining learning outcomes looking at knowledge, skills and attitudes, and on Blooms 'taxonomy' of learning which can help you to better design your learning event.

A few words of caution: models are designed to provide a useful simplification of complex reality. Models often divide learning into different parts in order to better understand it, but in the end learning is much more a dynamic and interwoven fashion – all factors are involved at once (Greenaway, 2006). So as much as the models give structure or direction, it is important to also allow for the unstructured, lateral, creative and contemplative reflection to happen.

“

Reflection is indicative of deep learning, and where teaching and learning activities such as reflection are missing ... only surface learning can result.'

Biggs 1999 in King 2002, p.3

Kolb's experiential learning cycle

A useful framework to understand learning is the experiential learning cycle developed by David Kolb (1984). The experiential learning cycle builds on the notion that people learn from experiences and build new knowledge based on practice. People can use analysis, experimentation and experience to decide what new knowledge is relevant and how it can be applied. Skills and knowledge can then be integrated into existing work and action plans, and thus become the new working practice.

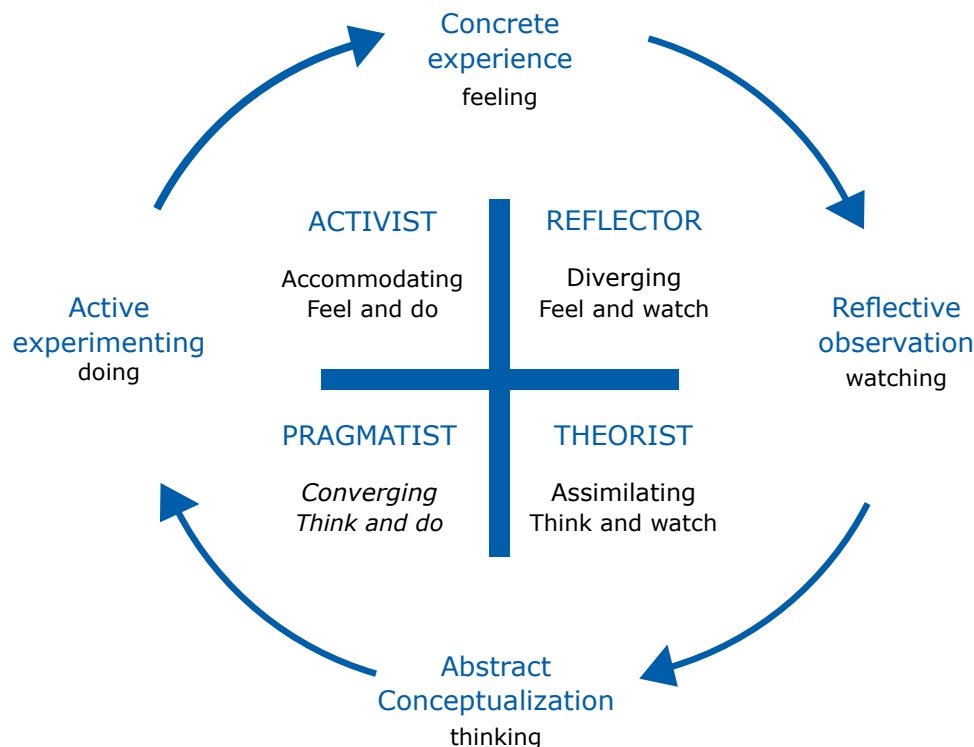
Building upon earlier work from John Dewey and Kurt Levin, the American educational theorist David Kolb argued that 'learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984: 38). Kolb presented a cyclical model of learning, consisting of four stages:

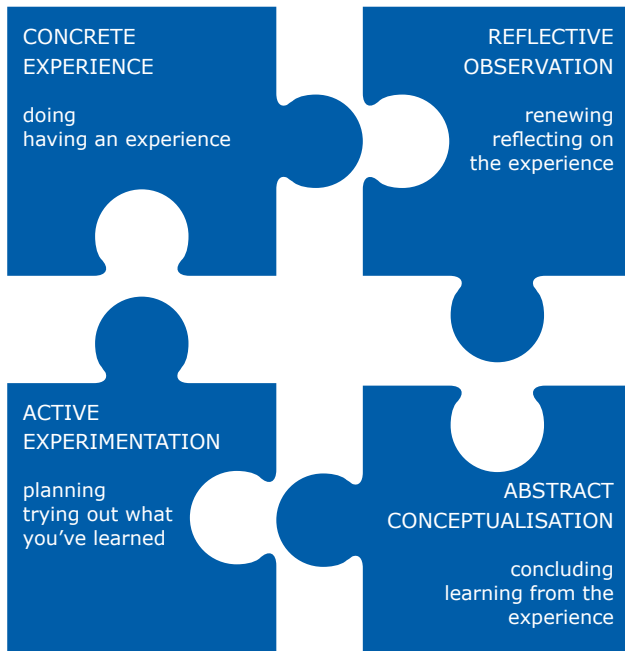
- 1 Concrete experience ('DO');
- 2 Reflective observation ('REFLECT');
- 3 Abstract conceptualisation ('THINK');
- 4 Active experimentation ('PLAN').

You may start the process at any stage, and there is no start or finish point but for full learning to take place, address all the four stages of the cycle. Kolb's learning cycle shows how through exploration, reflection and analysis (zooming in) experiences are

translated into concepts and new perspectives (zooming out), which then are used as guides for active experimentation for a subsequent experience (Kolb, 1984).

The reflective learning is part of this cycle. Core to this approach is that people get together in a learning process, with their existing professional practice in mind and they learn from sharing experiences and reviewing existing evidence. They conceptualise ideas by reflecting on their own practice, linking the problems of their reality to new theories and perspectives, in order to gain new knowledge which helps them to change their existing practices and approaches.





However, there are also some critical observations regarding Kolb's model of experiential learning. Although it does mention reflection as an important stage in the learning cycle, it does not provide any deeper understanding of what thorough reflection entails exactly. Furthermore, the model does not refer to cultural diversity, which is an intricate part of our work in an international context. And we would argue that learning is often far more complex than the model suggests. For example, it does not take into account aspects like self-directed learning, implicit learning (sometimes people are not aware of the fact they learn informally), the role of emotions in learning (a lot of stress might block learning), and social learning (learning at a system or societal level). Nevertheless we think it offers a very valuable perspective for understanding and designing learning events.

To illustrate this approach we will use the following example from our practice. The teaching staff from different universities, students, some private sector companies and a representative from the Ministry of Education came together in a multi-stakeholder meeting to address the problems in the educational system. They exchanged their experiences related to the educational system and we supported them in a reflection on and analysis of their current system. This was complemented by some more theoretical input on new educational systems from elsewhere. Through this approach they were inspired, and improved their teaching practice and educational system. They became more aware of how to better align education to the labour market to improve career opportunities for their students and how to anchor this approach in the existing curriculum.

Triple-loop learning

This model, developed by Argyris and Schön (1974), complements Kolb's theory, by engaging in 3 levels of learning about successful results and how these can be achieved. In this model, single-loop learning is about reflecting on the rules and procedures so as to improve actions with small adjustments. Are we doing things right? How can we improve our existing practise, e.g. in a project?

Double-loop learning can be applied when expected results cannot be achieved by adapting the rules and procedures. You then need to go a level deeper and question the underlying structures, strategies or methodologies. Are we doing the right thing? Or do we need to amend existing strategies or develop new ones? Double-loop learning can lead to major changes in approach and design of initiatives. If we still cannot

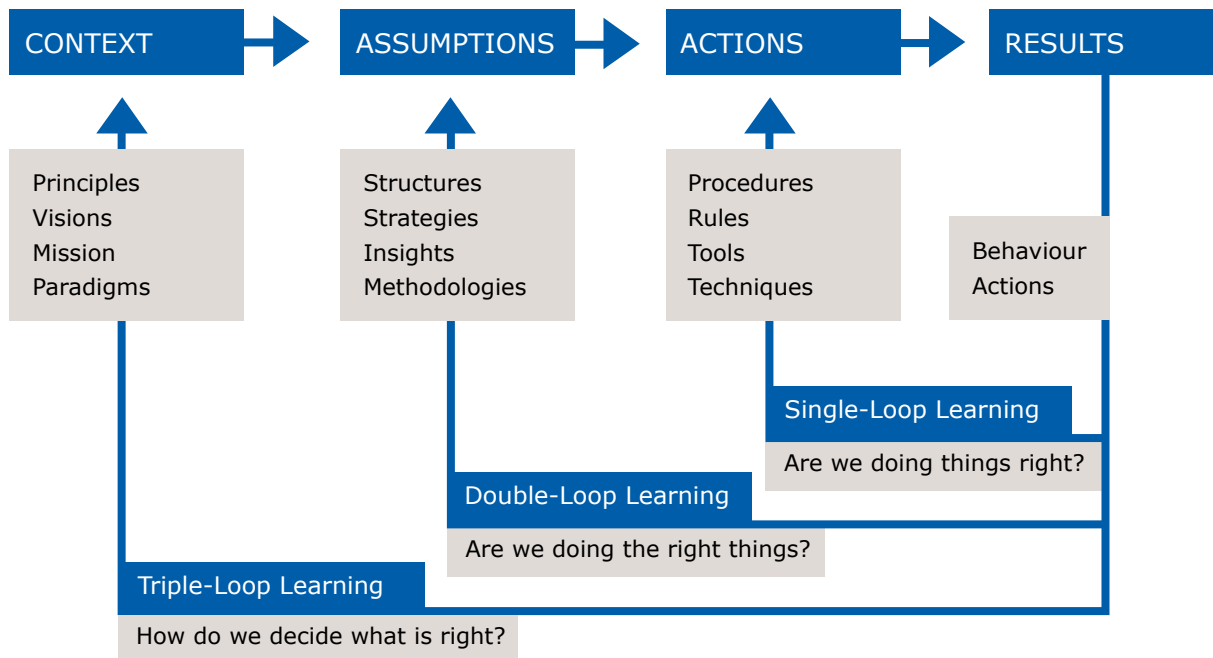
reach expected results through single- or double-loop learning, we may have to question our underlying assumptions, theories, paradigms or principles through triple-loop learning. This level of learning is much more fundamental, and reflects on the question 'How do we decide what is right?' Through which lens or paradigm do we look at a particular problem and make choices? The focus of this learning is on challenging and changing underlying values and assumptions, changing our purpose and on helping us to better understand and address complex problems.

Triple-loop learning can be used for deeper learning and reflection, which can help to bring about changes in attitudes, assumptions and beliefs. In reflective learning for innovation and change all three levels play a role. It can be helpful to be aware of the level you choose during the reflection session and which

questions you address. Sometimes you focus your questions on the single-loop learning and other times you may ask questions which are more related to double or triple-loop learning, addressing more fundamental issues about purpose and direction.

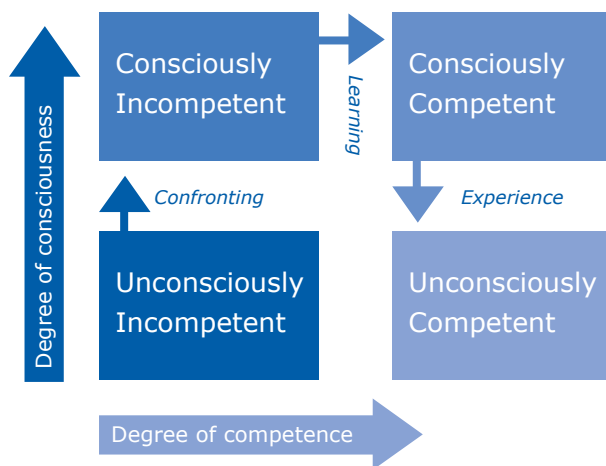
In summary, the three core questions that can be addressed with this model are:

1. Are we doing things right? Do we need to improve our actions?
2. Are we doing the right things? Do we need to change our choices in what we do and how we do this?
3. How do we decide what is right? Do we need to change the principles, theories, or visions that underpin our decisions for change?



Conscious competence learning model

The third learning theory that can be used to improve our understanding of learning is the so-called 'conscious competence learning model'. This model is widely used by practitioners in the field of education, psychology and training. It simplifies the understanding of how the process of learning competences (might) take place.



The model distinguishes four phases in the learning process. Firstly, there is a phase in which the learner is not aware of His/her 'incompetence', or lack of certain knowledge, skills and/or approach and is unconsciously incompetent. Through exposure or confrontation the incompetence can be recognised and then the learner becomes conscious of the inability to do something. This can be somewhat uncomfortable.

In the third phase, through learning and practice, the learner can become consciously competent. Eventually through experience, the competence is internalised

and unconsciously applied: the learner becomes unconscious competent.

Let's illustrate this cycle by using the example of riding a bicycle. If you have not heard of bicycles nor seen anyone ride one, then you don't know that you don't know how to ride a bicycle (you are unconsciously incompetent). When you come to The Netherlands and get exposed to a new reality (a lot of bicycles) you will become aware of your unawareness and inability to cycle (consciously incompetent). Through trial and error and continued practice you can learn how to ride a bike and at first you will carefully do so (consciously competent) but after some time you will cycle and keep balance without thinking about it (unconsciously competent). The same goes for the competence of interactive teaching: If you have never been exposed to this teaching approach you don't know that you don't know, but once you get exposed to it, you realise what you are missing and can learn to do it yourself, and eventually you might always be teaching in an interactive way without thinking about it anymore, it happens naturally (unconsciously competent).

Looking at the four phases in more detail the following characteristics can be distinguished:

1 Unconscious incompetence

- The person is not aware of the existence or relevance of a certain competence area.
- The person is not aware that s/he has a 'gap' in the concerned area.
- The person has to become aware of their incompetence before development of the new competence or learning can begin – this happens through exposure or confrontation, e.g. by interaction with different stakeholders.
- The aim of the learner and the trainer is to move

into the 'conscious incompetence' stage by demonstrating the competence, and the benefit that it will bring to the person's practice.

2 Conscious incompetence

- The person becomes aware of the existence and relevance of the competence.
- The person therefore also becomes aware of his/her inability in this area, ideally by attempting or trying to use the competence – this can be frustrating and trainers might experience some resistance when trying to help others in becoming aware of their incompetence.
- The person realises that improving his/her competence in this area will improve their performance.
- Ideally, the person has a measure of the extent of their deficiency regarding the competence in question, and a measure of what level of competence is required to improve their performance.
- The person ideally makes a commitment to learn, practice and explore the new competence, in order to move to the 'conscious competence' stage.

3 Conscious competence

- The person achieves the 'conscious competence' stage when they can perform the new competence reliably at will.
- The person will need to concentrate and think in order to perform the competence but without assistance – giving a feeling of success.
- The competence is not yet second nature or automatic.
- The person should ideally continue to practice the new competence and, if appropriate, commit to becoming 'unconsciously competent'.
- Practice and experience are the most effective ways to move from stage 3 to stage 4.

4 Unconscious competence

- The competence becomes so familiar that it enters the unconscious parts of the brain – it becomes second nature.
- Examples are driving a car, listening and communicating (in a foreign language), managing a group.
- It becomes possible for certain competences to be performed while doing something else, for example, managing time while facilitating.
- The person might now be able to teach others the competence concerned, although after a long period of being unconsciously competent the person might actually have difficulty in explaining exactly how they do it - it has become largely intuitive.
- This arguably gives rise to the need for long-standing unconscious competence to be checked periodically against new standards.

This model is often used in a formal educational setting and often related to skill development. We do believe that it is also highly relevant in our working context in which we develop capacities, attitudes and strategic approaches in order to deal with complex problems in sustainable development.

This model can offer guiding questions for your reflection. Furthermore, reflection can help people to become more aware in which of the 4 phases they are, and it can also help to deal with the discomfort and resistance which may be present when people move from the unconscious incompetent into the conscious incompetent – being aware of your incompetence can be a difficult experience. Knowing that others are in the same position, or acknowledging it and reflecting on it, can help to accept it and move on.



What this model does not explicitly cover is the unplanned and unconscious learning which sometimes remains unconscious: learning out of curiosity, by felt necessity, through ambitions, as preventive measure, out of anxiety, through group pressure, by conviction or through imitation, etc. Sometimes people go through these 4 phases without planned interventions (e.g. training) or being conscious that you are learning a skill, until after reflecting on it.

Adult Learning

Most often we are working with professionals, who are adults. They learn differently compared to children and have different needs when being trained or facilitated. When working with adults three issues are important to consider in relation to reflective learning:

- 1 Adults learn mostly from peers if they consider an issue or topic relevant to their lives or work. They have developed self-knowledge and need self-motivation to change. They want both to receive and to share their own knowledge and experience. They have strong personal dignity and should be treated with respect. Most adults do not need (and do not like) to learn from a teacher.
- 2 Adults are not empty vessels. They build on the knowledge they already have, hence they may also learn different things than was intended, depending on their motivation, the learning climate and the learning methods.
- 3 The role of the facilitator differs from a traditional teacher's role. Adults are stimulated by sharing their own experiences, engaging in dialogue with their peers, and actively participating in the search for causes and solutions.

These issues have implications for facilitators and trainers in that they need to work with the intrinsic

motivation of people by building on their existing knowledge and connecting to their problem definitions. In our learning events we mix classroom lectures given by experts, with active learning sessions in which peer learning is central. A common difficulty of many trainings and workshops is the application of the insights and results in the day-to-day work of participants back in their organisation. The translation from the abstract, sometimes simplified training context to the chaotic reality of day-to-day work in teams and hierarchies with established routines ('This is the way we do things') can be challenging for people to apply their lessons learned. Furthermore, adults are constantly learning from experiences in their work.

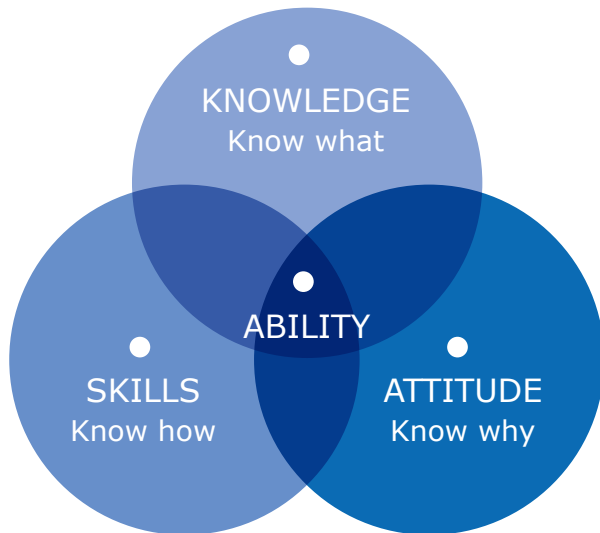
We see a learning event as an opportunity to accelerate the learning process and to take stock of recent experiences. By engaging participants in continuous and diverse learning opportunities, the chances increase of being able to apply lessons learned, since participants have had a chance to think through an application in their context and learn from others. We see such an event as enabling people to dedicate some time to learning in a conducive environment together with a group of colleagues with similar backgrounds, where a workshop can function as a laboratory for experimenting and gaining new insights in a safe and trusted environment. The inputs in such a setting can be both scientific and experience-based knowledge, as well as various forms of active application and testing. In this way we can move beyond a one-off learning event and really offer a profound and embedded learning experience.

Reflection sessions are important in adult learning since they allow for sharing of experiences and insights, and create an opportunity for the adult learner to draw out the lessons.



Learning Outcome Typology

Learning outcomes can be classified into three types of outcomes: Knowledge [cognitive], Skills [psychomotor], and Attitudes [affective] (Winterton et al., 2005). Also in the context of competence development people often refer to these three domains (Mulder et al., 2006). As a trainer, it is important to be aware of these different learning outcomes when you design a curriculum or training programme. It can help you to set the goals of the learning process: after the learning event, the learner should have acquired a number of new skills, certain knowledge, and have changed their attitude. It can also help participants to become more explicit in what they want to learn and set their own specific learning goals.



Ideally, you can create a table of skills, knowledge and attitudes before the learning event where you specify the learning objectives. An example is given below:

Knowledge

- people can explain the limitations of the current seed system correctly
- people understand the advantages of the new sowing technique
- people know where to buy good seed

Skills

- people are able to prepare the soil with the right nutrient inputs
- people are able to do a cost-benefit analysis for the new seed variety
- people can design and implement a field experiment and analyse the results

Attitude

- people agree that business as usual is not a good option
- people believe that the new sowing technique has many advantages.
- people see the importance of doing field experiments to test the new seed variety

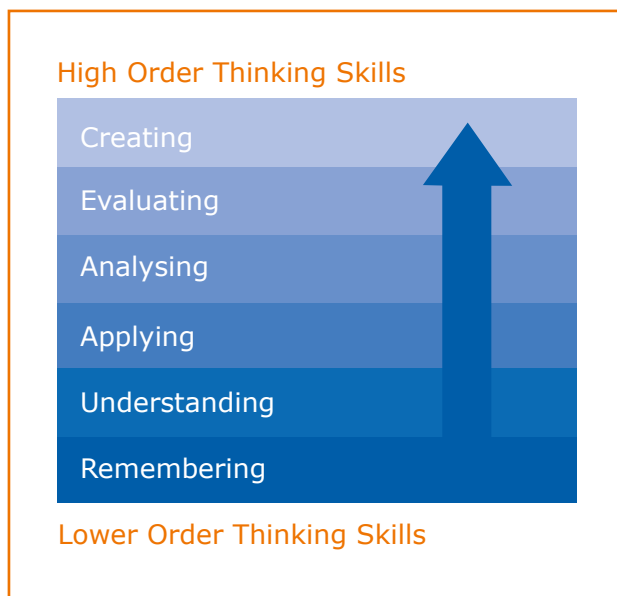
In the reflection session it is important to reflect on all the learning outcomes: some of the tools put more emphasis on knowledge people gained, other tools can support skills development, whilst for example the debating tools are more focused on a change in attitude and mindset. Reflection questions can support achieving these learning outcomes.

Models can provide a useful simplification of complex reality, but it's important to understand that learning is a dynamic and interwoven process. It's not just about increasing knowledge and skills and changing attitudes.

Learning is also about making sense of reality in order to understand what is happening and why it happens, to act more effectively and meaningfully. This type of learning is also linked to social or societal learning: the process by which communities, stakeholder groups or societies learn how to innovate and adapt in response to changing social and environmental conditions (adapted from Woodhill, 2005, and inspired by Ausubel, Lewin, Copain, Freire, Jung, Rogers).

Blooms Taxonomy of learning

Another useful concept is Bloom's Taxonomy, which was created in 1956 by educational psychologist Dr Benjamin Bloom in order to promote higher forms of thinking in education, such as analysing and evaluating concepts, processes, procedures, and principles, rather than just remembering facts. It is often used when designing educational, training, and learning processes.



Bloom organised learning into six different categories, ranging from the simplest cognitive process or behaviour to the most complex level of thinking. Whilst these categories outlined are not absolutes and other systems or hierarchies exist, Bloom's taxonomy is easily understood and is probably the most widely applied one in use today.

The six major categories starting from the simplest to the most complex include:

- **Remember:** retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory
- **Understand:** construct meaning from instructional messages and graphic communication
- **Apply:** carry out or use a procedure in a given situation
- **Analyse:** break material into its consistent parts and determine how the parts relate to another and to an overall structure
- **Evaluate:** make judgements based on criteria and standards
- **Create:** put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganise elements into a new pattern or structure

The categories can be thought of as degrees of difficulties. That is, the first ones must normally be mastered before the next one can take place.

When talking about reflective learning, sensemaking and integrating lessons learned into actions, we talk about the 'more complex', higher-order thinking skills. Whilst some of the tools listed in this handbook might be a bit more superficial and 'fun', in essence the reflective process we talk about is a deeper and more complex level of learning. It is important to realise that it is not an easy task to reflect and make sense for making decisions for change.

Summary of learning concepts, theories and models

In summary the following learning concepts, theories and models we consider useful to better understand learning. As a trainer or facilitator you can use these models to inform your facilitation practice and deepen your understanding of reflection as part of learning.

The Experiential Learning Cycle highlights that reflection is an explicit part of the cycle but also provides you with some guiding questions to reflect on all four parts of the cycle.

The Triple-Loop Learning model can be used for deeper learning and reflection, and it important to be aware of the level you choose during the reflection session and which core questions you address.

The Conscious Competence Learning model can offer guiding questions for your reflection to become more aware in which of the 4 phases people are, and it can also help to understand the discomfort and resistance people may feel when they move from the unconscious incompetent into the conscious incompetent phase.

Understanding the Adult Learning Principles helps you to design your learning event in such way that it meets the needs of adult learners, and reflection sessions are important in adult learning since they allow for sharing of experiences and insights, and create an opportunity for the adult learner to draw out the lessons learned.

The Learning Outcome Typology provides you with three sub-domains of learning: knowledge, skills and attitudes. Some of the reflection methods will put

more emphasis on 'knowledge' people gained, other methods can support 'skills' development, whilst for example the debating methods are more focused on a change in 'attitude' and mindset. In other words the reflection can support achieving the specific learning outcomes that you try to achieve in your learning event.

And finally, Blooms Taxonomy of Learning helps you to understand 'higher forms of thinking' in education and the increasing complexity in levels of learning. When talking about reflective learning, sensemaking and integrating lessons learned into actions it is important to realise that we are talking about the 'more complex', higher-order thinking skills, which are in general more difficult than for example remembering knowledge.

As mentioned before, we realise that models and theories provide us with simplifications of a complex reality of learning. Nevertheless, we think they offer a very valuable perspective for understanding and designing learning events, and within that, give profound and well-informed attention to reflection.

“

There is nothing more practical than a good theory.

James C. Maxwell

3 Facilitation

It is not very easy to demystify the concept of facilitation nor to define what a facilitator is, or does. A facilitator can play many roles including, getting things organised, creating space for dialogue, and running an effective workshop. It has been summarised in three main roles: convenor, moderator, and catalyst (adapted from Sørensen and Torfing 2013). For more in-depth information please have a look at our MSP Guide (Brouwer et al, 2015).

In the context of this book we refer more specifically to the facilitation of a learning process. For this role it is very important to understand the different learning theories and be able to effectively work with them in a group, to fine-tune your reflection questions and sense where the group is at an emotion level. Especially when you want to go deeper with your reflection you need to be able to come up with inviting follow-up questions and create the right encouraging but safe space for people to explore. In this chapter we pay attention to different aspects of facilitation: group and learning dynamics, the timing - when to reflect, and who will facilitate the reflection.

Talking over a situation or experience with someone informally can be an excellent way of starting to reflect – distancing oneself from it, breaking it down, looking at it from a different perspective, analysing what happened and why, and deciding how you could handle it differently next time. But reflective learning can be more effective when a particular reflection tool is carefully chosen and facilitated as it can bring more diversity in the way of reflecting.

Therefore, this chapter also gives some insights into how to choose a method, and which questions to ask. Lastly, this chapter draws attention to cultural diversity and awareness, and gives some reflections on the fact that learning is not always pleasant, and can even be scary.

Group and learning dynamics

Groups can move through different stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, performing and mourning (Tuckman, 1965). When participants arrive at a training course or other learning event, they may feel insecure: What do people expect from me? What are we going to do? How is this training going to be helpful? This is in the forming stage. Participants may also feel dependent on others because they cannot control the environment and cannot predict what is needed from them. This is especially important in a multicultural setting.

Equally, as a facilitator you may feel a strong need for trust and orientation. Will participants be motivated to participate and learn? What are their needs? How do they learn best? Being aware of the different phases of group development can help you to better understand and work with groups, and inform the learning approach you chose as facilitator.

It's important to help groups move through these stages so that they can really learn and perform well as a group.

Here are some tips for trainers on how to stimulate group and learning dynamics:

- Assess the learning needs of participants before the meeting and try to tailor the learning approach to these needs as much as possible.
- Take time for participants to get to know each other and share information about their experiences and their expectations. Building trust will make people feel more at ease and open for learning.
- Define the objectives of the meeting and draw up a 'learning contract' with the participants, explicitly stating expectations concerning individual and group behaviour and commitment.
- Be aware of the effect of seating arrangements, group size and group dynamics on building trust and openness. Arranging tables in small clusters rather than rows can support group work and open communication.
- Take time for reflections after sessions and at the beginning of each day.
- Use active participation as a key instrument in stimulating learning and group dynamics.
- Experiential learning (Kolb) is key and involves a lot of personal and group assignments built into the programme in order to learn from the experiences and new concepts.



- Gear learning events towards action and application in the context of participants and their organisations. Tools helpful to integrated this action perspective in the learning process are the pre-meeting assignments and during the event to keep a learning journal. Having discussions with peers is also useful, whilst working on personal products and action plans towards the end of a learning event help participants to think through the implications of lessons learned and application in their context.
- Variation in group size: plenary sessions (e.g. plenary presentations, excursions and discussions or debates); working with smaller groups of five to seven participants (group work, practical assignments, analyses of cases, application of tools, etc.); working in pairs (e.g. having a buddy, peer-to-peer coaching, sparring partner, etc.) or individuals (learning journal, individual action plan, individual coaching by trainer/coach).
- Tailor reflection methods to group size. Some tools are fit for large groups (plenary), some in sub-groups and some are for individual reflection. As a rule of thumb: individually or in pairs everybody will speak/actively participate, in small subgroups (5-6 persons) most people will do so but some will be quiet, and in plenary (large groups) only the most dominant people will speak and most people will be quiet. Being quiet does not mean that people who do not speak do not participate: they might be very much involved through observant reflection.
- Some facilitators like to work with a pattern '1-2-All' to start a reflection ('1' = solo; '2' = talking in pairs; 'All' = whole group discussion) but you can also reverse the process using 'All-2-1' or do both ways.

When considering the reflection methods presented in this handbook, it is important to take the timing, active participation and size of the group into account when choosing a reflection method. At the start of an

event it can be good to do more work in a large group since the group building process is still very important in this stage; people are yet to get to know each other and find their place in the group. On the other hand, working in small groups can create a feeling of safety in which also more shy people can speak out.

Alternatively you could combine or alternate the two. Towards the end of the learning event it can be good to work more with individuals and/or existing teams since they are the ones who will have to translate the lessons learned into feasible actions in their own context.

Timing and frequency

In general reflective learning is most meaningful after a time of (new) experience. When there is a longer timespan where people meet and interact on a daily basis, a short reflection of 30 minutes could be done every day to capture the learning and make sense of all that has happened. When people meet once in a while, the reflection sessions will also be less frequent and are used to not only reflect on what happened in the whole group, but also can be used to reflect on the experiences outside of the joint meetings.

Who facilitates

Who facilitates reflection sessions should be a conscious choice. It is important that the facilitator is familiar with the learning concepts and has a clear objective and vision in mind when facilitating the reflection session. It is useful to have a facilitator who is neutral and skilful in using the learning concepts and who knows how to foster deeper learning. Furthermore, if the facilitator is perceived as neutral,

people can speak out more freely on how they feel about their experiences. However, sometimes a level of relationship and trust is needed for people to open up and connect. More about choosing a facilitator can be found in our MSP Guide, page 122.

In some cases the facilitation can also be delegated to one or a few participants from the group (small committee), for example in case the focus of the learning process is about facilitation and learning. The advantage is that there is greater ownership of the reflection process within the group, and it offers them a possibility to practice their own facilitation skills. A disadvantage is that the quality of the reflection is sometimes poor in terms of deeper learning and in distinguishing key issues from less important ones. Sometimes participants have the tendency to do an interactive (sometimes playful) recap/summary of what was done, as a repetition rather than a deeper explorative reflection and sensemaking. When you do want to involve the participants in the facilitation of the reflection, it helps to ask them to do a proposal and prepare the reflection session beforehand, and that you have a look at it with them and give them some suggestions or tips to improve it when needed, before they actually present it to the group. After a first reflection session you can do a brief evaluation with the group to review the reflection. Was it useful? Was it participatory? What went well, and what could be improved for a next reflection session? In that way you do take the reflection seriously, participants have a moment where they can practice their facilitation skills and they can also add or integrate their own methods and creative ideas into the existing tools.

A hybrid form in which a trained facilitator and participants alternately facilitate the reflections can be also a practical reality which works reasonably well. It can be helpful to facilitate the first few sessions

yourself (as facilitator) and then ask the group, so they have some reference of what it could look like.

Asking the right reflection question

Of course in the end it is not so much about the format or the method, but more about the type of questions being asked to stimulate the reflective learning. This includes being able to formulate the right questions yourself, for your own learning. Questions can be linked to the head (thinking), heart (feeling) or the hands/feet (action/experience). Some questions are directly linked to Kolb's learning model (what happened, why, so what and now what?), and often they stay more on the rational level, related to thinking, analysing and doing.

Other questions are linked to the emotional level reflecting on the feelings of people (How do you feel during the experience yesterday? How did this experience affect you? Did anything happen that made you feel inspired/frustrated/happy/moved/uncomfortable, and why?). Some people even state: 'When you are affected emotionally, you learn.' Emotional or intuitive responses are important data and when taken into consideration in reflection, they can strengthen and support the actions that follow.

There are other questions that stimulate creative thinking (Can you visualise what you learned yesterday?), or deepening questions that draw out the deeper meaning and experience (What does this mean to you? What underlying assumptions make you think like this?). Some questions are more probing, asking for opinions and arguments (Do you agree with that? Can you develop a statement?).

Questions that can encourage double-loop learning include:

- Are you/we using the right strategy to solve this problem?
- Are there other ways to look at this problem?
- What is most challenging or provoking so far? Why and what does that mean?
- What have we not talked about or, in other words: by doing this, what did we not do?

And more systemic questions for reflection on a certain problem or issue:

- Who agrees with you that this is the key problem? And who does not? Why now?
- When did this first become a problem? What happened before?
- How does this problem fit with the values and aims of the organisation/context?
- Are there other people who need to be involved who haven't been? For what reason?
- What would most stand in the way of making this happen?
- What are the gains if this problem is resolved?
- What are the losses if this problem is resolved?

This handbook also contains an Appendix 2 listing a wide range of reflection questions that can be used or inspire the formulation of new questions.

Asking questions can bring up things from the unconscious, things that people were not aware of. As mentioned before, you don't know what you don't know, and through questions you sometimes discover new things ... It is very important to think carefully about the questions you use as facilitator to support the learning of your participants. Sometimes facilitators ask how to go for deeper reflection. This strongly depends on your listening skills and follow-up questions. Mostly you start with rather easy questions

to get people into the reflection mode and get them involved. Or a simple recap of what happened can help the group to get started. But then active and careful listening, sometimes paraphrasing ('So if I understand you correctly you are saying ...') and then asking a meaningful follow-up question is the crux. It's the art of questioning. Some examples of follow-up questions could be: What was the essence of the experience for you? And what does this mean for your future/your role in the organisation / your work? Was there more you would like to reflect on? And again, was there even more to draw out? Powerful questions are open, allow for imagination ('Imagine if ...'), they can refer to an ideal situation, they can ask for other perspectives on a situation (e.g. 'Mention three good aspects of the current problematic situation.'). Silence can be very powerful as well: don't answer but just listen to the questions and reflect for yourself. The intention behind the question is important: it should be true, out of curiosity and without judgement or hidden advice.

How to choose a method

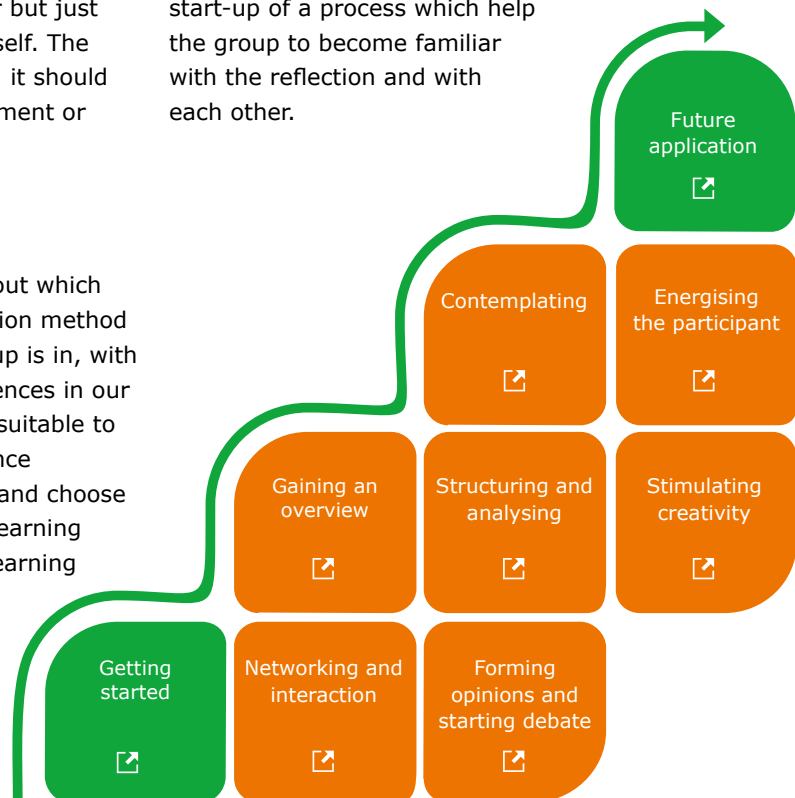
As facilitator you should carefully think about which tool to select for what purpose. The reflection method has to be matched with the phase the group is in, with the experience people had, cultural preferences in our society, and the method chosen has to be suitable to deal with the depth of the original experience participants had. You need to synchronise and choose the right tool for the right moment in the learning process. Form follows function! Although learning processes are messy and loop back, the methods have been grouped into three simplified phases in time: at the beginning, on the way, and towards the end. The largest category is the middle phase 'on the way' where the

methods have been put into sub-categories according to the purpose they serve.

Getting started

At the beginning

In a new group that is unfamiliar with the practice of reflective learning it can be helpful to first discuss in your reflection session questions like: 'How do we formulate a learning point? What are the characteristics of a lesson learned?' You can also provide some examples: 'I learned that poverty reduction can only be achieved by focusing on farmers as economic actors in the value chain' or: 'I understand now what the impact is of my assumptions on my decision-making behaviour.' So there are specific tools that are more suitable for the start-up of a process which help the group to become familiar with the reflection and with each other.



On the way

Reflection during the learning process

In the heart of the learning process there are numerous tools for different purposes: energising the group, stimulating creativity, structuring and analysing, contemplative, zooming in, zooming out, etc. Some methods need a bit of trust and safety to allow for unstructured and open reflection to take place, so these methods can better be chosen towards the end of a learning event when people know each other quite well but this depends very much on the group.

Towards the end

Future application

At the very end of a learning event there is often a need to look ahead, focus on the future and apply what has been learned so far. This can be towards developing an action plan. Some of the methods are specifically designed for this purpose.

When it comes to sequencing of methods used during for example a three-week course it is suggested to select a variety of methods so that reflection does not become a repetitive exercise.

For example you can alternate in the sequence between individual and plenary reflection methods, creative vs more serious or cognitive methods, and towards the end of a learning process you can choose a method which is specifically directed to the future.

Make sure you do not only choose for analytical methods, or only playful, or only plenary. When you alternate in methods the reflections stay interesting and surprising, and you address different learning styles and preferences.

- 1 Getting started:** How do I introduce reflective learning and get started with my group?
- 2 Networking and interaction:** How do I build new connections in the group and stimulate interaction?
- 3 Forming opinions and starting debate:** How do I challenge existing opinions and stimulate people to look beyond their own point of view?
- 4 Gaining an overview:** How do I help people to see the bigger picture and focus on what matters most to them?
- 5 Structuring and analysing:** How can I support people to get some order and structure in the density of what they experienced and learned?
- 6 Contemplating:** How do I invite people into a more free floating and deep, unstructured reflection, creating space for new thoughts to come into being?
- 7 Stimulating creativity:** How can I stimulate people to use the left side of their brain a bit more and think out of the box using creative form?
- 8 Energising the participant:** How do I stimulate the level of energy and playfulness in the group?
- 9 Future application:** How can I stimulate that people apply their individual lessons learned? And how do I stimulate the implementation of decisions?



Cultural diversity and awareness

We believe that cultural differences are not a major issue in reflective learning, like we stated in the first chapter. However a facilitator should be culturally sensitive and it helps to have a couple of things in mind and be aware of the cultural differences in your group. It also helps to be aware of possible power differences between participants. Sometimes you should also be aware of gender issues, which may play a role in the way how you will structure the learning.

Building confidence is a cornerstone in intercultural learning settings in order to achieve the openness necessary for a mutual learning process. It is a prerequisite to feel rather comfortable to share different viewpoints, perceptions and feelings, to arrive at acceptance and understanding. We need to listen to each other as equals, give space to everybody's expression, value all experiences, talents and contributions, and acknowledge the various needs and expectations. Mutual trust goes hand in hand with mutual respect and honesty in sharing.

Theories describing cultural difference emphasise how differently we can perceive reality, even such basic dimensions as time and space (see: Hofstede and Hall & Hall). Everyone constructs their own worlds and the reflection process should pay an effort to accept other views equally and seek the reconciliation of different viewpoints, especially because it is a sensemaking process.

Another aspect of culture is the way people have been brought up and educated, and how much they are used to analyse critical questions, or question their own thinking and behaviour. In some educational systems people get mainly trained in formal

authoritative settings to reproduce information, whereas other educational systems are more open and democratic and self-directed, participatory learning is stimulated. Of course this background has an impact on how easily people find it to reflect, or how much they are used to do so. But being aware of this cultural difference does not have to stop you from using these reflection tools and it is sometimes surprising how quickly intercultural groups pick up and enjoy new ways of working and learning.

The willingness of people to learn and change their behaviour needs to be balanced with the longing for security and safety. Curiosity is important and new perceptions can arise, but we have to be aware that the construction of something new implies possibly the breakdown of the old – such as ideas, beliefs, traditions ... No learning process is free of ruptures and farewells. It can be helpful to explicitly discuss the differences without labelling them.

Many things happen 'beneath the surface', are unconscious and cannot be expressed clearly. This discovery implies some personal risk, it implies tensions with which we have to deal. It is obviously not always easy to accompany people in this process. On the one hand, we need to encourage people to go further, to challenge them to leave their comfort zones, to open up to new realities. On the other hand, we have to be very careful and respectful to peoples' needs, diverse experiences, interpretations and knowledge and the limits of these processes.

It helps if the facilitator has a clear view on the reflection process but also the intercultural or other dynamics in the group (which change over time). What actually do we want to reach with this particular method, in this particular moment of the programme? Is this method appropriate in the present dynamic of





this particular intercultural group? Is the group atmosphere and level of communication suitable for the method? Did we consider our personal disposition and how it could impact our facilitation of the method? How are we prepared to react to outcomes which are not what we expected?

When a new group with different nationalities meets, there is no 'normal'. The 'rules of the game' and guidelines for interaction are (partly) unknown and this might cause a (high) level of stress and anxiety. It is therefore extra important to create some form of safety in the beginning, for example by establishing ground rules for interaction including aspects like respect, care for each other, and the principle to 'listen

to learn, and learn to listen'. Once these ground rules have been established in the beginning of the learning process, it is easier to refer back to them when needed.

Some cultures are more extrovert and expressive than others. Through the group pressure silent or introvert people might feel pushed out of their comfort zone and that could be counterproductive for their learning, it might even block their learning or have a negative impact on it. Extroverts can jump in too quickly and shut down reflection. But when you are sensitive on this issue and keep an eye on the more silent people it does not have to be a problem. A group of introvert people can be a very reflective group.



We have always had very enthusiastic reactions and active participation from all kinds of people. Working in small sub-groups might offer the right space for introvert people to express themselves. And in some cultures people are more used to storytelling or even singing and performing and they enjoy very much the creative tools.

Another aspect to be conscious about is male-female dominance and interaction. In some cultures men have a more dominant position and/or men and women don't interact a lot. In some of the methods people are asked to have conversations or discuss things in pairs. In some cases we try to facilitate in such way that two dominant people sit together and

exchange, or two more silent people sit together, or that there is a female pair. But most of the time people are free to choose in which constellation they want to work together, or there are a couple of exchange moments so they can interact with various people.

Body contact and eye-contact is also something to be sensitive about, but most of the methods allow for own flexible interpretation. Don't overstretch personal boundaries because people might block in their learning. Methods where people will drop out one after the other when 'losing the game' will stop their active participation in the reflection process, or games where people will get rewarded or punished for something

also have a negative effect on their reflection process, so we did not include such methods.

Language can obviously be an issue when working in an international context and not everybody masters the same language at the same level. Some of the tools are more visual so people who have difficulty with the working language (often their second or third language) can still easily use the tools. Another option is that they work in subgroups in their own language, in order to have a deeper discussion. Working with an interpreter is always a bit of a disadvantage in terms of having direct feeling and connection with your participants. If you do work with an interpreter, make sure the reflection questions are translated properly so that the reflection goes in the direction you envisaged.

So when the facilitator is culturally sensitive we feel that cultural differences are not a problem in reflective learning. All people can be invited into a sensemaking process by using these reflection methods, but make a careful choice.

“

*Learning is always rebellion ...
Every bit of new truth
discovered is revolutionary to
what was believed before'*

Margaret Lee Runbeck

Learning can be scary

Finally we think it is relevant to pay attention to the challenges of learning. Willshire stresses in her paper that to 'tolerate the state of not knowing in order for new ideas to be created' is one of the key competences of stakeholders and facilitators in complex systems. But this can be an anxiety-provoking circumstance since it implies giving up the need for certainty in order for new, creative solutions to emerge (Wilshire, 1999). People need sufficient self-knowledge to allow for the uncomfortable situation of not-knowing that may be a precondition for a state of coming to know, continually being open to new possibilities.

A more reflective and less controlling approach to learning is appropriate where educators relinquish some certainty but create an environment where the learner him/herself can take more responsibility for the learning process (Thompson and McGivern, 1996). This requires both cognitive and emotional involvement of the stakeholders in the learning process.

In the process of drawing out lessons learned and developing new meaning it frequently happens that people become resistant, doubtful and/or prejudiced by their own treasured opinions based on their 'old' values. For example when people want to help the poorest of the poor but learn that their potential impact is limited, they might feel frustrated and revolt and/or reject this 'reality'. Allowing this frustration to be ventilated and acknowledging the resistance as well as facilitating the stimulation of a debate is an important element in the reflective learning.

4 Description of the reflection methods

The objective of the reflection methods is to make learning more meaningful and connect it to the participants' own context. Apart from that it also helps to shape the learning environment. Safety, trust, personal expression and group building are very important for creating the right learning environment.

Reflection can be used as an 'icebreaker', making participants more alert and energetic, fostering curiosity and stimulating the exchange of lessons learned. Furthermore, through the reflection participants provide useful information to the trainer/facilitator on where they are in their learning process - what people have actually learned and how the new information has been interpreted.

It is important to mention the overall objectives to the group when you introduce a (new) reflection method:

The main objective is:

To digest what you have learned so far, make sense of it and apply it in your own context.

In the previous chapter we elaborated on different theoretical learning models and aspects of learning.

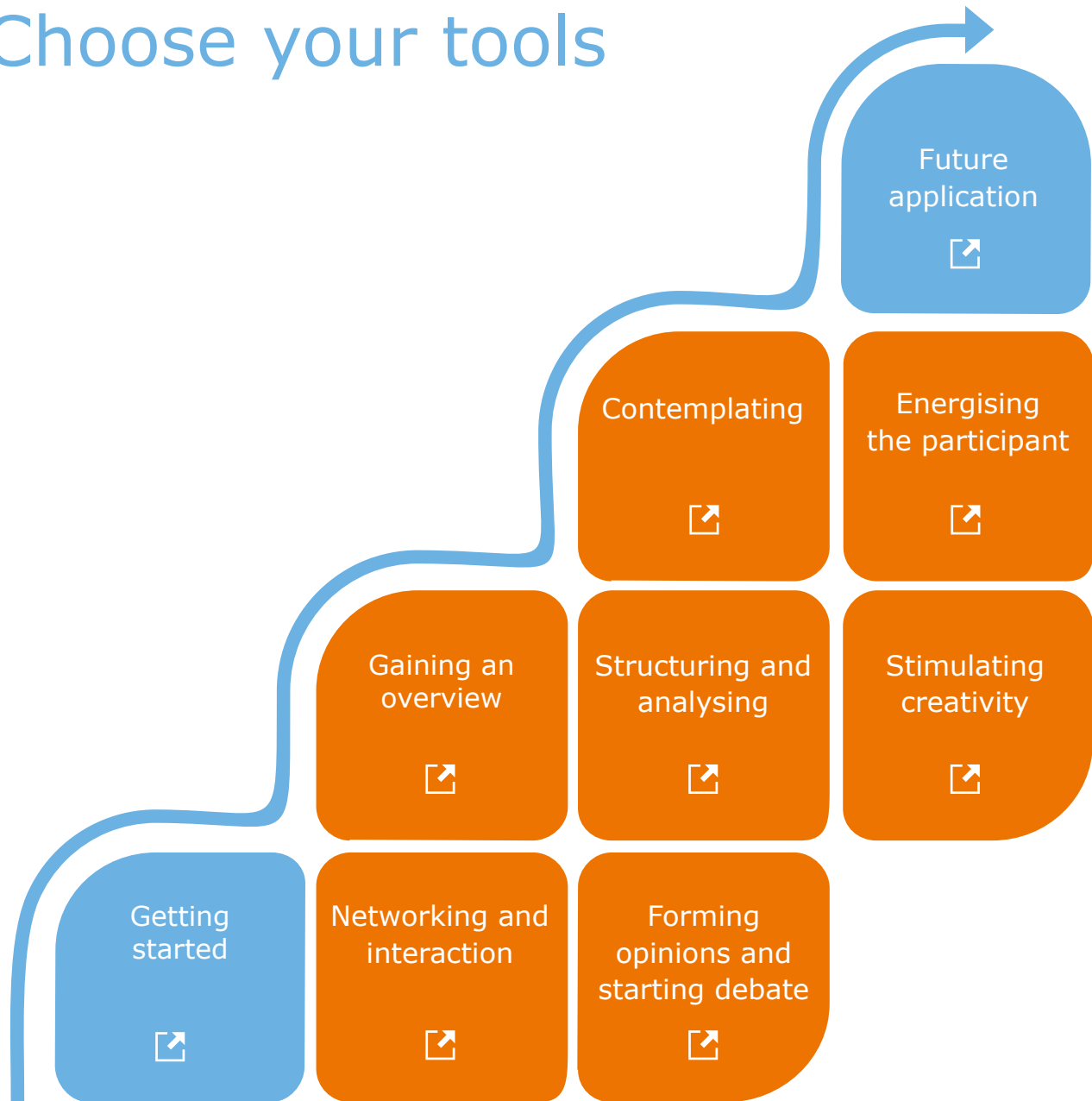
As a trainer or facilitator you can use the models as background information to inform your practice and be more aware of the learning dynamics.

You may ask yourself: Am I covering all the domains of the experiential learning cycle (Kolb)? Can I move beyond the single-loop learning? Which reflection questions will take people into double-loop learning? In which domain of the conscious-competence model are my participants? Are they yet aware of their incompetence and how does that influence the learning dynamics? Should I choose a serious reflection method or is a playful and humorous exercise more appropriate now? A competent facilitator can make deliberate choices informed by the theoretical learning models.

In general the reflection methods are meant for a session lasting about 30 minutes, unless specified otherwise. After 30 minutes of reflection you can close the session by referring to the goal, briefly summarising what was discussed and linking it to the next topic in the programme.

The methods are grouped according to sub-objectives as described in the previous chapter, and that also forms the structure of this chapter.

Choose your tools





Often the suggestion is made to create small groups. There are different ways of doing so. It can be done at random (e.g. by counting), by choice (asking people to form groups) or by deliberately putting certain people together (using criteria like cultural diversity, gender, character traits, content knowledge or professional backgrounds). Try to make a conscious choice how you want to form groups, the effect of that on the groups, and why you choose for that.



If also a personal learning journal is used for daily reflection, then it is important to link the journal to the exercises.

For example, at the end of each day participants take 5-10 minutes to look back and reflect on what important insights they got during the day - at the individual level as well as the organisational level - and write this in their learning journal. Deliberate use of silence is often very helpful for reflection. If people keep track of the different elements and lessons learned it helps them to summarise and develop an action plan at the end of a programme. This is an individual tool, and it depends on people's personal learning style whether they like this way of note taking (some will never use it, others do it naturally). During the interactive reflection sessions the next morning people can refer to their learning journal and what they wrote there.

If new (content-related) questions arise during the reflection session or there is a need for clarification on certain topics, then a 'question corner' or 'parking lot' can be created to 'park' these unanswered questions, to keep track and make sure they will get answered at some point during the learning event.

We have also labelled the methods according to the form they have:



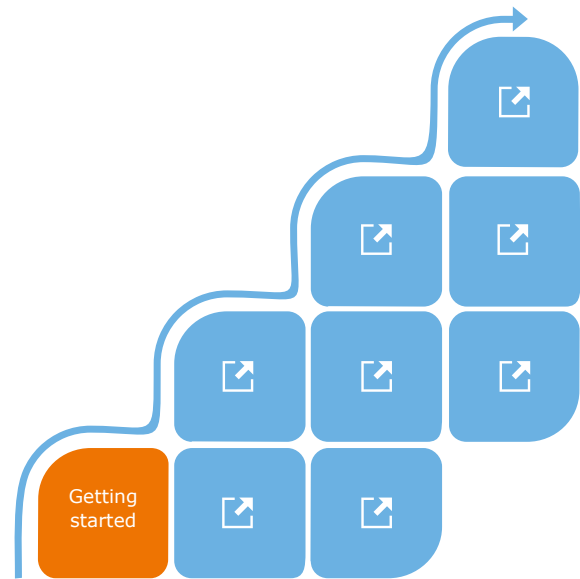
-  The number of stars reflects to degree of difficulty of the method:
1 star is easy, 3 stars is most difficult
-  This method has been video taped
-  The number of persons reflects the group size:
1 = individual reflection
2 = sub-group
3 = plenary
-  Digital method, using tablet or smart phone
-  Using material provided on website

The following sections contain a description of the different reflection tools. Use them for inspiration and feel free to adapt them to your own context, target group and learning objectives.

Getting started

How do I introduce reflective learning and get started with my group

In a new group that is unfamiliar with the practice of reflective learning it can be helpful to first discuss questions like: 'How do we formulate a learning point? What are the characteristics of a lesson learned?' So in this sub-chapter you find specific tools that are more suitable for the start-up of a process which help the group to become familiar with the reflection and with each other.





Formulating a 'lesson learned'



Method

Start with a short interactive recap of the experience of some time before. Then discuss in plenary what learning is: 'How do you feel when you have learned something?' Subsequently, focus the discussion on how to articulate a lesson learned. 'What are the characteristics?' It helps to write some examples of lessons learned on a whiteboard or flip chart.

For example:

- I came to realise that other people in different continents face similar problems.
- I learned that poverty reduction can only be achieved by focusing on farmers as economic actors in the value chain.
- I understand now what the impact is of my assumptions on my decision-making behaviour.
- I learned how to do a stakeholder analysis using the power analysis tool

Depending on how much theory you want to add, you can refer to the experiential learning cycle of Kolb or explain that learning takes place in three domains: knowledge, skills and attitude. Then participants are asked to think individually and in silence of the most important lesson learned of yesterday's session (they choose one) and write it down on a card.

Subsequently, the learned lessons can be discussed in plenary. This is useful because people might not be used to articulating lessons learned and by reporting back in plenary the facilitator can give direct feedback and guidance. Or the participants mingle and pair up into pairs. The pairs exchange their lesson learned. By

switching pairs after a few minutes, participants are encouraged to talk to as many people as possible. This is followed by a brief discussion in plenary about how to formulate a lesson learned. *Option:* combine this method with the reflection ball which is described next.

This tool has been videotaped:

www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection

Material

- Cards
- Marker / pens
- Introduction (PowerPoint) presentation

Remarks

Advantage: This reflection method is particularly valuable at the beginning of a learning event as a way of discussing the concept of a lesson learned and stimulating a culture of reflection and learning. It is important that this is understood by all participants; it is an investment for the rest of the reflection sessions. Furthermore, if you choose to divide the group in pairs, the participants get to know each other by mingling and talking. This method is useful as a 'warming up' exercise for the group to feel at ease and creating an open and egalitarian discussion environment.

Disadvantage: There is little creativity involved, and the focus and discussion are more on the process (how to formulate a lesson learned) and not on the content (what was learned).





Reflection ball



Method

First people think individually about the most important lesson learned after a specific learning event. Then the facilitator throws a ball to one participant and asks for their lesson learned. After answering, this participant throws the ball to somebody else, etc.

Depending on the available time, either a few participants will reflect, or everyone will have a go. In the latter case, the facilitator can ask the participants to stand in a circle, each with a chair behind them. After someone has received the ball and shared their lesson learned, s/he sits down. This allows everyone to see who hasn't spoken yet and should therefore receive the ball.

This method can be combined with a discussion on how to formulate a lesson learned (see Method 3.1). First the group reflects on how to articulate a lesson learned, then everyone thinks individually about their most important lesson from yesterday, and then the ball is used to hear some examples.

If used at the beginning of a process when participants are still unfamiliar with each other's names, they can be asked to throw the ball while also calling out the name of the person they are throwing to.

Material

A soft ball (not too small as some people might find it hard to catch). You can also wrap a flip chart as a ball and tape it firmly.

Remarks

Advantage: It is a quick way to hear some reflection points. After the first ball the participants decide who should be the next person to receive the ball and speak, so you can already see some group dynamics.

Disadvantage: Sometimes the most dominant people will be the first/only ones to get the ball. When a participant suddenly receives the ball, it might encourage just a quick response with limited reflection. It helps if the facilitator allows some time in advance for everybody to think about what they are going to say. In a large group (< 20 people) there will be some repetition of lessons learned so the facilitator can choose to switch to a different question; for example: what unanswered question relating to yesterday's session do you still have?

For more inspiration for reflection questions, see Appendix 2.





Method

The facilitator acts as if s/he is a news reporter who interviews different participants about their learning points. This is a plenary reflection where people share their answers to the 'reporter' with the rest of the group listening in. The facilitator prepares a set of interview questions in advance but additional questions can be improvised on the spot. For inspiration for questions, view Appendix 2.

Material

- Set of interview questions
- Microphone or similar device (optional)

Remarks

Advantage: It is a quick method and everybody will get an overview of what people feel and think.

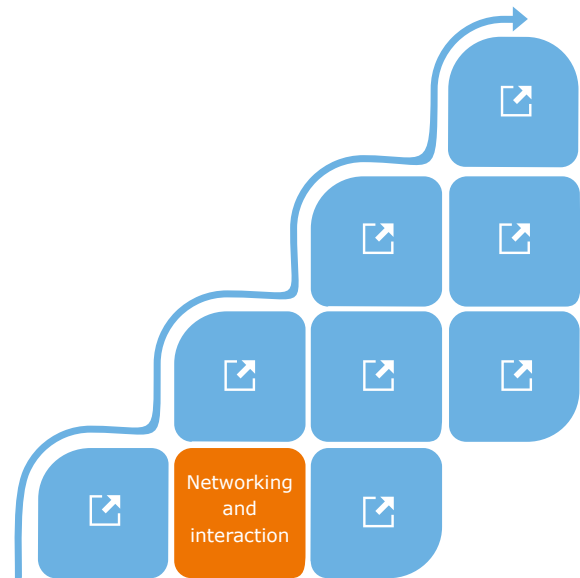
Disadvantage: Some people don't like sharing in plenary, or feel shy. And depending on time availability and group size not everybody will get a turn to speak. Furthermore, people need to improvise on the spot, which does not always allow for deeper reflection and exploration.



Networking and interaction

In the middle of the learning process there are numerous tools for different purposes. This sub-chapter provides a number of methods on

How do I build new connections in the group and stimulate interaction?





Collaboratively answering questions



Method

Participants are asked to form groups of 4-6 people. Then each of group members uses two separate cards to write down their answer to the following questions (individually and in silence):

- Green card: What is your most important learning point?
- Orange card: What question came up for you and remains unanswered so far?

The facilitator collects both cards. S/he mixes the orange question cards and hands them out to the groups in such a way that each group has questions written by people from another group. The groups are then asked to discuss the questions. They don't necessarily have to find answers, but they should discuss the questions and jointly decide on possible answers, advice or comments related to the question. These are written down on the back of the cards.

In the meantime, the facilitator clusters the different learning points, the green cards.

At the end, the questions are collected and laid out on a table for everybody to collect their own card with their question.

The facilitator gives a small presentation about the learning points, summarising the main ones, commenting on the clusters /categories, naming some surprising features, etc.

Alternatively, each group comes up with one joint question, which is written down and shared with another group (by the facilitator redistributing them at random). The sub-groups discuss and decide on possible answers, which are then shared in a short presentation. In this way more of the sharing is done in plenary, which allows for more collaborative learning.

Material

- Cards, two colours, enough for every participant to have one of each.
- Marker pens

Remarks

Advantage: It provides a chance to go deeper into the subject matter by looking at outstanding questions, and it increases the group feeling by thinking collectively about the questions.

Disadvantage: There could be some discrepancy between the question and the answer when written on the cards. Some groups might have to discuss a question that doesn't really interest them, while others have a question that they discuss enthusiastically.





Interviews in pairs



Method

Participants pair up. They interview each other following a series of questions that the facilitator wrote on the whiteboard/a flip chart and are related to the topic they are reflecting on.

Example questions that can be posed in the interviews:

- What was most interesting to you during the last session?



- How, if at all, has this experience changed your thinking?
- How can you link this to your own experience or context?
- What, if at all, will you do differently because of the experience?

After interviewing each other every pair develops a conclusion regarding the topic they discussed. Then the pairs meet up with another pair, so that there are four people in a group. They develop a statement on the topic, merging the two conclusions. Lastly, each group of four presents their statement to the rest of the group.

Material

Interview questions (which can be changed to fit the context of the exercise).

Remarks

This is a good exercise to do at the beginning of a course when the participants are getting to know each other and practicing to listen to each other.

Advantage: In pairs it often feels safer to have a deep and meaningful reflection, stimulating a form of peer-to-peer coaching.

Disadvantage: If two people don't feel at ease with each other (or don't like each other), their reciprocal reflection might be hindered. The participants need good listening skills to do this exercise meaningfully.

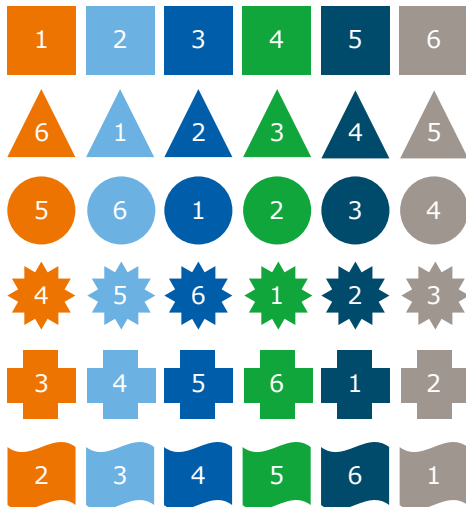


Colour, shape and number

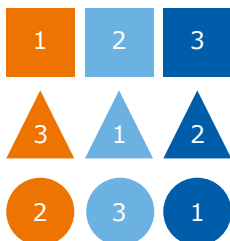


Method

The facilitator has made cards for all the participants – this needs a bit of planning. The cards have three characteristics: colour, shape and number. For example a set of $6 \times 6 = 36$ cards:



Or if you have a smaller group, you can have a set of $3 \times 3 = 9$ cards:



The facilitator gives everybody a card. Then the facilitator asks the group to form sub-groups according to colour, and talk about a reflection question, for example: what motivated you, what gives you most energy in your work? It may be helpful to tell people how much time they have in their sub-groups to discuss the questions (e.g. 5 minutes) and to try and divide the time so everybody will get a chance to speak.

When the groups have shared and discussed for a couple of minutes, the facilitator asks them to close their conversations and now form groups according to the shape, so find other people who have the same shape of card. And with this new sub-group again you give a reflection question. Lastly, people have to group according to the number on their cards and discuss the final reflection question.

Material

Set of cards, one for each participant.

Remarks

Advantage: The method generates nice interactions between people and works a bit like an energiser. People will always meet new people in the next group the form.

Disadvantage: It allows only for short conversations, and the facilitator can't really follow the parallel conversations.



Networking cards



Method

This is a networking tool. All participants receive a card with two questions for discussion and reflection. Participants will walk around for a while, then stop in front of someone else. The pairs discuss one of the questions (choose question A. or B. – the one you like best) on each of the cards and exchange ideas. When a pair has finished their discussion, they swap cards and continue walking around until they meet someone else. Again the pairs choose a question to discuss and swap cards at the end of the conversation.

*This tool has been videotaped:
www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection*

Questions on the cards:

Card 1

- A Identify one element of the presentations or discussions in the programme that triggered you or that you did not agree with?
- B What was the most important lesson you learned?

Card 2

- A What did you like most about the experience, and why?
- B How would you educate others or raise awareness about this topic?

Card 3

- A What was the most challenging/provoking issue?
- B What would you like to experiment with once you are back home and whom would you need to involve?



Card 4

- A Did anything surprise you? If so, what?
- B Do you feel the need to respond to/act upon what you have learned? How?

Card 5

- A What was the funniest moment yesterday?
- B What important trend do you see that might be an opportunity for your organisation?

Card 6

- A Did anything happen that made you feel uncomfortable? If so, what, and why do you think it made you feel this way?
- B How could what you learned affect your life/work?

Card 7

- A What could you teach your colleagues about this topic? How can you engage your colleagues?
- B What were your feelings during the learning experience? How did this experience affect you?

Card 8

- A If you were giving a lecture on this topic, how/ what would you do differently?
- B Based on what you learned, what is the smallest step you can take to create a positive change?

Card 9

- A What did you learn during the informal interactions?
- B What did you find most inspiring?

Card 10

- A What was the most meaningful aspect of yesterday's activity for you ?
- B What unanswered questions do you have? What more would you like to know or find out?

Material

Reflection cards.

Remarks

Advantage: The method generates nice interactions between people and works a bit like an energiser. It leaves room for participants to decide whom they want to talk to.

Disadvantage: It works best with an even number of people. Two questions per card is quite a lot so therefor give them the option of choosing one of the two questions. At some point the questions overlap a bit.

Source: Adapted from: NATURE Outdoor Training & Education, Belgium 2010



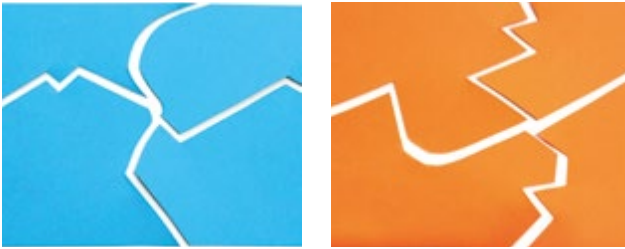


Pieces of the puzzle



Method

This method is similar to the method with colour, shape and number. But this time you can easily make pieces of a puzzle by cutting a coloured piece of paper into 4 part, for example:



When you use different colours, it gets easier for the group the find the pieces of the different puzzles. The shapes you can choose, but make them easy and distinctive for rather easy matching!

Each participant gets one piece of a puzzle – at random. So depending on the size of the group you make a number of puzzles. For a group of 16 people you can make 4 puzzles of 4 pieces. In case of an uneven number of participants you can make a puzzle with 3 pieces or 5.

Once you have handed each person a piece of a puzzle you can first ask them to find another person with a piece of a puzzle that fits with their own. So the puzzle is not yet complete, just one other person. When they have formed pairs, you give them a first

reflection question to discuss about. For example: what was for you the essence of the activity, or the day?

After a while of discussion you ask the pairs to close their conversation and find another pair that has the 2 pieces of the puzzle that would make the puzzle of 4 complete. In the group of 4 they can discuss the next question, for example how they can use what they have learned in their work.

Optional: you can add a third round where you don't use the puzzle but ask people to choose someone deliberately (for example someone whom they have not talked with a lot/someone they would like to talk to) and discuss a last question. You can also ask them to first think of their own reflection question and then discuss that. In plenary you could collect the questions being discussed.

Material

Coloured paper, scissors.

Remarks

Advantage: A rather simple tool to make random groups (or you can deliberately mix existing subgroups by giving them a specific colour)

Disadvantage: People can't choose so they might be stuck with someone they do not want to talk to. Furthermore it is a rather structured form of reflection which does not always allow for more open, contemplative reflection.



Method

A small group of volunteers is asked to prepare an interactive (creative) reflection session for the next morning. Emphasise that they will need to make sure there will not only be a recap or summary of the previous day but also a deeper reflection and drawing out of lessons learned.

Material

This depends on what the subgroup intends to do. A toolbox with material can be provided.

Remarks

Advantage: This is a way of giving the participants more ownership and responsibility for the learning process. It can generate an original session and engender fun and energy in the group.

Disadvantage: The facilitator has no influence on what will happen and therefore needs to give clear instructions on what the purpose of these reflections is: to make sense of learnings. Sometimes the reflection exercise that the group creates just leads to an entertaining recap of the day before. This could be prevented if you discuss the plans of the reflection committee the day before so you can still give some feedback and suggestions.





Method

Some people call this method Speed Dating. Participants sit in two circles facing each other (the inner circle facing outwards, the outer circle facing inwards). Everybody is facing one other person. If the group has an uneven number of people, one threesome is formed or the facilitator can join. Make sure that it is clear who is facing whom; this can be done by asking everybody to shake hands with the person opposite. Do three to four rounds. Each round consists of a question, which is then discussed in the

pairs for three to five minutes. Emphasise the fact that three/five minutes is short and that each participant should take care to leave time for the other to talk.

In plenary the facilitator invites a few pairs to comment on what they discussed. Subsequently, the outer circle moves one place to the left, and the next question is asked.

*This tool has been videotaped:
www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection*

Examples of questions that can be asked:

- What was the most important learning point, on a personal level, that you gained?
- What was the most important learning point, on an organisational level?



- What is the most important learning point that you will be implementing in the coming six months?
- What is the most important question that came up for you and hasn't been answered so far?

Alternatively, participants can be asked to sit in a two straight rows, one facing the other. One row asks a reflection question to the other row, and participants discuss in pairs. After a first round, one row moves one (or more) chairs to the right, while the other row stays. (the person at the end of row has to walk to the other end). Now they all face a new person. Then the other row asks a reflection question.

Material

- One chair per participant set up in two circles or two rows
- Examples of reflection questions

Remarks

Advantage: It is a great way of having some brief interactions with different people. The quick change of partner and the surprise who will you meet next generates a lot of energy.

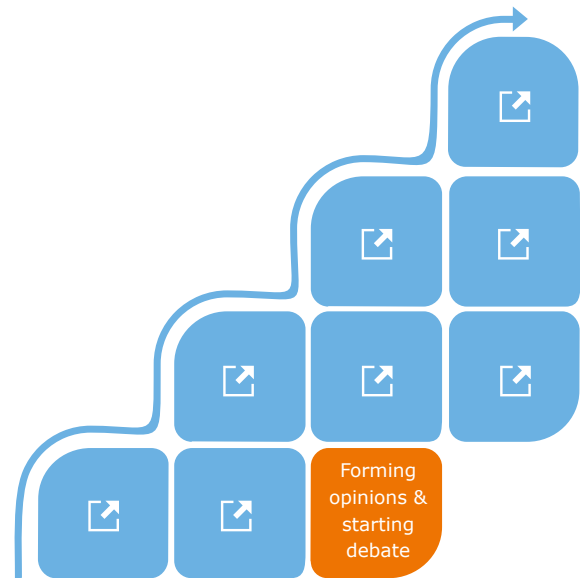
Disadvantage: The method requires a rather large room and it can create a lot of noise, which disturbs the conversations in the pairs. (It can be helpful to use a sound/bell to catch the attention when people are discussing) People might face a person that they don't feel comfortable with and then there is limited interaction. But the good thing is that they move on again quickly, so they get another chance.



Forming opinions & starting debate

In the middle of the learning process there are numerous tools for different purposes. This sub-chapter provides a number of methods on:

How do I challenge existing opinions and stimulate people to look beyond their own point of view?





Debating statements



Method

The group is divided into smaller groups of 4 to 5 people. The teams reflect on the programme of the previous day by preparing a challenging, provoking or surprising statement about what was learned, and developing arguments for and against their claim. After 10 minutes the facilitator asks which group would like to start by sharing their statement.

All participants take sides, either agreeing or disagreeing. To avoid confusion the facilitator can draw a line across the middle of the room (e.g. with masking tape) and put a sign on each side of the line: one marked 'agree' and the other saying 'disagree'. People decide whether they agree or disagree and move to the corresponding side of the room. This results in two groups that are facing each other. Then each group tries to convince the other group with arguments. When participants change their mind, they move to the other side of the line. The idea is to have the most convincing arguments so that more people move to your side. Aim to have a short, lively debate. When the discussion starts to fizzle out or becomes repetitive, the facilitator concludes the debate. S/he can ask the participants to name the three most convincing arguments and/or possible lessons learned. Then a next statement is shared, after which people take sides again and start the debate.

Optional: The facilitator can fuel the competition by adding a scoring system: If a participant can make someone move to your side, that group scores one

point. At the end you add up all the points.

This tool has been videotaped:

www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection

Material

- Paper for signs
- Masking tape or a string to draw the line

Remarks

If the group is large the subgroups have to be bigger because the debating about the statements takes time and you want as many groups as possible contributing their statement. It is better to use this tool later in the course, when the participants have built a certain degree of trust amongst each other.

There is a general tendency to favour extroverts because they seem to participate more, whereas the more introvert, reflective, observing and silent members might participate just as much or more, in their own way.

Advantage: This method generates good discussions and encourages people to look for critical arguments, take sides and reason why. It stimulates critical thinking and helps people to reflect on different opinions.

Disadvantage: The more dominant people will probably do most of the talking, and it could reduce the confidence of more silent people to share their opinion. If the facilitator is noticing this, s/he can facilitate the discussion in a bit more structured way by giving turns to people and creating space for more silent participants.





Debating rounds



Method

Participants form groups of five people. First they are asked to develop a group statement that summarises the essence of a learning event/session. The facilitator emphasises that the statement has to make sense, be a bit provocative, be specific and written down clearly.

The statements are collected and handed out again in such a way that each group has the statement of another group. Then the facilitator explains the rest of the exercise. It helps to write the different steps on a whiteboard/flip chart:

- 1 Select a statement.
- 2 Decide which two people will be in favour of the statement (supporter A and B); who will oppose the statement (opponent C and D); and who will be the observer.
- 3 Supporters A and B, and opponent C and D get two minutes to prepare their argument.
- 4 *Round 1:* Supporter A gets one minute to defend the statement, the others listen carefully without responding.
- 5 *Round 2:* opponent C gets one minutes to respond to supporter A's monologue and oppose the statement.
- 6 *Round 3:* Supporter B gets one minute to respond to opponent C's monologue and defend the statement.
- 7 *Round 4:* opponent D gets one minute to respond to supporter B's monologue and oppose the statement.

- 8 The observer gets a few minutes to give feedback to the others, giving reactions to the content (what was discussed?) and process (how was it conducted?)

If time allows, the facilitator can pick up all the written statements and redistribute them for another round of debates.

Timekeeping can be done by the facilitator having all groups starting at the same time, or it can be done by the observers to allow for a bit more flexibility per group.

Material

- Paper
- Marker pens

Remarks

Advantage: It stimulates reasoning and argumentation for or against a certain statement. It is challenging and a bit provocative. It stimulates critical thinking.

Disadvantage: There is little real dialogue; it is more a sequence of monologues.





Turntable discussion



Method

This method allows participants to see and experience two or more sides of an issue. It is especially useful to reflect on the performance of a group after an activity or assignment or role play. But it can also be used to reflect on a content issue or statement with pro and con arguments.

The simplest form of a turntable discussion is to set up two teams facing each other in a semicircle. The facilitator can brief the group: 'When you are sitting in this semicircle you have a positive view about your performance and progress as a team; but when you are sitting in the opposite seats you may only express negative views about (for example) performance problems and slow progress as a team. To not get stuck in one position, and to give you the chance of achieving a balanced view, you will be spending roughly equal time on both sides of the argument. Every minute or so I will stand up as a signal for you to move two places to your left.'

The ideal group size for a turntable discussion is 10 - for a 'five-a-side' discussion. For a group of 20, you can create two groups of 10 to operate independently, or have an outer circle of 'listening chairs' included in the rotation.

A variation: To assist with the transfer of learning near the end of a training programme, have one semicircle of pessimistic seats (for expressing pessimistic views about being able to

transfer their learning) arranged opposite a semicircle of optimistic seats.

Warning: At the end of the exercise, rearrange the chairs (and participants) to mark the end of the turntable discussion – otherwise people can get 'stuck' in their last position, which is not where you want to end an exercise about helping people to appreciate other points of view!

More variation: you can also discuss a topic in which a third view is worth exploring. In fact, three- and four-way discussions are generally of a higher quality than two-way discussions. A third side can bring in lateral thinking to unlock the confrontation, and a fourth side can be an opportunity for practising facilitation skills. Again, make sure people move around in the circle representing the different views. Moving chairs and perspectives always has more impact; Minds move when bodies move.

Source: Adapted from Greenaway (2016).

Material

Two or three semicircles of chairs facing each other.

Remarks

Advantage: It allows people to see and issue or experience from different sides.

Disadvantage: This method is less suitable for large groups because then part of the group might be observers and less involved.



Fishbowl



Method

This conversation method involves two circles of people. The inner circle of 'fish' have a conversation; the rest of the group listens while seated in the outer circle (the bowl). The facilitator sets the topic of the discussion (the lessons learned about a controversial/important topic dealt with the day before). Four to six people are invited to take place in the bowl. If the listeners want to contribute to the conversation by adding their point of view they can join the speakers in the inner circle. When a listener becomes a fish, another fish has to leave the inner circle and retreat to the bowl. That means that one chair always remains empty; if it is filled then the person next to the empty chair is the first to move. If there is little movement in the group, all the fish are replaced by fresh ones from the bowl.

Alternatively you can facilitate two rounds: during the first round the inner circle is discussing, trying to reflect and make sense of a topic. There is again one empty chair, the 'parachute chair'. This chair can be temporarily occupied by someone from the outer circle. When someone from the outer circle takes a seat on the parachute chair, the conversation in the inner circle stops, and s/he can do an intervention on the behavioural level: for example addressing how the group is discussing, or mentioning that someone seems to be left out, or what the group might be trying to avoid, or anything that is related to the behaviour in the group, not the content.

After a certain period (20 to 30 minutes, depending how much time you have) the second round is started. People change chairs and a new group of volunteers will sit in the middle. The topic for the conversation can remain the same, or can be changed depending on the learning process the group is in.

Material

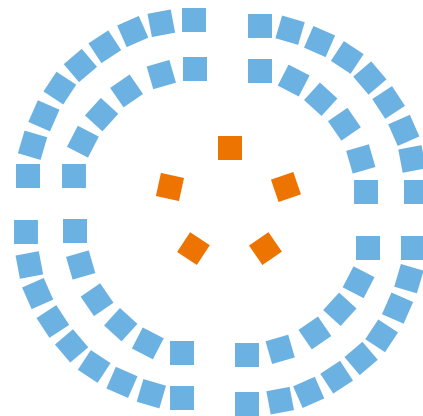
Enough chairs for all participants, organised in an inner circle (4-6) and outer circle (the rest). Circles shouldn't be too far apart.

Remarks

Advantage: It stimulates reasoning and argumentation for or against a topic. It is challenging and a bit provocative. It stimulates critical thinking.

Disadvantage: Introvert people may not join the inner circle and keep silent.

Source: Adapted from: www.kstoolkit.org/Fish+Bowl





Soft Shoe Shuffler (or 'dynamic dialogue')



Method

Participants are standing in a large room where there is enough space for everyone to walk around freely without bumping into each other too much (no tables and chairs).

The facilitator introduces the main topic of reflection (what happened yesterday in class, preferably one topic/theme, e.g. 'how to work on inclusive business development', or 'poverty reduction', or 'climate change'). S/he asks everyone to think off a statement about the topic in question (in silence). Furthermore the facilitators asks everyone to walk softly (without making much noise) and respect diversity of opinions. Everyone walks quietly through the room.

Then one volunteer can start by standing still in the middle of the room and share his/her statement, while everyone else remains silent. The facilitator 'amplifies' the statement by making it stronger and more 'blunt'. Then everyone moves to a position: whoever agrees with the statement moves closer to that person, whoever disagrees moves away.

After a short look at the constellation the walking continues until a next volunteer shares a statement. This continues for a while.

After some time when different arguments have been shared (e.g. about 10 or more) the lead facilitator can stop the 'soft shoe shuffling' and mention the main (two polarised) sides of the discussion and makes this

explicit to the group. 'Apparently those two sides of the discussion around theme X seem to be most alive in the group thinking now.'

Material

A large empty room.

Remarks

This method can be combined with the next method: two-sided discussion.

Advantage: It is a more soft and dynamic way of working with statements, playing with different points of view without locking yourself into one side/point of view.

Disadvantage: After a while it can become a bit boring since there is not much dialogue.





Two-sided discussion



Method

This is a two-sided discussion around a central theme (e.g. which was discussed the day before). The facilitator develops two polarised points of view (or statements) around the theme. For example: 'Market access will alleviate poverty vs. market access will not help the poorest of the poor.' The idea is to 'throw arrows' (arguments) from both sides – one side in favour of the argument (pro), the other against (con).

After the facilitator has explained the two main polarised points of view on the theme, people choose sides depending on whether they mostly agree or disagree with the statement. They choose by moving to the respective side. One side begins; for instance, somebody might start off with 'Market access works for the poor, because ...!' Only this side (the 'pros')



may speak while the other side is quiet. Each spoken statement will be amplified by the facilitator; i.e. summarised and made more controversial (provocative). Anyone agreeing with the statement walks to that side; if they don't agree, they move to the other side (so people can be moving from and to both sides during the first round). This first round continues for about 8 minutes.

Then the other side can speak for 8 minutes. ('Market access does not work for the poor, because ...') Again, each statement is amplified by the facilitator and people can move according to their opinion. Then each side can respond again, but only for 4 minutes per side. People can move as many times as they find an argument convincing and thus change their position.

After these rounds the facilitator explains the next step. 'This was a very polarised discussion. Often in discussions people take polarised views. But none of us is this black and white. We actually have the polarity, which we now split, within ourselves. But often we are unwilling to accept both sides. For example someone prefers to hold on to the positive thought and the more dark or depressive thoughts are left to someone else. But in fact when reflecting a bit deeper this person might find some of the depressive thoughts also within his or herself. Polarity was first expressed by different sub-groups, but if you zoom in to the individual level you find the different opinions about the central theme within one individual. If you acknowledge that, you can reflect on a deeper level'.

The facilitator asks everyone to stand in a large circle and then asks: 'Which argument that was shared during the different rounds provoked you most? Where did you feel a defensive reaction in yourself, maybe even a bodily sensation? Which remark touched or stirred you the most? If you reflect deeper,



is there a part of the argument that you can agree with?’ For example, someone might strongly disagree with the argument that ‘markets are not going to help the poorest farmers because they are simply not ready to enter the market’ and that person may feel really provoked and stirred by the argument feeling an emotional reaction of sadness and anger as they don’t agree. But when they look a bit deeper, this person may discover that there is also a part of the argument that s/he does agree with it, although initially not wanting to see it that way. If one can acknowledge this and reflect on oneself in such nuanced manner, then deeper personal learning can take place.

The facilitator asks various volunteers to share a moment when they felt provoked, and any personal learning that they take from that experience (the group might be too large to hear from everybody). Each time a person shares, the facilitator summarises the key message. And to make people feel more connected in their learning (‘I am not alone in this’), the facilitator can for instance request the following: ‘Whoever had a similar point of learning, please raise your hand.’ Take about 5 minutes for this final round of sharing.

At the end the facilitator can give a summary of what has been said in the final round, what the group as a whole has learned. You can check if all voices were being represented in the summary.

Material

None.

Remarks

This method is particularly valuable when there is a conflict of values regarding the central theme you want to discuss.

Advantage: It is a dynamic way of working with statements, playing with different points of view without locking oneself into one side of the discussion. People can keep moving between the two sides while the arguments are being shared.

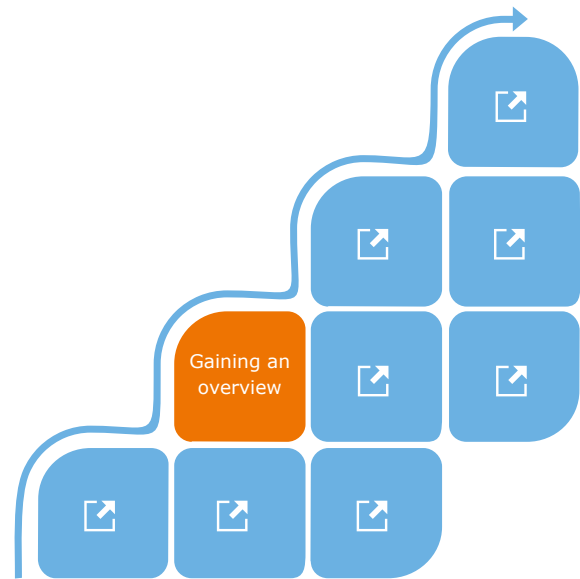
Disadvantage: This method needs a bit more time to be done thoroughly. If you have more time you could give both sides 3 rounds. You can also allow more time for the final round in the circle to share people’s personal learning points.

This method is adapted from a workshop about Deep Democracy from Myrna Lewis (2015).

Gaining an overview

In the middle of the learning process there are numerous tools for different purposes. This sub-chapter provides a number of methods on:

How do I help people to see the bigger picture and focus on what matters most to them?





Heart, hand and head



Method

Ask one participant to stand in front of a big sheet of paper attached to the wall. Choose someone of the right size so that the upper body and head fit the paper and ask him/her to hold their hands along their body so that they are on the paper as well. Draw the outline of the person on the paper (this inevitably will lead to some laughter).

Explain that learning takes place on heart, hand and head level: personal, practical and intellectual/theoretical. If necessary the facilitator can give an example of a learning point at each level. Say that the outline of the person is the collective body of the group, which is now empty but that the group is going to fill the body with their learning points from the day before.

They divide in pairs and each of them receive Post-its/papers in the shape of a hand, heart and head (or related symbol). They discuss their learning on all three levels, and write that down.

Depending on the group size you can either ask three pairs to group together and exchange the heart, hand and heads, or (in a small group) invite each person to come forward and attach their learning to the body on the wall, on the right places and explain (one of their) their learning points briefly.

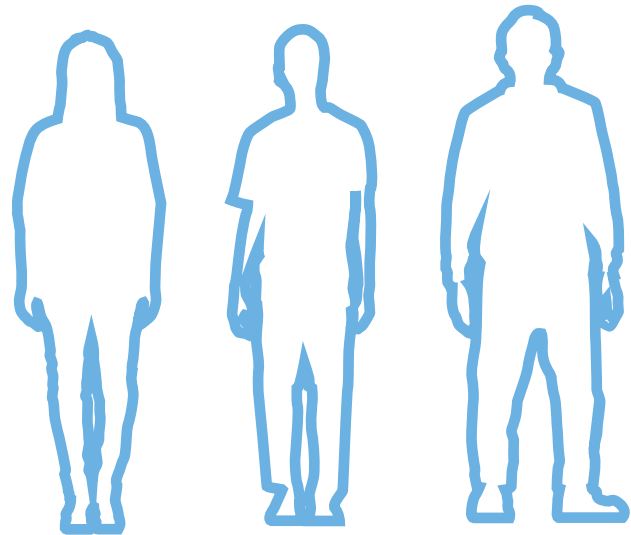
Material

- Post-its in the shape of heart, heads and hands or printed hearts, heads and hands.
- Big piece of paper
- Marker pen

Remarks

Advantage: It stimulates people to address different aspect of learning. Participants usually feel safe and confident to share and explore. It is useful that the method acknowledges that there is a collective learning in the group, people learn together and from each other.

Disadvantage: Everyone having their say can take a lot of time in a large group, the facilitator could choose to restrict speaking time to 1 minute per person.





ORID Focused Conversation



Method

The purpose of this method is to reflect on and interpret a shared experience (what happened the day before in class) and decide what to do as a result. Participants are encouraged to listen to and share perceptions and emotional responses, suspend judgment during the discussion, and gain a broader and deeper understanding of the experience. It is similar to the Kolb experiential learning cycle but also includes the emotional reaction to an experience.

The acronym 'ORID' is derived from the first letters of four stages of questioning:

- Objective
- Reflective
- Interpretative
- Decision

ORID method - Reflection Levels

Objective level

What did we do?



Head

Reflective level

How did you feel?



Heart

Interpretative

What did you learn?



Mind

Decisional level

How will you apply this?



Feet

1. Objective: Facts, Data, Senses

Objective questions are related to thought, sight, hearing, touch, and smell are used to draw out observable data from the experience. For example:

- What images or scenes do you recall?
- Which people, comments, ideas, or words caught your attention, and why?
- What sounds do you recall?
- What tactile sensations do you recall?

Participants learn that different people have different perspectives on observable reality and may recall the same experience differently.

2. Reflective: Reactions, Heart, Feelings

Reflective questions relate to the affective domain - emotional responses and mood. For example:

- What were your feelings during the experience?
- How did this experience affect you?
- What was a high point?
- What was a low point?
- What was the collective mood of the group involved?
- How did the group react?

3. Interpretative: So What?

The facilitator invites participants to consider the value of the experience, its meaning and significance. For example:

- What was your key insight?
- What was the most meaningful aspect of this activity?
- What can you conclude from this experience?
- What have you learned from this experience?
- How does this relate to any theories, models and/or other concepts?

4. Decision: Now What?

Individuals and the group determine future resolutions and/or actions. For example:

- How, if at all, has this experience changed your thinking?
- What was the significance of this experience to your study/work/life?



- What will you do differently because of the experience?
- What would you say about the experience to people who were not there?
- What would help you to apply what you learned?

The method structures the debriefing process and encourages participants to recall the experience collectively. Thereby they broaden their perspectives of the experience, develop a shared understanding of the experience and formulate a shared strategy. Emotional or intuitive responses are important data but often insufficiently acknowledged (or ignored altogether). When taken into consideration in decision making, they strengthen and support the decision taken. If ignored, they might undermine the decision.

Source: Adapted from Hogan (2003).

Material

None. Optionally you can show a PowerPoint slide/flip chart sheet with the four steps to structure the conversation.

Remarks

Advantage: People often evaluate experiences quickly and superficially, or allow discussions to go in a different way. This framework enables detailed reflection, and helps a group to get to the heart of a matter efficiently. It is simple, follows an organic structure, and ensures that each step of the process is taken, so that the group can reach conclusions based upon the widest possible range of data.

Disadvantage: This method takes quite some time to move through all the four steps. Be aware of that.



Method

Participants stand in a circle and the facilitator asks them to silently form an answer to a reflection question. For example: 'What learning point do you take home?' or 'What was the "gem" of the learning experience?' or 'What was most inspiring?' The facilitator hands a ball of wool to the first person who starts sharing. This person gives their answer to the question, holds on to the end of the string and throws the ball of wool to a next person. The next person shares his or her answer and throws the ball of wool to the following person while also holding on to the string. In this way everyone who shares becomes part of a 'Learning Web' in which all participants are connected.

Material

A ball of wool.

Remarks

Advantage: The visual pattern at the end symbolises the connection between people s.

Disadvantage: a lot of attention goes to plenary sharing and the form of the method, there is less opportunity for deeper individual reflection or in-depth exchange. Also there might be some repetition learning points within the group.



Individuals, pairs, four of a kind, plenary



Method

This is a simple but effective way to reflect and form an opinion about a topic. The steps are as follows:

- 1 The facilitator asks a reflection question (see Appendix 2)
- 2 Firstly, the participants think about the question individually, forming an opinion or answer (1 to 2 minutes).
- 3 Subsequently, they pair up with their neighbour; exchanging their answers/opinion and then they formulate a joint answer (about 3 minutes).
- 4 Then each of the pairs find another pair (now you have a group of 4) and again they exchange, and then form a collaborative answer (about 5 minutes).
- 5 You can repeat this for another round: two groups of 4 merge into a group of 8. This depends on the number of participants (about 5 minutes).
- 6 Then you ask each of the final groups to share their collective answer (you could ask them to write it on the whiteboard)
- 7 The whole group discusses the different answers/questions in plenary.

Material

White board or flip chart with markers.

Remarks

Advantage: When participants do not know the group so well, they do not have to share their idea or opinion with the whole group straight away. The discussions in pairs and groups of four give participants a chance to connect with those people within their group more deeply.

Disadvantage: This method needs a bit more time to be done effectively because people tend to talk a lot with each other, as they need to find commonalities when they come together. When it is rushed too much, there is a danger that the participants come up with an answer for the facilitator rather than for themselves!



Video synthesis



Method

Using a video device (phone/tablet), participants are asked to make a short (3 minutes) video impression representing a synthesis of what they learned. They can do this in smaller groups, interviewing each other, or doing a short role play.

First, they need to think about what they learned and which message they want to tell in the three-minute video. Then develop the images and video shots that will tell their story, by drawing a storyboard.

Subsequently, they need to organise what they need have it at hand. The video is filmed in one shot. There should be no editing afterwards because that will take

far too much time. Depending on the group size and available time, some or all, videos are shared in plenary (e.g. ask for volunteers).

Material

- Video device for each group (tablet, smart phone or video camera)
- Paper
- and other material that the groups can use to create the animation(a hat, a tie, glasses, a jacket, etc.)

Remarks

Advantage: It is fun and stimulates creativity.

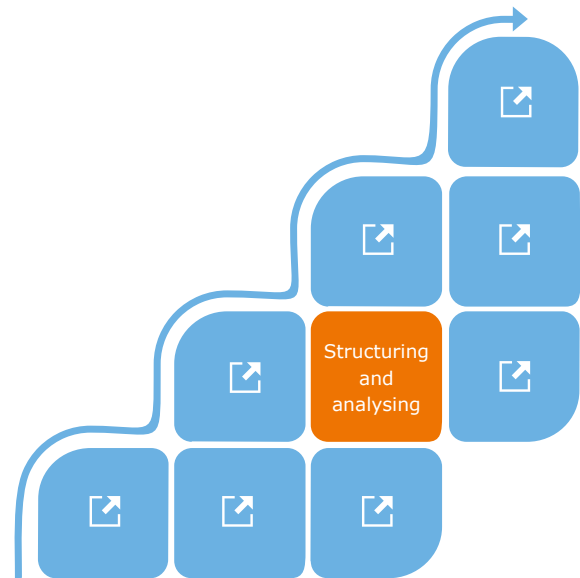
Disadvantage: If never done before, this method might be a little complicated, taking the focus away from the actual reflection. And it may take a bit longer than 30 minutes.



Structuring and analysing

In the middle of the learning process there are numerous tools for different purposes. This sub-chapter provides a number of methods on:

How can I support people to get some order and structure in the density of what they experienced and learned?





Reflection with symbols



Method

This tool is simple and safe to use in the beginning of a process but can also be used later in the process.

The facilitator lays out 8 different reflection cards on the table (see below) and asks participants to 'select a card that relates to the most important learning point'. Everybody has a maximum of one minute to share their thoughts.

An alternative way of using the cards is that everyone picks a card from a blind deck and then improvises an answer to the question on the card. Or the facilitator spreads the cards upside down on a table and people choose a card and again answer the question on the spot in plenary.


Material

Set of 8 different cards (see below).


Remarks

Advantage: It helps participants to think about the essence of a learning experience with the help of guiding questions. Pick a blind card brings in a surprise element and the challenge to improvise on the spot.


Disadvantage: Everyone having their say can take a lot of time in a large group, so be strict on the 1-minute speaking time. Also the questions and answers might get a bit repetitive after a while. Having to improvise on the spot, might take away from the actual reflection as people are more concerned to come up with an answer than actually deeply reflecting.




Brain: 'I learned/ understood that...'




Thumb up: "I would like to give positive feedback about/to ..."



Key: 'A key moment for me was ...'



Heart: 'I experienced/ felt ...'



Puzzle: 'What I am still puzzled about and want to look into more'



Hand: "I was supported by... / What helped me was ..."



Foot: 'My next concrete step will be ...'



Camera: 'The picture that is in my mind ...'

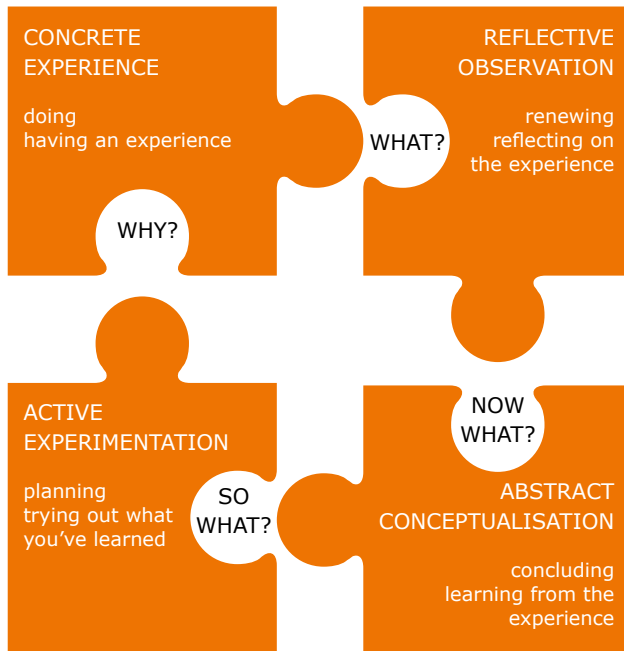


Kolb learning cycle



Method

Start with a brief introduction of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (see page 18). The facilitator can ask who is already familiar with the model, and how they use it. Explain how you use it. We feel it is a useful model to understand both individual learning processes of professionals taking part in a learning event, as well as the different phases the group will go through during the various activities in the learning event.



Experiential learning cycle, based on Kolb (1984)

After explaining the model the group is divided into small groups of about five participants. Either each group discusses all four questions that are part of Kolb's learning cycle, or every group discusses just one of the four questions.

Use a PowerPoint slide to remind participants of the questions, or give the groups the questions written on a piece of paper.

- 1 What? What were the most important things we did? What happened, what did you observe, hear, etc.? (recapping).
- 2 Why? What surprised or impressed you most, and why? What questions or challenges did you see? What did you agree/disagree with and why? (zooming in/analysing).
- 3 So what? What did you learn or come to realise? What conclusion can you draw or what generalisations can you make? (zooming out, conceptualising).
- 4 Now what? What does this mean if you were to apply this in practice? What could the implications of this learning be for your work and your organisation? Which lessons or ideas can you apply? Which questions do you still have and what actions will you take to explore them? (planning, experimenting)

In plenary, all groups present their lessons learned and their answers to the Kolb questions. The facilitator is checking whether everyone has understood how the experiential learning cycle works.

Material

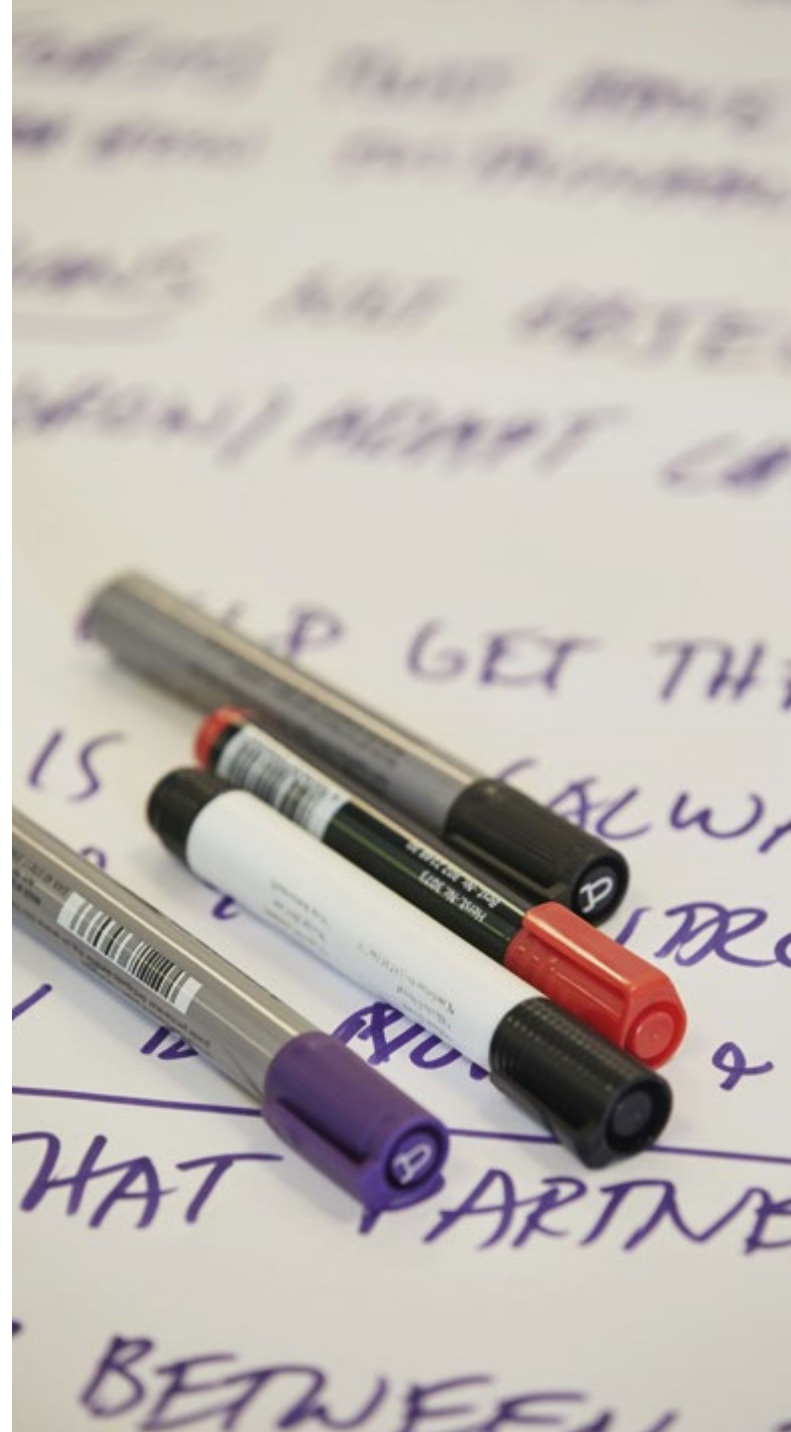
PowerPoint slide, flip-chart or sheet of paper with an explanation of Kolb's experiential learning cycle and related questions. the animation (a hat, a tie, glasses, a jacket, etc.)

Remarks

Explaining this model is especially useful when participants want more insight into learning processes and when the process will return to the model later. When the emphasis of the learning event is much more on the content, the facilitator might decide not to explain this model but use another tool.

Advantage: It is a good way of making participants familiar with Kolb's learning model. This is not always easy to understand at first, but if referred to it again later in the programme, it helps to make learning explicit and applicable.

Disadvantage: If people are not familiar with the model, it can be somewhat difficult to distinguish between the four different steps of learning (action, reflection, conceptualisation and application).



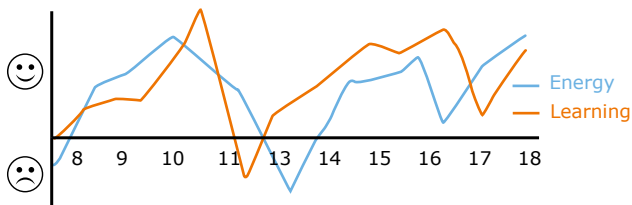


Mood and lessons learned meter



Method

Participants will individually prepare a diagram with two axes (see figure below). The horizontal axis depicts the time (e.g. one day), the vertical one represents the level of energy or learning. Now participants draw two lines. One shows their energy level at different moments over the course of an event; the other shows their learning level (i.e. the degree to which they were learning). Draw the diagram on a flip chart and give a few examples. In the morning for some people the energy level might have been low, because they were still waking up, but the presentation was very interesting, meaning that they were learning a lot. So their learning level was high while their energy level was low. At another moment energy and learning level might go hand in hand: when learning a lot, the energy level is also high. And finally there might be instances when the energy is very high - for example during an energiser - but the learning is low, because there is no content and the exercise is mainly fun.



Participants are asked to identify the most important moments in their diagram:

- When was their energy level high? Why?

- When did most learning take place?

When did they learn the most useful lessons?

Optionally they can enhance the diagram with small pictures (e.g. emoticons). Participants form groups of four people to exchange diagrams and analyse the important lessons learned and to draw some conclusions regarding their learning process. What were important learning moments? How does the energy level influence their learning capacity? What can they do themselves to increase their level of learning? For example: they can ask for an energiser when they feel sleepy. In a plenary session, the most important conclusions are shared, while discussing the lessons learned and conditions that enhance learning.

Source: Adapted from Rob Hoekstra (2006).

Material

- Flip chart to draw and example
- Blank paper
- Marker pens

Remarks

Advantage: It gives people insights into their learning process, when they learn best and what influences their energy level. This exercise is especially useful to show that learning is not a steady, continuous process and that everyone has their own 'learning rhythm'. Furthermore, learning doesn't only take place during the course; in two weeks' time participants may suddenly realise something that was dealt with in the course, or create new connections between pieces of course content.

Disadvantage: It can be better to do this for a longer process (e.g. a week). If you do it just for one day, the graph often gives less surprising insights.



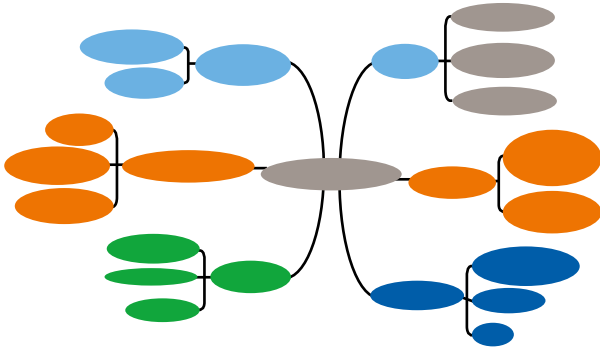


Mind Map



Method

Each participant downloads a free 'Mind Map App' on their laptop, tablet or phone and reflects on his/her learning experience by developing a mind map. They visualise clusters of ideas (branches) and organise their reflective thoughts.



There are a variety of 'Mind Map Apps' available online: Mindjet, MindMeister, iMindMap HD, SimpleMind, Mindomo, Mind Mapping, MindMaps Lite, MindMemo, Mind Map Memo, MindBoard, etc. We will highlight a few here.

Mind-mapping tools are improving as they integrate web-based solutions with tablets and desktop computing platforms. All of these applications offer a free version that allows you to explore mind mapping on an Android platform. (There are apps that allow one to integrate 'actions'; i.e. steps they would like to undertake inspired by the learning experience they had.

Mindjet: Creating a mind map in Mindjet is very easy. Adding nodes, relationships, colours, notes, and icons can be done with the menu system in the lower left corner. It is also possible to take notes, sync them with Mindjet Connect, and download the map onto one's computer. It features a 'Camera mode' to create map topics from pictures.

iMindMap HD: This mind map app is visually appealing. Most mind mapping tools create a node and growth direction. With iMindMap HD, the 'built-in human equipped stylus' draws branches and nodes in the direction of your finger.

MindMaps Lite: This app is easy in use. Touching each node opens a graphical set of options that make it easy to add, edit, and delete nodes.

*Information about apps adapted from:
www.techrepublic.com/blog/tablets-in-the-enterprise/the-top-five-mind-mapping-apps-for-the-android-tablet/*

Material

Each participant should have a tablet, laptop or phone with a mind map app (or there should be a reliable internet connection to download an App)

Remarks

Of course it can also be done on paper!

Advantage: It is a nice and visual way of structuring information, reflecting and brainstorming.

Disadvantage: people might have to get used to the app, but it is rather simple.



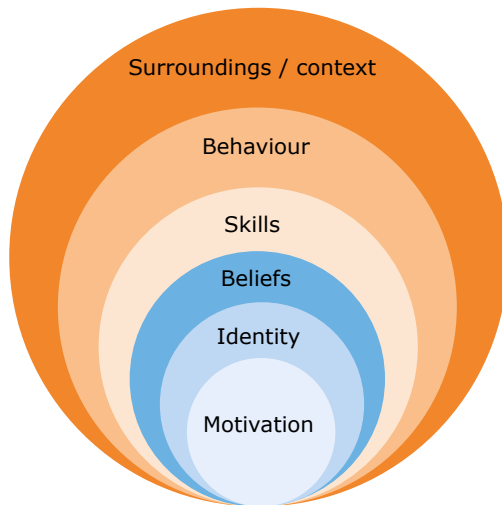
Reflection cards on own performance



Method

These cards with questions can be used to reflect after a role play or other situation in which participants had to perform and apply their (newly acquired) competences. It is meant to reflect on their performance and emotional experience after a concrete situation or practice.

The reflection questions are categorised into different levels based on the logical levels of Bateson.¹ Bateson's framework can be used for multiple possibilities of learning from experience.



¹ The concept of logical levels of learning and change was initially formulated as a mechanism in the behavioral sciences by anthropologist Gregory Bateson.

- *Surroundings/Context:* How do I react to others? When? Why?
- *Behaviour:* What do I see myself doing?
- *Skills:* What skills do I have? How am I performing?
- *Beliefs:* Why do I do what I do? What values and beliefs are important to me?
- *Identity:* Who am I, and what is typically me?
- *Motivation:* What drives me?

For each level there are four questions:

My surroundings/context

Which circumstances were challenging me?	What needs to be in place in my surroundings, for me to feel safe and at ease?
Which conditions can upset me or make me angry?	What feelings were evoked in me during the situation and what is the cause of this?

My Behaviour

What actions did I undertake?	When did I work from my routine & intuition and when did I apply some new methods?
How do I cooperate with others? How do I shape the cooperation?	What is typically my behaviour?

My Skills/competences

Which skills did I use?	Which knowledge did I use?
Which methods did I apply in the situation?	Which of my qualities became visible in the situation?

My Beliefs and assumptions

What do I find important in such situation?	What were my expectations? What did I think <i>should</i> happen?
Which values influenced my behaviour?	How did I give expression to my vision? And how is that aligned / influenced by the vision of my organisation?

My Identity

How could I describe myself in role, during the situation? How does that reflect myself in my professional role at work? Similarities? Differences?	In which moments during the situation could I mostly be myself?
What are my personal traits which became visible during the situation?	How did I give expression to my vision? And how is that aligned / influenced by the vision of my organisation?

My Motivation, what is meaningful to me

What do I want to achieve in life?	What is really motivating me?
What is meaningful for me? Why do I do my work, how do I get my satisfaction?	What is my mission?

The cards can be used in different ways. The facilitator reminds people of the situation (and possibly the theme) that they will reflect on, and chooses one of the following methods:

- Participants work in small groups in which people choose several cards and share their answers and reflections with each other.
- Use the questions on the cards for a 'guided visualisation' where people reflect individually (and possibly make some notes for themselves). The facilitator guides participants by slowly reading out some questions while people with closed eyes are visualising the answers to the questions.
- Place the cards on the table on a stack in such way that you cannot see the question (the cards upside down), and people can randomly draw out one card on which they reflect in a small group.

This method is inspired by Lida Nijgh, www.slb-reflectie.nl/topic/reflectiekaarten/

Material

Cards with questions.

Remarks

Advantage: This method can be very useful to do deeper personal reflection, for example after a large role play or field work/teamwork assignment.

Disadvantage: These cards can only be used after a concrete situation in which the participants actively engaged. The cards are not suitable for reflection on a theory session.



Hang out the washing



and cards that are still hanging on the line can be parked in the 'Question Corner'.

Source: Adapted from Rob Hoekstra (2006).

Method

Participants pair up and reflect: 'Thinking of yesterday's session, what questions or items for clarification do you still have?' These points are written on cards (one issue per card) and attached to a 'washing line' (a maximum of two per pair). After 5 to 10 minutes all participants walk in pairs along the washing line, reading all the cards.



They then choose one (or two if the group is small) cards to discuss. They are free to choose a card with a question that they know the answer to, or select a card with a topic they feel strongly about (e.g. concerned, enthusiastic, inspired).

After a few minutes of conversation each of the pairs presents their thoughts in plenary. It is not necessary to find answers to all the questions. Unresolved issues

Material

- A piece of string hung across the room
- Pegs
- Small cards
- Marker pens

Remarks

Advantage: This is a nice way to find out what issues are important but still not clear to the group. The exchange in pairs allows participants to answer the questions by drawing from their own experience and knowledge without the involvement of external experts. It is also a nice, interactive way to encourage people to move around and explore.

Disadvantage: It does not always generate very deep reflection and dialogue about the content. And sometimes it can become somewhat chaotic.



Online Socrative quiz



Method

Tablets and smart phones offer new possibilities for reflection like the 'online student responds system' that uses 'Socrative software'. The facilitator can prepare an online quiz, assessment or discussion statements. The participants log in by using a 'room number', which was set up by the facilitator in advance. They answer multiple choice or open questions. The answers are directly visible and can be projected on the big screen. Participants see either a graphic representation of the multiple-choice questions, or the written answers in the case of open questions.

Material

- Tablets
- Good internet connection (wifi)
- Socrative account for the facilitator (creating an account is free and easy)

Remarks

This tool is simple and safe to use in the beginning of a process but can also be used later in the process.

Advantage: It gets everyone involved. And it is useful to get an overview of their understanding of the topics, concepts and knowledge in question.

Disadvantage: It is more of an assessment or debating tool; it fails to stimulate (deep) reflection. concerned to come up with an answer than actually deeply reflecting.

2 of 5
● SHORT ANSWER

FINISH QUIZ

PPPs are THE best way to get businesses to significantly source from small scale producers, what is your opinion and argument?

Enter Answer Here

2 of 5

K < 1 2 3 4 5 > >



Method

World Café is a structured conversational process intended to facilitate open discussion. It is designed around the idea that people often have very good and meaningful discussions in a café while having a drink together.

The idea is that participants move between a series of tables where they continue the discussion in response to a set of questions or topics which are predetermined by the facilitator. It is helpful to create a nice ambience in the room.



It is important to emphasise the overall objective: that in the end this is a reflection and sensemaking exercise.

A World café consists of the following steps:

- 1 The facilitator asks the participants: 'What were the three main topics/lessons learned of yesterday's experience?'
- 2 Participants share their answers and 3-4 main topics are selected (for example the topics that were mentioned most often, or the topics that need further exploration).
- 3 The group sets up the room in such way that there is a number of tables equal to the number of defined topics. Chairs are put around the table; more or less the same number of chairs at each table and enough for every participants to be able to sit. For example when you take 4 topics for a group of 20 participants you need 4 tables with 5 chairs each. Each table will contain a different topic to be discussed. And every table is covered with a 'table cloth': a big piece of paper.
- 4 People divide themselves among the different tables. (They will visit all the tables so it does not matter where they start.)
- 5 At this point the facilitator explains the rest of the process.
- 6 In the first round people get about 10 minutes to talk about the topic at their table and discuss (for example) what it means for their future work (focusing on the application and implications of the lessons learned) and draw/write their ideas and thoughts on the table cloth.
- 7 At the beginning of the first round every table should appoint a host. S/he remains at the table and doesn't move to the other table like the others do. Later in the process the host can summarise the discussion to a new group of participants, using the notes on the table cloth.

- 8 After 10 minutes everyone (except the host) leaves the table and finds a new one where the host welcomes them and summarises the things that were discussed in the previous round(s). During the second round (which is a bit shorter than 10 minutes) the new participants build on what was already discussed, adding (with a different colour) to the writings and drawings on the table cloth. At the end of the round people leave and spread again, mingling as much as possible so they get to speak with other people.
- 9 Do as many rounds as there are topics so that everyone gets to visit every table.

At the end the facilitator asks the table hosts to summarise the most relevant points discussed at their table.

Source: Adapted from: www.theworldcafe.com



Material

- Tables
- Chairs
- Big pieces of paper
- Markers/colouring pens

Remarks

It is useful to have a bell/sound to announce the next round (as it can become rather noisy). Of course you can adapt the focus question for the tables according to your learning objective of the session.

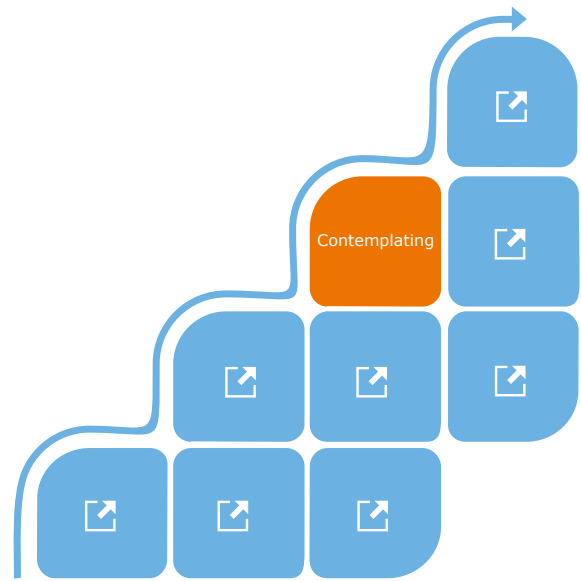
Advantage: It is a well-known method that works very well to have meaningful conversations. It gets everybody involved.

Disadvantage: It may take more time than 30 minutes. The facilitator can't guide the discussions at each of the tables, so it is important to set a clear framework at the beginning and try to create the right focus and energy for reflection.

Contemplating

In the middle of the learning process there are numerous tools for different purposes. This sub-chapter provides a number of methods on:

How do I invite people into a more free floating and deep, unstructured reflection, creating space for new thoughts to come into being?





Free writing



Method

Free writing helps to access less conscious thoughts and feelings before they are filtered out or corrected by the conscious part of our brain. These less conscious thoughts can hold some surprising insights.

Participants are given a question or topic to start writing. They have to keep writing till the time is up. They are not allowed to lift their pen; just keep writing anything that comes to mind. If nothing does then they re-write the question/topic until something does come to mind. Take your time to do this exercise. They can be given two or three prompts of about five minutes each.

After five minutes of free writing, the facilitator ask the participants to finish off the sentence they are working on and read back over their writing, underlining any words or phrases that they like or that seem relevant.

Then the facilitator gives them a second question and possibly a third one. Each time, s/he asks them to repeat the process of reading what they have written and underlining what they like.

Sometimes it makes sense for the three prompts to follow this order: past, future, present. This can leave them in a creative tension between past and future, but in the end focused on the now, today, based on what they have gained from the day before and in the light of future intentions.

For example:

First topic: 'Looking back on the experience, I feel...'

Second: 'When I get home I will...'

Third: 'Today I intend to...'

A fourth and last prompt may be one that the participants choose themselves (i.e. they write about anything they like)

After they have finished writing, they turn to a neighbour and share something that they experienced during the exercise or that emerged from the writing, or that they underlined.

Source: Adapted from The Barefoot Guide to Working with Organisations and Social Change (2009).

Material

- Paper and pens
- Reflection journal (if used in the course)

Remarks

This exercise can be used every time participants are asked to write in their reflection journal.

Advantage: It is a nice way for people to get their ideas and feelings onto paper, freely associating and bringing less conscious thoughts to the surface.

Disadvantage: It sometimes generates a less concrete or useful text.





Memory Game



Method

The facilitator ask everybody to take a seat somewhere in the room, evenly spread across the space, and close their eyes. S/he explains that this is an exercise in memorising, recollecting, and imagining in detail everything that happened.

One person will start remembering a small piece of an experience that took place. Another person takes over and adds the next piece. Then a third, etc. until the story is complete and everything has been covered what happened.

When the group is finished recalling the whole learning experience, they silently contemplate on it for a few minutes.

Then the facilitator calls people's names, one after the other. When their name is called, they share one word expressing the feeling that is alive in them at that moment – related to the learning experience.

Material

None.

Remarks

Advantage: Through recalling the learning experience in detail, people will memorise more and get the time to digest the experience. It will also stimulate a group experience, since different people remember different bits and pieces. Furthermore, it can allow for deep (personal) reflection.

Disadvantage: Some people feel uncomfortable closing their eyes and don't like this type of quiet reflection and they might disturb the energy in the group.



Find an object/symbol outside



Method

Ask participants to go out for a walk in pairs to discuss what they have learned. Together they find an object that symbolises what they have learned. When they come back, all the participants present their object and explain what they have learned. They can pick anything that they encounter along the way (flower, a stone, a seed, a piece of wood, etc.)

Rather than the pairs going off on their own, the 'walking and talking' can also be done as a guided walk, where the facilitator leads and everyone else follows. This version has several advantages. In this way they keep together, there is a clear start and conclusion to the process, and the participants don't need to worry about getting lost, so that they can focus on the assignment.

Instead of bringing an object, participants can also take a picture of something they encounter outside (with their tablet/smart phone).

Of course they can think beyond an object, and take a picture of any kind of structure or composition that symbolise their learning point.

Material

Outside area, preferably with access to a 'natural' environment.

Remarks

Advantage: Reflecting and talking while walking works really well; finding an object stimulates creative thinking. Often participants enjoy leaving the classroom for a bit; experiencing a different environment refreshes the mind.

Disadvantage: Whether you can do this exercise depends on the venue (is there some nature/garden/forest nearby?) and the weather (not too cold or wet?). And the method is likely to take more time than 30 minutes.





Reflective Meditation



Method

Participants are invited to sit in a circle, close their eyes and relax but at the same time be alert and calm. They make conscious contact with their bodily sensations; feel the chair they sit on, feel their feet on the ground, feel if there is any tension in their body, and check in with their emotions (how am I feeling?). They concentrate for a while on being present with a calm and quiet mind.

Then people are asked to move their attention to the previous learning event/day and reflect on what happened. What did they experience, what kind of thoughts and feelings did they have? And what were the most inspiring learning elements or insights they had, and what is the meaning of that for their future work?

They reflect and meditate for a little while in silence. Then the facilitator walks around the circle and lightly touches participants on their shoulder. If they are tapped they convey one sentence with their most important learning point.

Material

Chairs.

Remarks

If people feel uncomfortable closing their eyes, they can look to the centre of the circle with half open eyes (with a 'soft' gazing look). The facilitator could even put a small object in the middle that they can focus on).

Advantage: people may appreciate the quiet time and relax while at the same time connecting with their thoughts and sensations.

Disadvantage: For some people this is a very unusual thing to do and they might feel resistance and refrain from participation or even disturb the process by laughing or breaking the silence.





Walk & Talk



Method

When going for a walk people often have spontaneous conversation about reflective thoughts. The pace of walking should be rather slow, comfortable, and it helps if the facilitators set the direction and the participants can just follow without having to think about the way. So they are free to think and reflect. As facilitator you can give them the instruction to walk in pairs, or in trios at most, and give them different prompts to talk about. After each questions you walk for a while and the follow you (for example 5 to 10 minutes) and then you pause with the whole group, hear some example reflection from the group. Then you ask them to find a new companion, give them the next prompt, and you continue the walk. You can repeat this a couple of times. Make sure you make a circular walk and end again in time at the right place for the next activity on the programme.

Example prompts:

- What did you find most interesting about the session that took place?
- Which dilemma's do you see when you try to transfer the learnings to your own work situation
- What and who can help you to apply what you have learned here, in your work?
- What remaining questions do you still hold and want to address during this learning event?

Material

People should wear walking shoes (no high heels) and you need a suitable surrounding to walk, and nice weather.

Remarks

If people feel uncomfortable closing their eyes, they can look to the centre of the circle with half open eyes (with a 'soft' gazing look). The facilitator could even put a small object in the middle that they can focus on).

Advantage: through walking people can get activated and refreshed.

Disadvantage: It takes some time to get ready and go outside. And you are a bit dependent on the weather :-)





Talking stick



Method

The 'talking stick' or 'speaker's staff', is an instrument of indigenous democracy used by many tribes, especially native people of the Northwest coast of North America. The talking stick may be passed around a group or used only by leaders as a symbol of their authority and right to speak in public.

We use it as a tool to share reflections. In our daily work we are used to having discussions, debates, ask critical questions and to react to each other. With this method we invite a different way of sharing: try to really listen and just share what is on your mind or on your heart. The group sits in a circle, and the talking stick is passed around the circle from participant to participant. Every person shares his/her key insight or lesson learned from the day before. You can also allow for unfinished thought to be shared, or dilemmas, or feelings that were evoked, etc. Only the person that is holding the stick is allowed to speak and share one thing; everyone else listens. There is no discussion nor dialogue. This enables all those present in the circle to be heard, especially those who are more shy. Mention at the beginning how long participants can speak for (e.g. 1 minute or 1 sentence) to ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak within the time available.

Optional: If somebody doesn't want to talk they can also pass the stick directly to the next person. Alternatively, the stick is put in the centre of the circle and whoever feels like saying something comes to the

middle, takes the talking stick and shares with the group. The facilitator should emphasise that silence is fine: people can leave a pause between one person finishing and the next person picking up the stick. The silence allows for more personal reflection, and it is a nice way to slow down. Just try to hear where the other are in their thinking without changing that, just acknowledging. For inspiration and as a reminder you can put some A4 papers on the ground with the words: 'thoughts', 'feelings', 'dilemma's', 'questions', 'sensemaking', etc. The facilitator has to manage the time.

*This tool has been videotaped:
www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection*

Material

A talking stick or something that symbolises one (a flower, a candle, a small ball, etc.)

Remarks

It is important to introduce and frame the exercise well and to set the right tone or atmosphere.

Advantage: It is a nice, quiet way for everybody to say a few words. It's also a good way to finish a training course.

Disadvantage: Whatever is said, is the right thing to say. The facilitator should not (much) interfere or react, there is no discussion, just sharing. If people don't pick up the right energy, or can't handle silence, the sharing can become jokey and superficial.

Reference unknown. This method comes from North American Indian people.



Open Space for Reflection



Method

This is a 'minimalistic' tool. The group sits in a circle and is basically left to lead their own reflection. It is important to frame the method and objective very clearly. The following words can be used:

'Good morning everybody. We are here to reflect on what you learned (mention a specific event/experience). This is an open space for reflection. We will stay in this room and in this seating arrangement for the next 30 minutes. Your task is to reflect on what you learned yesterday and the meaning of it for you and your work. Silence may be a perfect space to reflect and make sense of what you learned, but you may also want to share your thoughts, feelings, questions, dilemmas, worries and conclusions. I will be here as facilitator and manage the time. What would you like to talk about and who would like to begin?'

The facilitator tries not to intervene during the 30 minutes. If the group goes off-task, s/he may want to remind them of the task at hand: 'May I remind you of your task, which is to reflect on what you learned yesterday and the meaning of it for you and your work.'

Alternatively, the facilitator can step in once in a while (not too often, e.g. 4 times during the 30 minutes) by sharing a 'meta-reflection' or hypothesis on how the group is working and/or what they are struggling with.

Material

Chairs in a circle.

Remarks

Advantage: This minimalistic structure with minimal intervention allows the group to guide their own discussion and reflection. Sometimes surprisingly deep thoughts emerge.

Disadvantage: This can only be done with a more mature group where there is enough trust and willingness to explore and work in a less structured way. If the group is not ready for it, it may result into chaos, laughter and reduction of trust within the group.



Metaphor map



Method

Ask participants to reflect on a central theme discussed and relate it to their own experience and feelings by drawing a metaphor map. The following questions can be used for inspiration and guidance:

- *A harbour of hope*: which boats are there
- *A jungle of joy*: which sounds do the birds make, what are they singing?

- *A cave of calmness*: what is in there, how is it furnished?
- *An ocean of optimism*: what kind of fish do swim there?
- *An island of irritation*: is it big? Small? Why?
- *A forest of fear*: if the trees could whisper, what would they say?
- *A mountain of meaningfulness*: why climb to the top, what do you see?

Other elements can be added like stormy seas, swamp, fountain of ideas, bridge under construction, greener grass, playground, dead end road, etc. You can also use some soft and gentle music while the participants are drawing individually.



Towards the end of the session you can ask people to share their emotional map in trios, or do a gallery walk without speaking and ask for some reflective comments in the end in plenary. Reflective question can included: which places did you visit? Where did you spend most time? Which route did you take? Do you need to create new places on the map?

Material

Large sheets of paper, (pastel) crayons or markers.

Remarks

Advantage: Participants can go into their own space and connect more consciously with their emotions. Learning is not only a rational process but rather also evokes al kind of emotions in us.

Disadvantage: Some participants find it difficult to be in touch with their emotions and might find this a very abstract assignment. There is also a risk that people focus too much on the difficult and uneasy places so make sure they also include places of hope, places they want to visit.

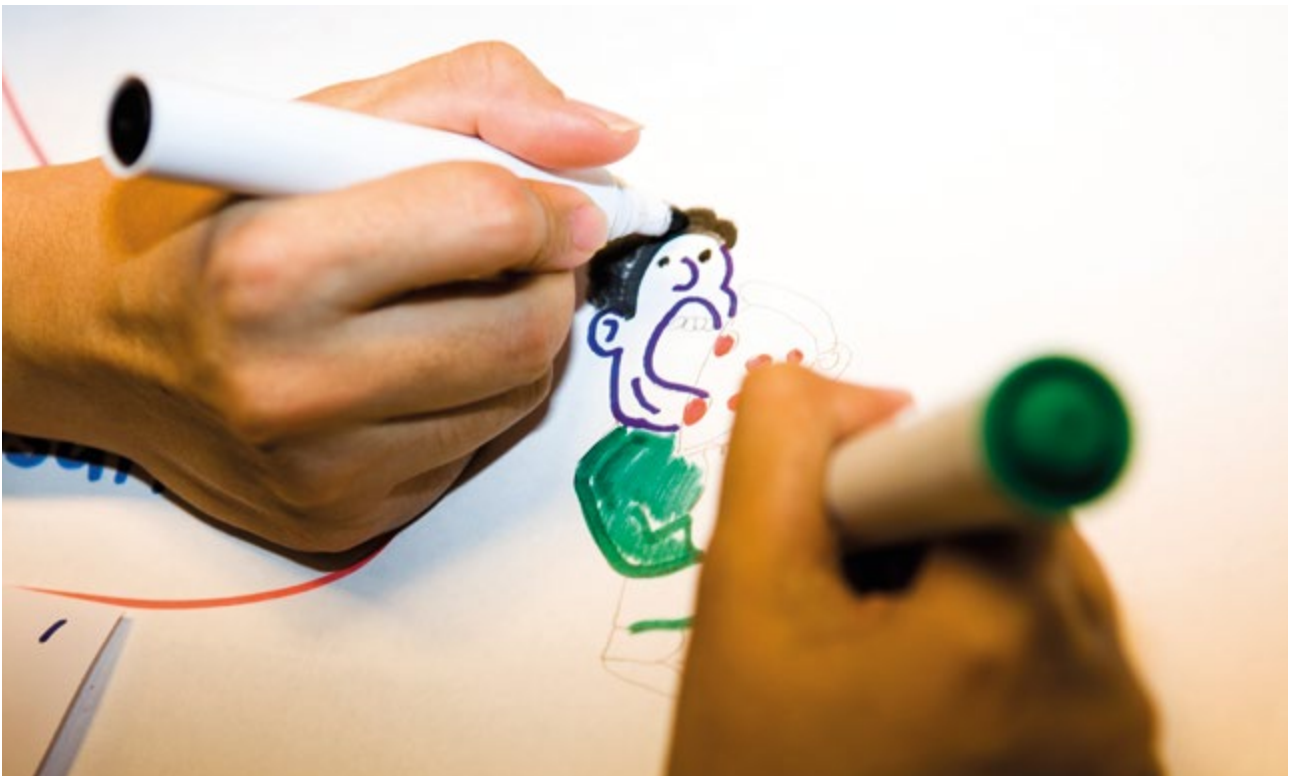
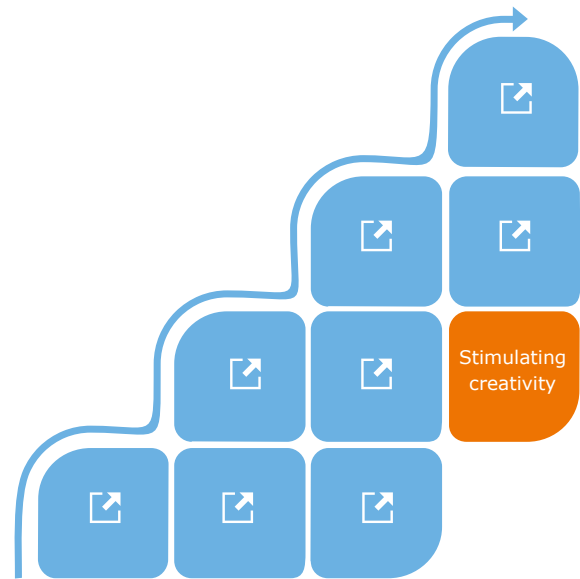
Inspired by Greenway, 2006



Stimulating creativity

In the middle of the learning process there are numerous tools for different purposes. This sub-chapter provides a number of methods on:

How can I stimulate people to use the left side of their brain a bit more and think out of the box using creative form?





Reflection with images



Method

The facilitator puts a number of images (pictures or postcards) on a table or on the wall and asks the participants to 'select an image that (symbolically) represents the most important learning point'. Then each participant has a maximum of one minute to present their image, explaining their learning point and its relation to the picture.

Otherwise you can ask people to choose an image without actually taking it off the table/wall (so that more people can select that image). If the pictures are laid out on a table, then each participant can pick theirs up and present it in the circle when it is their turn.



If the images are stuck on the wall, then ask people to leave the picture on the wall, step forward and stand next to the picture to present their story.

Alternatively, you replace the images with a variety of small objects they can choose from (e.g. household objects, statuettes, a stone, leaf, etc.).

Material

A set of cards with images/postcards or small objects. As a rule of thumb: take as many as the number of participants x 4 (with small groups a few more, with large groups some less).

Remarks

Make sure everybody comes forward and speaks clearly.

Advantage: Images and metaphors often help participant to think and reflect about the meaning of a learning experience and often it generates very beautiful stories and comments.

Disadvantage: Everyone having their say can take a lot of time in a large group, so be strict on the 1-minute speaking time.

*This tool has been videotaped:
www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection*





Collage and Gallery



'Think about the last days/event and what you have done, heard and seen. What new insights and lessons learned did you gain? What were meaningful moments? Visualise these in a collage, using images, drawings, icons and anything else visual.'

Method

This session requires at least an hour. Participants are asked to form groups of five people and make a collage from the insights, lessons learned and meaningful moments from the previous day or two days. Introduce the exercise as follows:

The participants need to be encouraged to move beyond the level of just depicting what they have done/seen, to visualising their reflections and lessons learned, thereby demonstrating the impact of a session, seminar and/or excursion in question. They can use marker pens, paper, old magazines, images, etc. to make their collage in 30 minutes.



Next, the collages are hung on the walls around the room and together they form a 'Gallery of Learning Points'. Take about 20 minutes for sharing of the collages. This can be done by connecting two teams that present their collages to each other. Or every team presents their collage in a plenary session.

Alternatively, the participants can walk around the gallery in their own time. One participant remains with the collage to explain it to others, while the rest of the team moves around. After a while they swap and somebody else stays with the collage.

If there is time, the last 10 minutes there can be a short debriefing by the facilitator, asking the participants:

- Was there anything that caught your attention or surprised you?
- What were the big differences/similarities between the collages?
- How did the creation process go (group work + process-wise)?
- What did this session bring you, anything more you would like to share?

Modifications:

Instead of working in a group, participants can also reflect individually and make a collage on their own. The facilitator can play quiet music to create a conducive working environment.

Participants can visualise their lessons learned in a drawing/painting without the aid of other visual materials, images, magazines or text. This will stimulate more reflection and creativity.

Material

- Old magazines (at least five per group)
- Glue (at least one tube per group)
- Scissors (at least one pair per group)
- Markers/pens
- Large sheets of paper

Remarks

Advantage: This method addresses the left hemisphere of the brain and triggers more creative thinking, which can lead to surprising results and insights. Also, a picture can sometimes say more than a thousand words. It helps participants to make connections between what they learned, and they often enjoy doing this assignment.

Disadvantage: This exercise needs sufficient time to be effective. There is a danger that the collage become more of a recap than a deep reflection. It is important to encourage people to visualise their learning (not just what happened). Some people don't feel at ease with creative assignments.



Reflection with proverbs



Method

The facilitator puts a number of cards with proverbs (see below) on the wall or on a table and asks the participants to 'select a proverb that (symbolically) represents the most important learning point of our last session'. Participants get about 3 minutes to think about what they have learned and select a proverb. (People pick a proverb without taking it off the table, so that more people can select that proverb.) After picking one each they will share their selection in the group. Everybody has a maximum of one minute to present their case, explaining their learning point and its relation to the proverb. If the cards are stuck on the wall, then ask people to leave the card on the wall, step forward and stand next to the proverb to present their story. If the cards are laid out on a table, then each participant can pick theirs up and present it in the circle.

Material

Proverbs printed on A4/A5 sheets of paper.

Remarks

Make sure everybody comes forward and speaks clearly.

Advantage: It helps participants to think about the essence of a learning experience. Doing so in a

creative way and making use of proverbs often generates beautiful and meaningful stories and comments.

Disadvantage: Everyone having their say can take a lot of time in a large group, so be strict on the 1-minute speaking time.

There is no beauty but the beauty of action <i>Moroccan proverb</i>	A person with too much ambition cannot sleep in peace <i>Chadian proverb</i>
Do not let what you cannot do tear from your hands what you can <i>Ashanti proverb</i>	The one chased away with a club comes back, but the one chased away with kihooto (reason) does not. <i>Kenyan proverb</i>
If ten cents does not go out, it does not bring in one thousand dollars. <i>Ghanaian proverb</i>	For the benefit of the flowers, we water the thorns too. <i>Egyptian proverb</i>
He who thinks he is leading and has no one following him is only taking a walk <i>Malawian proverb</i>	How easy it is to defeat people who do not kindle fire for themselves. <i>Tugian proverb</i>
You always learn a lot more when you lose than when you win. <i>African proverb</i>	Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped <i>African proverb</i>
Wealth if you can use it, comes to an end; learning, if you can use it, increases. <i>Swahili proverb</i>	An army of sheep led by a lion can defeat an army of lions led by a sheep. <i>Ghanaian proverb</i>

Adapted from both MDF Training & Consultancy and Linda Naiman of Creativity at Work.





Write a haiku



Method

Individually, everyone chooses 4 to 5 words that capture the essence of what they learned and what was important in the previous session. Then participants form groups of 4 people, in which they first exchange and explain the meaning of these words to each other.

Then each group prepares a haiku, using (a selection of) the words they came up with.

The facilitator explains that a haiku is a Japanese poem consisting of:

5 syllables in the first line

7 syllables in the second line

5 syllables in the third line

In Japanese tradition a haiku is used to represent the essence of a feeling or experience.

The facilitator should make sure that s/he clearly explains what a syllable is, or emphasise the rhythm so people don't get lost. In the small group they prepare a small presentation of the haiku. Each group writes their haiku on a flip chart and the posters are hung around the room. In plenary all the groups present their haiku. After the presentations the facilitator can allow for a small plenary discussion and summary to deepen the main lessons learned (optional).

This tool has been videotaped:
www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection

Material

- Flip chart paper
- Marker pens

Remarks

Advantage: This method stimulates people to think about the essence of an experience and use the creative part of their brain to represent it. It is a team exercise, so the learning is collaborative, with people using each other's contributions.

Disadvantage: The focus on the format of the poem can take away the focus on the content. It can also restrict free thinking and deep reflection. It works well to combine this method with writing a poem or song (Method 3.31), and give participants the option to choose which format they prefer to use. Working in large sub-groups (more than 4 people) might impede the active participation of all group members, so it is best to keep the teams small.

Examples of haikus

Hello Mister Sun Blazing bright in the daylight Bye when it is night	Financing value chain Mitigating transactions For the poor farmers
SMART vision and goals Always have causes behind Strength and weaknesses	In the value chain Internal and external Financing the needs
Problems define goals SWOT has goodies and baddies Goals depend on SWOT	Let the wind blow free Each gives their opinion Hold true to your self

Adapted from Korrel (1995).





Reflection poem or song



Method

Participants are asked to form groups of 4-5 people. By working individually and in silence everyone thinks of the most important learning point and selects one key word that summarises/represents this learning point. The word can be a concept, emotion or action (verb). Then the participants are asked to shout out their word while the facilitator writes them down on the whiteboard. Within their groups the participants then select 5-7 words which they use to write a poem or song. They can use other words, but only to connect the words they selected. When all groups are done, they recite the poems/songs in front of the whole group.

This exercise can also be carried out more informally. Groups are formed and simply given the task of writing a song/poem about the lessons learned in the previous session. Or people come up with their own words first and then get together in a group.

*This tool has been videotaped:
www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection*

Material

- Paper
- Pens

Remarks

This method is similar to the method in which participants write a haiku, but now the format is less rigid, they use words more freely and creatively. This tool works better at a later stage in a learning event when people know each other and feel more at ease in the group.

Advantage: This method stimulates people to think about the essence of an experience and use the creative part of their brain to represent it. It is a team exercise, so the learning is collaborative, with people using each other's contributions. It creates a positive team spirit and it is nice to return to the songs later in the course (you could video tape the presentations). The participants feel ownership of their creation. This method is often highly appreciated!

Disadvantage: Deep reflection is sometimes limited; it is more about fun and creativity. Working in large sub-groups (more than 4 people) might impede the active participation of all group members, so it is best to keep small teams.





Comic strip



Method

Everyone gets a copy of a comic strip from which the text has been removed. People then get 10 minutes to create a story based on the activities during and lessons learned from a specific session, completing the speech bubbles in the comic. After 10 minutes the participants are divided into groups of three people and they exchange their stories. The facilitator completes the exercise by asking each group to briefly mention the most important learning elements that were discussed.

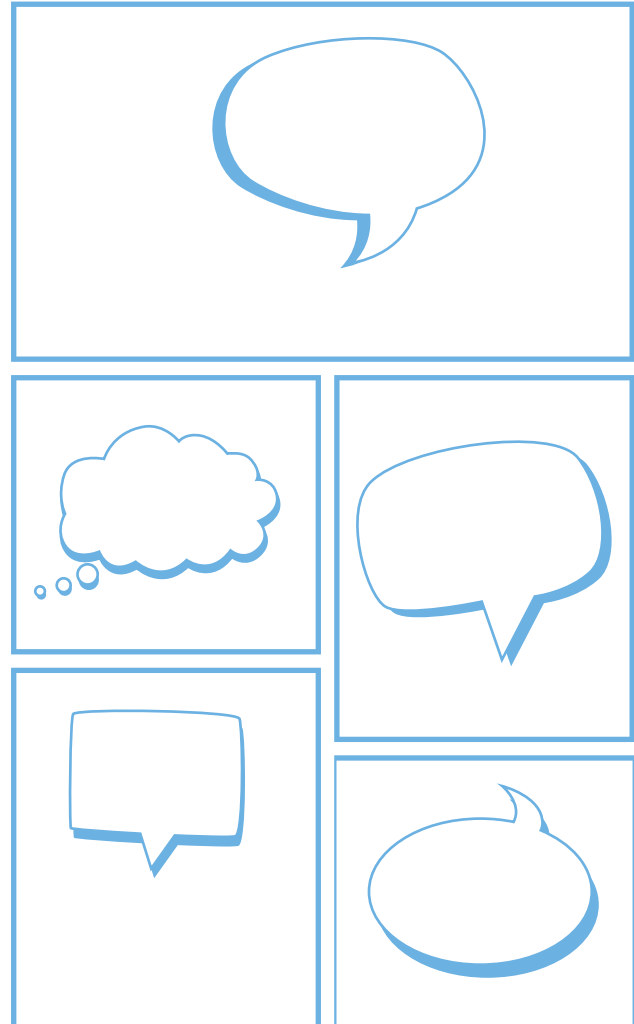
Material

Comic strip with blank text speech bubbles.

Remarks

Advantage: This playful and creative method is a nice change to the more cognitive reflection exercises. And it works well for people who prefer to reflect individually.

Disadvantage: As the learning outcome has to fit in the comic strip format, the freedom in thinking is restricted to a certain extent.



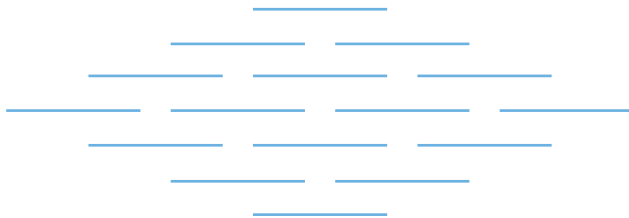


Paired Poem



Method

Everybody has a blank sheet of (A4) paper on which they draw the following configuration of lines:



(The facilitator has an example on a flip chart, ready to be copied.)

Then participants pair up with another person (e.g. their neighbour). In their pair, participants will write two poems about a certain learning experience. Without communicating, both participants write a word on the first blank line (they write at the same time). They swap papers and then both complete the second line by putting two words down that are connected to the first word. When both are done, they swap again, now writing down three words on the third line, building on what was written previously (still in silence). They keep passing the papers back and forth until they completed their poems. When everyone is done, the facilitator ask people to share (one of) their poems with the group.

An example of a poem:

*Trust
Is not
A physical means
But it's really important
To build it
And we
Did*

Because the poems are created with someone else, often participants find reading them out loud less daunting and are generally happy to share.

Source: Adapted from Reos Partners. This exercise was originally shared with Reos by Andrew Sullivan Feb 24, 2014

Material

- Blank sheets of paper
- pens or markers

Remarks

Advantage: It is a simple tool that works well for reflection during or at the end of a course, learning journey, or workshop, as it provides a short wrap-up and positive energy.

Disadvantage: It generates limited deep reflection.





Body sculptures



Method

The participants divide into groups of 4-5 people. Each group makes a 'sculpture' using their bodies. They take on a set of postures which together form an image that represents something they learned the day before. When all groups are finished with preparation, each group presents their sculpture to the rest of the group. The group then observes and comment on what they see. Subsequently, the performing group explains what they wanted to visualise and why they chose for this image in relation to what they learned; why did they find this image important? This method is sometimes called a 'human slide show', or frozen statue.

Material

None.

Remarks

Advantage: This method stimulates people to think about the essence of an experience and use the creative part of their brain to visualise it. The comments from the rest of the group about what they see often reveals unconscious ideas and assumptions within the sculpting group.

Disadvantage: Some people feel uncomfortable and inhibited to reflect in such 'artistic' way.





Stop-motion animation



Method

Participants are asked to create a short video that represents the key lessons learned of an experience or lecture. They will use drawings, cuttings and text, which they move in and out of the frame to tell the story.

After dividing the group into subgroups of about 5 people, the participants go through the following steps to create the video:

- 1 The facilitator explains what kind of video the groups will make (show an example if that helps)
- 2 Within their groups the participants think about the story they want to tell – the lessons learned of the learning experience in question.
- 3 When they have a clear narrative, they develop a 'storyboard': they sketch a quick overview of the story in separate frames. And they develop a script for the audio -i.e. the voice-over that will tell the story (see example below).
- 4 Then they create the different elements (figures, drawings, objects etc.) that will go in each of the frames. These are organised on a (long) table in the right order; their position corresponding the story board.
- 5 They mark off a square on an even surface (table/floor) with tape; this is the frame. The video device is positioned exactly above the square in such way that it won't move position. This can be done by attaching the device to a chair. An extra light gives a better result but is not strictly necessary. This can be done by positioning

the device on a piece of wood or carton between two chairs, leaving a hole for the lens.

- 6 When everything is ready, the video device is started. One person tells the story, while the rest of the team moves the different elements in and out the frame, following the storyboard. The video should not be longer than a few minutes (e.g. 2 to 5 minutes).

In plenary the video animations can be shared by projecting them on a screen.

Material

- Video device for each group (tablet, smart phone or video camera)
- Paper
- Crayons/markers
- Scissors
- Tape
- And other material that the groups can use to create the animation
- An extra lamp (optional)

Remarks

Advantage: It is a nice way to take advantage of the new possibilities created through modern technology, and participants often enjoy using digital devices. It stimulates people to tell the message in simple and clear language.

Disadvantage: If never done before, this method might be a little complicated for some people, taking the focus away from the actual reflection. And it may take a bit longer than 30 minutes.



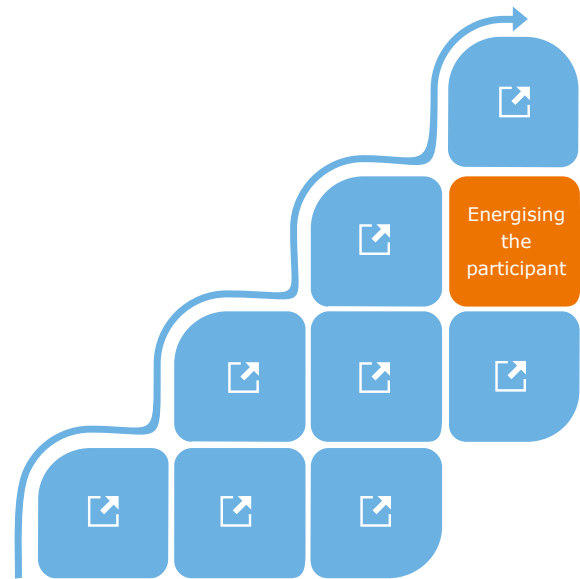
Stills taken from video on www.youtube.com/user/CDIwageningenUR/featured



Energising the participant

In the middle of the learning process there are numerous tools for different purposes. This sub-chapter provides a number of methods on:

How do I stimulate the level of energy and playfulness in the group?





Quiz



Method

Ask participants to group in small teams and prepare one question for a quiz, testing who remembers what! The question should be about the content of the previous day's sessions. The facilitator should encourage a bit of competition to activate people.

The question must be formulated as multiple-choice questions (i.e. have three possible answers) and written down on paper clearly so that everybody can read it. Challenge the participants not to settle on too easy questions, because then all other teams will know the answer easily. However, a vague or complicated question with unclear answers will result in a lot of debate and won't work either. So a challenging but clear question works best. While the teams prepare their question, the facilitator puts 3



different coloured cards on every team table, each marked with a large and clear 'A', 'B' or 'C'.

When all the teams are ready, each team shares their question and the three possible answers in plenary. After a question is presented, the other teams get a short while to discuss the possible answer. Ask people not to look in their notes or on their tablets. When all teams are ready and have selected an answer, the facilitator gives a signal for all the teams to reveal their answer at the same time: by holding up the card with A or B or C.

Then the team that prepared the question shares the right answer. The facilitator quickly counts the score: 1 point for the right answer, 0 points for wrong answers. The teams obviously cannot score a point when they present their question. Be strict, transparent and clear about the scores because to avoid debate and disagreement. And in the end it is not about the scores ...

Alternatively, the facilitator can ask one small group or one participant to prepare a quiz for the rest of the group. They will have to do this the evening before.

Material

- Paper
- Marker pens
- Coloured cards, 3 for each group

Remarks

Advantage: A quiz stimulates a bit of competition and it is a playful way of remembering a lot of information. This works very well after a weekend, to refresh the memory. And it generates a lot of positive energy.

Disadvantage: This exercise results in a recap, as it encourages people to remember what was done the day before. It does not necessarily stimulate deeper reflection. Furthermore, there might be discussion about the right answers with people disagreeing, which makes the scoring tricky and tedious; with the result that the exercise ends up being about the scores and not the learning points.



Lucky dip



Method

Write the name of each participant on small cards and put them in a bag or bowl. In plenary one participant draws a card and asks the person whose name is on the card a reflection question. After answering that person draws the next card, etc. Each participant draws a card and calls the person whose name is on the card. (See Appendix 2 for examples of questions). The answers can also be written in a learning journal. Alternatively, it can be done according to characteristics. There are different cards in the bowl describing different attributes; for example, 'men with a moustache', or 'women with brown eyes', 'everybody with glasses'. When a card is drawn, everyone with that characteristic comes forward and shares their most important learning point. The last to share can draw the next card. Decide beforehand whether people should share twice if their characteristic is drawn again.

Material

- A bag or a bowl
- Small papers/cards with the names of all participants –one name per card (or characteristics)

Remarks

Advantages: The surprising effect of who will be next, whose name you will draw has an energising effect.

Disadvantage: It can become more like a game than a serious reflection.



Storifying Domino



Method

All participants are standing. One person starts the exercise off by sharing one sentence that is somehow a reflection on a previous learning experience and then sits down. The next person picks one word from the former sentence and creates a new sentence that also reflects on yesterday's experience, and sits down. The following person continues again picking one word from the last sentence and creating a new one.

Source: Adapted from: www.icebreakers.ws/small-group/connecting-stories.html

Material

None.

Remarks

Advantage: Participants are challenged because they have to improvise and think quickly. There will be surprising sentences that create an interesting story. It is energising.

Disadvantage: This method is fun but generates less deep reflection.



The chair game



Method

It is a well-known game but now the focus is on reflection.

Everybody is sitting on a chair in a circle, with one person standing in the middle without a chair. This person needs to find a chair to sit down. To do so, the person in the middle shares an opinion or statement about the previous session; e.g. something you think is important, something to advise to your government, something that needs to be done related to the topic of yesterday's session. Give participants a few moments to decide whether they agree or disagree with the statement and then person in the middle shouts 'GO!'. Everybody who agrees with the statement/advice stands up and finds another chair. One person will end up in the middle without a chair; s/he explains why s/he agrees with the statement and comes up with a new statement.

After a few rounds the facilitator can change the rule, saying that now everyone who *disagrees* should swap chairs. At the beginning instruct them that they cannot run or block others walking towards a chair.

Material

Chairs organised in a circle, the number of participants minus one.

Remarks

Advantage: It is very energising and there will be a lot of laughs.

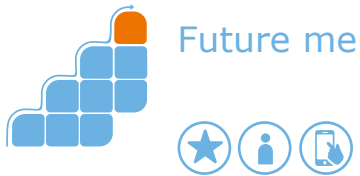
Disadvantage: The level of reflection will be somewhat limited/shallow, and it can be a little dangerous when people bump into each other when running to an empty chair – warn them to be careful.

Future application

At the very end of a learning event there is often a need to look ahead, focus on the future and how to apply what has been learned so far - thinking of actions plans. This sub-chapter provides a number of methods on:

How can I stimulate that people apply their individual lessons learned? And how do I stimulate the implementation of decisions?





Future me



If you had to explain to your boss

Method

Participants send themselves a message in the future! They write an email in which they summarise what they learned in the last couple of days and include some actions, good intentions and important thoughts for the future. Through the website they can send this message to themselves and receive it in the future.

The application allows them to decide on the period after which they want to receive it but should be at least 30 days into the future.

www.futureme.org

Material

- Each participant should have a tablet, laptop or phone
- This link: www.futureme.org

Remarks

Advantage: It stimulates commitment to do something after the learning event, a great reminder to yourself. And it is private, only the sender will read it.

Disadvantage: People get so many emails that it might not have a stimulating effect but just gets lost between the other emails.

Method

Participants are divided into small groups of 2-3 people and are asked to discuss: 'If you had to explain to your boss why it is worthwhile to have been involved in this learning experience, then what would you say ...?'

This exercise helps participants to distinguish the most important things they take home from the learning event and think about its relevance to their work.

In plenary the facilitator can ask the groups to briefly share what they discussed.

Material

None.

Remarks

Advantage: It stimulates thinking about the key things and forces people to relate this to their work context.

Disadvantage: It can feel like a marketing assignment, so you have to introduce this method well and be clear on its objective.



High five – desire for the future



Method

The facilitator shares a story or example of what could be a desire for the future concerning a change in a project or a situation. The example is intended to inspire others to think about the future. After this, participants are invited to take a moment to think about their organisation and situation back home right now and their desire for the future. Something they would like to change inspired by the new insights from the learning event.



Then all participants draw their hand on a piece of paper by tracing the outline of their hand. Each finger represents one step to take into the future to make their desire come true. For example:

- *Thumb*: What I liked and what inspired me during this learning event was ...
- *Index finger*: What I should be careful about is ...
- *Middle finger*: What I did not like or found difficult ...
- *Ring finger*: How it is related to my other experiences ...
- *Little finger*: A small step I can take when I arrive back home ...

Alternative questions to be used in the hand picture:

- When I get home after this event I usually start with doing first the actions I like to do. This time it will be ...
- I have an overview of all topics so that I can set priorities. My main priority is ...

- I should not ...
- I will have to stimulate my team back home to learn about the new perspective on ...
- I have to plan an appointment to make sure my team can ...

Sharing of future action plans is optional but can make the plans much stronger. Expressing your idea is a crucial step in moving from desire towards implementation. The sharing can be done in pairs, small groups or plenary. In the plenary the participants could for example share one important step that needs to be taken.

Material

- Paper
- Markers/pens

Remarks

This reflection method is especially well suited to use at the end of a training course as a means of transferring what has been learned to the practical situation. Suggestions for the facilitator: Give an example of a step. And make people copy the steps from their hand picture into their diary, and/or send the hand picture to the participants three weeks after the course.

Advantage: A nice and symbolic way to reflect and think about the future. It allows time for true reflection and application.

Disadvantage: It is more of an individual reflection method and does not generate a lot of discussion/energy in the group.





Making a manifesto



Method

A manifesto is a statement of one's beliefs, opinions, motives, and intentions, which can be phrased in a few words or cover many pages of text. It is a document in which people or organisations declare what is important to them. A manifesto may guide one in making decisions and keep them focused on the set goals. It helps to 'anchor' one's beliefs and is a reminder of one's personal and professional purpose.

In this exercise the focus is on the learning event. Sharing a manifesto is a powerful tool to attract people who share the same beliefs and purpose or are ready to support you.

The participants describe their manifesto with motto and vision/aspirations for the near future (the facilitator can set the time frame).

The following questions can guide the framing:

- What is important to you?
- What work do you want to do? What do you want to achieve or change in this world?
- How is this different from where you are now?
- What is better? What's easier?
- What needs to be done to creating that work situation, right now?
- And how can others join you?
- What do you want to achieve and what are you willing to do to achieve it?
- What values are important to you to uphold?
- What do you plan to do when you get in to the

position that you wanted?

- What are possible risks and obstacles that might hinder you in achieving your goal?
- What opportunities do you see that might help you in overcoming these obstacles?

Remind participants to hang their manifesto somewhere at home where they see and read it regularly, to keep themselves alert and motivated.

Material

- Paper
- Pen

Remarks

Advantage: It helps people to think about the future and what they would like to see happening in the future, it can be very motivating.

Disadvantage: Some people don't like to make plans for the future, they may resist such method. There is also a danger of participants setting themselves unrealistic goals.





Developing a personal action plan



Method

We hope that participants apply some of the lessons they have learned and have an impact in their respective work context. Because 'If you keep on doing what you always did, you will get what you always got'.

Action planning is a process which will help participants to focus their ideas and to decide what steps they need to take to achieve particular self-defined goals.

Preparation of a personal action plan

There are many ways to prepare a personal action plan. We will describe two options here to structure a personal action plan.

Option 1: Describe:

- Relevant topic(s) for your own situation
- Problem description and the underlying causes
- Objectives (achievable & measurable)
- Prioritise your tasks
- Process steps chosen and arguments why
- Activities for the first 3 - 6 months

Consider if it is achievable by making it 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Agreed Upon, Realistic, Time Based).

Option 2:

- List a maximum of 5 key lessons learned from the learning event

- Describe what the implications of each of these lessons learnt will be for you personally:
 - What will you do differently?
 - What change will we see?
- Describe what the implications of each of these lessons learnt will be for your organisation:
 - What will you do differently?
 - What change will we see?
- Describe what the implications of each of these lessons learnt will be for a case/project you are involved in:
 - What will you do differently?
 - What change will we see?
- Give a concrete example of how you will apply these key lessons learnt in your daily work
- Based on the above, prepare 3 coaching questions for which you would like to receive advice from the panel and your fellow participants

Presentation of a personal action plan

There are different ways to do this and we will mention again two options here:

Option 1 presenting in plenary:

Participants prepare a 5 minute presentation (drawing/poster/mindmap/etc. Be creative!) covering:

- Your name, country, organisation and possible a case you are involved in
- The 5 key lessons learnt
- Implications of these key lessons learnt at personal, organisational and case level, describing what you will do differently and what change we will see as a result
- Illustrate with concrete examples from your daily work
- 3 coaching questions



The panel and fellow participants have 10 minutes to share their reflections on your presentations, and to give you advice on the questions you have posed at the end of your presentation. Of course this way of presenting will take quite some time ...

Option 2 presenting in pairs:

Ask participants to prepare their action plan before the session and use a format they like: a structured table with the above mentioned information, or a mindmap, or a poster. Then you can use the Margolize Wheel to facilitate the sharing of action plans between participants. You can do three rounds in which the inner circle is sharing and gets 3x feedback from the outer circle, and then the other way around: 3x the outer circle sharing and the inner circle giving feedback. Use about 5 to 6 minutes for each round. Important is to emphasise that the people who are giving feedback and advise do this in a constructive and supportive way and help the other to make their plan stronger.

Disadvantage: It will take some time to do this well, and you cannot enforce anyone to put things into practice. Some people may feel resistance to this way of working and committing, they rather leave things open.

Furthermore if we think back at Bloom's Taxonomy (Chapter 2) then we work now at the highest level thinking skills 'Create': to put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole, to reorganise elements into a new pattern or structure. Working on this level is not very easy.

Material

Depending on the format you choose, but probably a piece of paper and some pens or markers will do. Or people prepare it on the computer and print it.

Remarks

Advantage: Developing an action plan can help participants to structure their thoughts and think about the implication of the lessons learned. It increases the chance that people put lessons learnt into action.



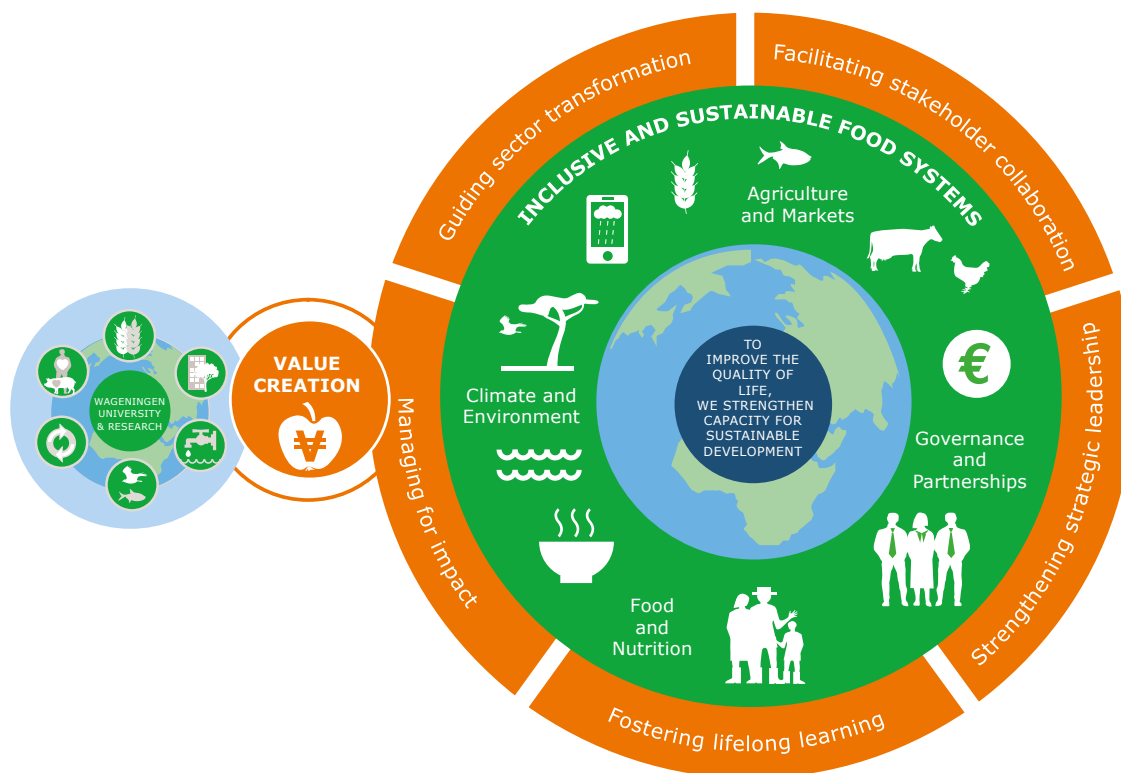
The context in which we work

This chapter gives a brief overview of what we do, the context we work in and how we work on creating capacities for change.

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation strengthens capacities for sustainable development in support of inclusive and sustainable food systems. We do so through our unique approaches in fostering lifelong learning, guiding sector transformation, managing for impact, facilitating stakeholder collaboration and strengthening strategic leadership.

A close connection between project implementation and capacity development characterises our work.

In our work with clients from governments, businesses, civil society, NGOs and the academic world, our group of over 50 staff with a combined 500-plus years of on-the-ground experience in international development, connects Wageningen University & Research's knowledge and expertise with the challenges to support inclusive and sustainable food systems in low and middle income countries.



The services and support we provide include process design and facilitation; policy and technical advice; monitoring and evaluation; action research; training and organisational development; knowledge brokering; and organising forums for dialogue and debate. An important part of our portfolio is its international programme of short courses in the Netherlands and abroad.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life, we strengthen capacity for sustainable development. Capacity development is the process by which individuals, organisations and institutions enhance and organise their systems, resources and knowledge. The degree of capacity development is reflected in their ability, both individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives. Capacity development is crucial in bringing about sustainable change and development. The pace of change and complexity of issues that individuals and organisations face are such that they need to be constantly, updating and improving their capacities.

There is growing demand for need-driven, interdisciplinary capacity development to complement traditional forms of academic education. This kind of capacity development goes beyond 'training'. It is part of longer-term processes of engagement and on-the-job facilitated learning which take into account location, situation and stakeholder specific characteristics.

We realise this kind of capacity development in a variety of ways: through projects, consultancy and training. We help stakeholders develop and implement effective learning and innovation processes. We stimulate our client to link up their new learning and insights to their own 'reality' as experienced by them and apply as much as possible to contribute to meaningful change.

Our programme of short training courses offers mid-career professionals the opportunity to gain relevant new insights into their work and professional sectors. We link the theory to policy developments and practice. In addition we build on findings and experiences from the field. Using conceptual knowledge to structure participants' own experiences, the courses offer valuable opportunities for reflecting on and analysing new approaches, tools, methods and their practical use and relevance together with peers.

The courses (approximately 40 regular and tailor-made courses every year) are characterised by a high level of interaction and the use of participatory facilitation methods. For more information please visit: www.wur.eu/cdi/shortcourses

“

Knowledge in Action



About the Authors



Femke Gordijn is trainer, facilitator and coach in the field of multi-stakeholder learning processes, leadership and personal development with Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research

With more than 12 years of experience in this field working in Africa, Asia and South America, interacting with stakeholders from many different nationalities, she can draw on a vast experience of facilitating interactive learning in multi-stakeholder settings. Femke designs and facilitates processes in which a specific (learning) goal has to be achieved, contributing to personal and organisational change and sustainable development. She plays a strategic role as lead facilitator, trainer or member of a team of professionals.

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Natalia Ernstman specialises in (community) learning for sustainability through artful and performative means.

As an educator, artist and researcher she initiates her own projects and works with theatre companies, universities, public authorities and charities. She teaches social science subjects as well as theatre; she facilitates group processes and directs site-specific and community art/theatre.

With 10 years of experience, Natalia is a skilled researcher interested in conducting meaningful action-oriented research that contributes to positive socio-environmental transformation. She lives in Cornwall, South-West UK and works regionally as well as internationally.

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Jan Helder is a lecturer, action researcher, trainer and moderator in the field of market economics with Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research

He has over 25 years of extensive, professional experience in this field of work in Africa, Asia and Europe, while working within a wide variety of different multi-stakeholder settings. Jan Helder is the initiator and coordinator of the open, annual courses on 'Market Access for Sustainable Development', 'Local Economic Development', 'Rural Entrepreneurship', and of many tailored training programs and action-research projects feeding the courses' content. The reflection toolkit has been developed within this set of courses and training programmes.

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Herman Brouwer is a multi-stakeholder engagement specialist working at Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research

He advises, trains and coaches professionals across sectoral boundaries on how to contribute to sustainable development through collaboration. As an accredited PBA partnership broker, Herman supports local and global MSPs, mainly in food security and natural resource management. He is one of the main authors of 'The MSP Guide: How to Design and Facilitate Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships'. Based on the many positive responses, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation has worked with Practical Action Publishing to release a second edition of this book in May 2016.

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Appendix 1

Content of the physical Toolbox

All the materials needed for the different reflection tools have been organised in a physical toolbox for Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation staff but can also be organised by yourself.

Herewith we provide the list of materials we have in our toolbox, for inspiration. Standard training materials like paper and markers are not mentioned.

- Ball
- Reflection cards with questions
- Reflection cards with images
- Reflection cards with symbols
- Reflection cards with proverbs
- Laundry line + pegs
- Bal of wool
- Microphone (symbolic)
- Talking stick
- Bell

Online materials available (can be downloaded):

- Video clips with examples for inspiration
- Ppt of Kolb learning cycle
- World Cafe principles on slide
- Ppt with personal action plan guidelines
- Ppt with introduction to (one of the first) reflection sessions
- Format empty cartoon
- Heart, hand, head – formats can be printed
- Questions for reflection cards
- Reflection questions for the hand
- Useful links

Online videos of reflection methods:

www.mspguide.org/tool/reflection

Appendix 2

Reflection Questions for inspiration

First questions structured around the Kolb learning phases

What happened and why? (reflection)

- What are some things we did today/yesterday?
- What happened, to whom, in what circumstances?
- What words stand out?
- What are some events you recall in the past year/week/day?
- What images or scenes do you remember?
- What people, comments, ideas, or words caught your attention?
- What lines of dialogue do you recall?
- What were the key points in the speech?
- Identify one element of the presentations or discussions you did or did not agree with?
- What did you like/dislike most in yesterday's session, and why?
- What was the most challenging/provoking issue in yesterday's session?
- Did anything surprise you yesterday? If so, what?
- How did this experience affect you? What were your feelings during the experience?
- What was the funniest moment yesterday?
- Did anything happen that made you feel uncomfortable? If so, what, and why do you think it made you feel this way?
- What joke or humorous saying can you make about yesterday's session? (Make a person laugh!)

- How did you feel about yesterday's experience? Why?
- What made you feel appreciated?
- What was inspiring? Most exciting?
- What was the collective mood of the group involved? How did the group react?

So what does that mean? (conceptualisation)

- What generalisations do you draw from this?
- What have you learned?
- What seems the most critical?
- What was your key insight?
- What does it mean to you, to have experienced this?
- What was the most meaningful aspect of this activity?
- What appears to be the central issue or key problem area?
- What exceptions are there? How can those exceptions be explained?
- What was the most important lesson learned yesterday?
- What did you learn during the informal interaction yesterday?
- What contradictions do you see, what sense can you make of it?
- What questions did this raise for you?
- What insights are beginning to emerge?
- What is the importance of this?
- What values are we holding here?

- What difference will it make?
- How have others dealt with these issues?
- What would you say underlies these issues?
- How has this been beneficial to you personally?
- What can you conclude from this experience?
- How does this relate to any theories, models and/or other concepts?

Now what? (application)

- How, if at all, has this experience changed your thinking?
- Do you feel the need to respond to/act upon what you have learned? How?
- What does this mean for your future?
- What will you do differently as a result of the experience?
- What kind of decisions need to be made?
- What changes will we need to make?
- If you were giving yesterday's lecture, how/what would you do it differently?
- How can you educate others or raise awareness about yesterday's topics?
- What aspect in the programme would you like to experiment with when you are back home and whom do you need to involve?
- If we would do this again, what would you change?
- What would it look like for you to act in this way?
- What application or ideas about action has this session triggered for you?
- What important trend might be an opportunity for your organisation?
- How could what you learned yesterday affect your life/work?
- What was the significance of this experience to your study/work/life?
- What could you teach your colleagues about yesterday's topics?
- How can you engage your colleagues?

- What are you really committed to?
- Based on what you learned, what is the smallest step you can take to create a positive change?
- What are the first steps you need to take?
- What would it take to help you apply what you learned?
- What more do you want to know?
- What remains a puzzle? What would you have to do to begin to resolve that puzzle?

Additional reflection questions

Questions on personal thoughts, emotions and feelings:

- What was important to me yesterday?
- What have I learnt from that?
- What was my role/reaction to that?
- What do I want to do about it?
- What am I noticing about myself today my thoughts my feelings my energy?
- Where do I need to pay attention most? (ie, if you are disturbed by a strong feeling about something, anger, or frustration this might mean you really need to pay attention and do something about it today).
- How are these thoughts/feelings/energies affecting my actions?
- How do I want to use these thoughts/feelings/energies today?
- What do I need to appreciate about myself today?
- What do I need to forgive myself for today?

Questions on personal behaviour

- How does my preferred (learning) style affect my work?
- My preferences for leadership?
- My preferences when I am facing uncertainty and change?



- How does my style affect me when I am under stress?
- When I am relaxed am I more willing to try out other styles, or be patient with those who have other styles?
- How does my style influence my learning?

Questions about the group

- What has been so far the role of the group in the learning process in this course?
- What should be the role of the group in the learning process of this course ?
- What are my main frustrations in the group learning process so far?
- What are my main highlights and learning in the group learning process so far?
- What is your suggestion to address an issue (needing attention) in order to enhance our learning? Also indicate/specify the actions/roles by the different actors.
- Any observations and feedback to help the facilitators to enhance your learning experience and make it more fruitful?

Deepening and follow-up questions

- What happened, to whom and in what circumstances?
- What generalisations do you draw; what exceptions are there; how can those exceptions be explained (and not explained away)?
- What contradictions do you observe (i.e. what could be fitted into the phrase 'on the one hand ..., on the other hand ...')? Assuming these contradictions both to be true, what sense do you make of it?
- Which of these events did you not expect to happen? What does that say about the assumptions you made about the development intervention?
- What did not happen that you expected to see? What does that say about the assumptions you made about the intervention?
- What remains a puzzle? What needs further attention? What would you have to do to begin to resolve that puzzle?
- How have you progressed towards your learning objectives that you defined? What has enabled you to progress towards your learning objectives?



I was delighted to read this book – it was a timely reminder of critical practice that often gets forgotten in the rush of every day! Working with activists in a social justice organisation means reflection is sometimes not prioritised. But when we do it well, the insights are powerful. And this book helps do it well. It offers tried and tested techniques and exciting novelties to get the most out of our experiences. Clear examples and graphics make concepts accessible and relevant to even the most pragmatic of us.

Dr. Irene Guijt
Head of Research and Publishing,
Oxfam Great Britain

This is a valuable resource for any facilitator wanting to bring a rich variety of methods and thus more ways of learning into their

reflection sessions. The authors rightly emphasise that: "Reflection stimulates people to 'own' their learning, which again stimulates the intrinsic motivation to apply lessons learned." A full commitment to reflection increases the impact of any programme. These facilitation tools apply to all stages of reflective learning and will help participants to articulate, evaluate, deepen, consolidate and apply their learning.

Dr. Roger Greenaway
Training Consultant,
Reviewing Skills Training

'Learning is often about awareness and purpose, and as often as possible about creating chances for it to happen. This nifty handbook aims to sharpen our awareness for learning, with specific purposes in mind. Neatly organised as a

mini-guide, it offers many opportunities to pepper your training courses and workshops with participation methods that are geared for purposeful learning. From the light heartedness of icebreakers with a thoughtful twist, all the way to the solemn topics of conflict management and decision-making. You can make this a design companion of your learning adventures or refer to it in passing, with a light touch.

A must for trainers and facilitators, and to develop participants' process vision and skills. All based on long-standing experience in intercultural multi-stakeholder contexts. A great addition to my library, hopefully to yours soon too!

Ewen Le Borgne
Team leader Knowledge, engagement
and collaboration, ILRI

Knowledge in Action

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation strengthens capacities for sustainable development in support of inclusive and sustainable food systems. We do so through our unique approaches in fostering lifelong learning, guiding sector transformation, managing for impact,

facilitating stakeholder collaboration and strengthening strategic leadership. A close connection between project implementation and capacity development characterises our work. In our work with clients from governments, businesses, civil society, NGOs and the academic world, our group

of over 50 staff with a combined 500-plus years of on-the-ground experience in international development, connects Wageningen University & Research's knowledge and expertise with the challenges to support inclusive and sustainable food systems in low and middle income countries.

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