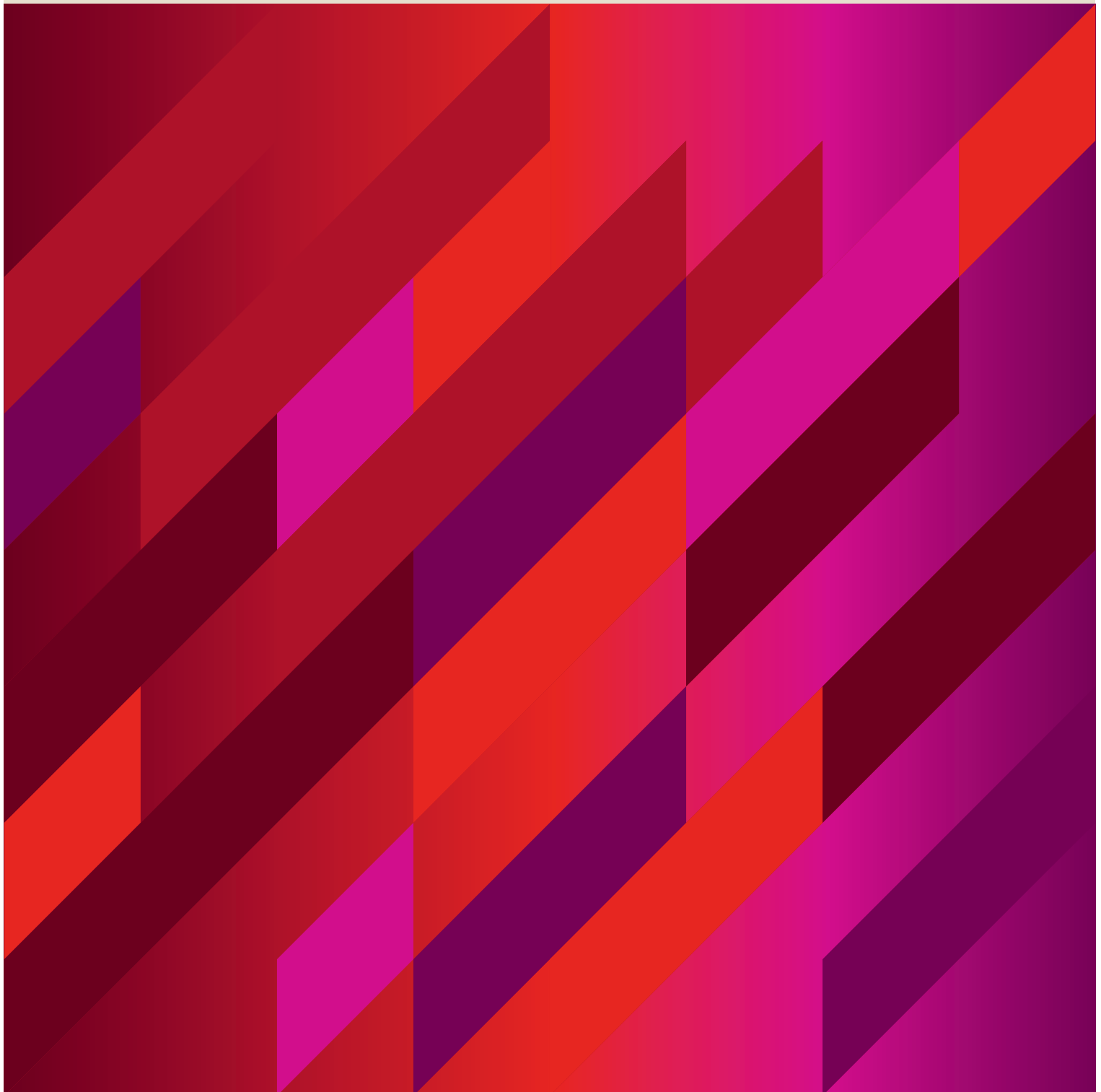


# Reflection for learning resources

CREATED BY THE MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY REFLECTION  
FOR LEARNING CIRCLE





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# Reflection for learning resources

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# Application card

## APPLICATION

This exercise can be used a few weeks into a course, after students have been introduced to new material such as a particular principle, theory, or procedure. Applications include:

- Developing critical and practical thinking skills through reflection
- Enabling students to take an active part in their own learning
- Encourages students to connect with prior knowledge and to reflect on the implications beyond the classroom

## MATERIALS

Paper, or blank cards

Pen or pencil

Alternatively, you could ask students to write their reflections on an online discussion forum.

## TIME

Allow students at least 5 minutes to reflect. Then allow 10-15 minutes of discussion time in the following lesson to discuss the responses.

## PROCESS

At the end of a session, hand out copies of the applications card to your students (see template at the end of this resource). Then allow around 5 minutes for them to write their responses. Collect the cards and sort through the responses by dividing them into 4 categories: great, acceptable, marginal, and not acceptable. Discuss

the responses in the following class, paying particular attention to the factors that argue for or against a particular set of responses.

Compile the responses into a resource for your students to encourage a circle of learning.

## OVERVIEW

The Applications Card is a classroom assessment technique devised by Angelo and Cross (1993) and is used to provide feedback to the teacher on student learning. However, it also encourages students to become active learners. By asking students to apply what they have learned to a particular situation, this activity requires students to engage with the new material by relating it to prior knowledge. The student not only has to reflect on what they have learned in class, but they must demonstrate a deeper understanding of the topic by thinking about the implications beyond the classroom.

## REFERENCES

Angelo, T. A. & Cross, P.K., 1993, Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers, Jossey-Bass Publishers: San Francisco

## APPLICATIONS CARD TEMPLATE

Take a moment to recall the ideas, techniques and strategies we've discussed – and those you've thought up – to this point in the session. Quickly list as many possible applications as you can. Don't censor yourself! These are merely possibilities. You can always evaluate the desirability and/or feasibility of these applications ideas later.

# Application card template

1

Take a moment to recall the ideas, techniques and strategies we've discussed – and those you've thought up – to this point in the session. Quickly list as many possible applications as you can. Don't censor yourself! These are merely possibilities. You can always evaluate the desirability and/or feasibility of these applications ideas later.

Interesting IDEAS/TECHNIQUES from this session	Some possible APPLICATIONS of those ideas/techniques to my work



# Critical incident

## APPLICATION

This exercise is typically used at the end of a session and allows teachers to gain an insight into what their students think about their methods and the classroom environment. It also provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning experience and provides an outlet for them to express themselves.

This exercise is best used early on in the course so that the teacher is able to identify and implement any areas for improvement.

Applications include:

- Encourages teachers and students to engage in self-reflection
- Provides students with a 'voice'
- Promotes active learning

## MATERIALS

Pen and paper

Alternatively, you could ask students to write their reflections on an online discussion forum.

## TIME

Allow 3-5 minutes for students to write and then a further 10-15 minutes to discuss their responses in the following session.

## PROCESS

At the end of a session, ask your students to respond, in writing, to 5 questions prepared by the teacher using the template at the end of this resource. Collect the responses at the end of class and then

allow some time the following week to discuss the responses with your students.

In order to encourage a collaborative learning approach, you may also wish to collate the responses into a resource available to all of your students.

## OVERVIEW

This exercise is taken from Stephen Brookfield's book *Becoming A Critically Reflective Teacher* (1995) in which he argues that critical reflection is essential to the improvement of teaching practices.

Brookfield proposes that it is necessary to go beyond self-reflection in order to understand student perspectives, thus it is necessary to create a student-centered learning environment in which the teacher responds to the needs of the class. Brookfield argues that excellent teachers "continually attempt to shape teaching and learning environments into democratic spaces of knowledge exchange" (p. 44).

Not only is this exercise useful for teachers to reflect on their own practice, it also encourages students to become active participants in their own learning.

## REFERENCES

Brookfield, S. (1995). *Becoming A Critically Reflective Teacher*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco

# Critical incident template

Please take about five minutes to respond to each of the questions below about this week's class(es). Don't put your name on the form - your responses are anonymous. When you have finished writing, put one copy of the form on the table by the door and keep the other copy for yourself. At the start of next week's class I will be sharing the group's responses with all of you. Thanks for taking the time to do this. What you write will help me make the class more responsive to your concerns.

**At what moment in class this week did you feel most engaged with what was happening?**

**At what moment in class this week did you feel most distanced from what was happening?**

**What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most affirming or helpful?**

**What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?**

**What about the class this week surprised you the most? (This could be something about your own reactions to what went on, or something that someone did, or anything else that occurs to you).**

# Critical incident template: different approaches

1

*This variation of the critical incident activity is a relevant application for PACE learning contexts*

Please take about five minutes to respond to each of the questions below about this week's class(es). Don't put your name on the form - your responses are anonymous. When you have finished writing, put one copy of the form on the table by the door and keep the other copy for yourself. At the start of next week's class I will be sharing the group's responses with all of you. Thanks for taking the time to do this. What you write will help me make the class more responsive to your concerns.

**Reflecting upon the past week, identify an incident, situation or event in which you were involved that for some reason has stayed in your mind.**

Write a brief statement describing the situation.

What were the main issues as you understand them?

How effectively were these issues addressed?

**What three or four alternative approaches could be taken to address these issues? You might like to consider aspects of your course of study that may inform alternative approaches.**

What could you have done differently in this situation?

What would it take for you to change your approach in the future?

What have you learnt from considering different approaches to this situation?

## LEARNING AND TEACHING CENTRE

Adapted by the Learning and Teaching Centre, Macquarie University, (2009) from: Fran Peavey, (1997). Strategic questioning: An approach to creating personal and social change. Ed. V. Hutchinson <http://www.jobslatter.org.nz/> retrieved 25 November 2009. LTC A415\_003

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# Critical incident template: perspectives

1

*This variation of the critical incident activity is a relevant application for PACE learning contexts*

Please take about five minutes to respond to each of the questions below about this week's class(es). Don't put your name on the form - your responses are anonymous. When you have finished writing, put one copy of the form on the table by the door and keep the other copy for yourself. At the start of next week's class I will be sharing the group's responses with all of you. Thanks for taking the time to do this. What you write will help me make the class more responsive to your concerns.

**Reflecting upon the past week, identify one incident, situation or event that for some reason was of particular significance to your university studies.**

Briefly describe the incident.

If there were others involved in the incident (e.g. someone from your host organisation, a recipient of the service, a fellow student) how might their view of the incident differ from yours?

What approaches, ideas, concepts in your university studies may be relevant to this incident?

What might you do differently in similar situations as a result of considering perspectives other than your own?

## LEARNING AND TEACHING CENTRE

Adapted from Macquarie University Unit ACES 873 Critically Reflective Practice in Higher Education and Brookfield, S.D. (1987). Developing critical thinkers. Challenging adults to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. LTC A415\_O03

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# Five main points

**APPLICATION**

This exercise is typically used at the end of a session in order to gauge how well your students have understood a particular topic or idea.

Applications include:

- providing the teacher with an insight into student learning
- helping students to retain new information
- encourages deep critical reflection and conceptualisation of new information

**MATERIALS**

Pen and paper

Alternatively, you could ask students to write their reflections on an online discussion forum.

**TIME**

Allow 3-5 minutes for students to write and then a further 10-15 minutes to discuss their responses in the following session.

**PROCESS**

Towards the end of a session, ask students to respond succinctly to two questions regarding the ideas and issues raised in the session (see template at the end of this resource).

It is best to leave some time after this in the same session to discuss the responses, but it may also be done the following class.

Students' ideas could be brainstormed on a whiteboard, or you may compile them into a resource for all your students.

**OVERVIEW**

Some research suggests that when students reflect on the material presented to them at the end of class, they retain almost twice as much of its factual and conceptual content (Menges, 1988, in Cuseo, n.d.).

This exercise encourages students to stop and reflect on what they have learned. But more than simply recall information, this exercise also encourages students to conceptualise the information by listing what they believe to be the pivotal issues.

**REFERENCES**

Cuseo, J., N.D., One Minute Paper, <http://oncourseworkshop.com/self-awareness/one-minute-paper/> accessed 4/11/2014

# Five main points template

Please take about five minutes to respond to each of the questions below about this week's class(es).

Reflecting upon today's session, write down the main ideas in one or two sentences.

List the 5 pivotal issues addressed in this session.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

# Minute paper

**APPLICATION**

This exercise is typically used at the end of a session in order to provide teachers with feedback on what students have learned about a particular topic, and to allow students to reflect on their own learning.

Applications include:

- developing critical thinking skills through reflection
- enabling students to take an active part in their own learning
- encourages students to engage in metacognitive strategies

**MATERIALS**

Pen & paper (or note cards)

Alternatively, you could ask students to write their reflections on an online discussion forum.

**TIME**

1 minute for students to reflect

Allow yourself some time to read through the responses (it usually takes around 1 minute to read through 4 responses).

Allow some time in the following session to discuss the responses with your class.

**PROCESS**

At the end of a session, ask the group to respond, in writing, to 1-2 short questions prepared by the facilitator.

It is more time effective to prepare forms or cards for your students to write on, but you can also display the questions for all students to see, or use an online forum.

Allow your group 1-2 minutes to write their responses before collecting them. In order to keep to the one-minute time frame, this exercise should focus on a single concept.

There is a sample form at the end of this resource, which you may wish to adapt.

Share the responses with your class when you next meet.

**OVERVIEW**

Minute papers are one of the most commonly used CATs (classroom assessment techniques) in Higher Education (Angelo and Cross, 1993), designed to provide anonymous feedback on what students are learning in class. Some research suggests that when students reflect on the material presented to them at the end of class, they retain almost twice as much of its factual and conceptual content (Menges, 1988, in Cuseo).

As well as a feedback strategy, the minute paper can be used as a “student-centered reflection strategy designed to help students discover their own meaning in relation to concepts covered in class, and to build instructor-student rapport” (Cuseo). Additional research indicates that students can learn to engage in meta-cognitive strategies if they are asked self-assessment questions on a regular basis. By asking students to reflect on their own learning, we encourage them to think deeply and critically (Resnick, 1986). The Minute Paper encourages students to reflect beyond surface learning, towards deeper reflection and higher learning.

**REFERENCES**

- Angelo, T. A. & Cross, P.K. (1993). *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Cuseo, J., n.d., One Minute Paper, <http://oncourseworkshop.com/self-awareness/one-minute-paper/> accessed 4/11/2014
- Menges, R. (1988). Research on teaching and learning: The relevant and redundant. *Review of Higher Education*, 11, 259-268.

# Minute paper template

1

In one minute, please answer the 2 questions below in 1 or 2 brief sentences.

**What was the most significant [useful, meaningful, surprising, etc.] thing you learned during this session?**

**What question(s) remain in your mind at the end of this session?**

# Seeking clarity

## APPLICATION

This is a simple activity you can use at the end of a session (such as a lecture or tutorial), in order to assess how well your students have understood the subject, and to allow students to reflect on their own learning.

Applications include:

- encouraging students to reflect on their learning and to increase retention of information
- enabling students to take an active part in their own learning
- encourages students to engage in metacognitive strategies
- improves listening skills
- provides the educator with an update on student progress and allows for planning for the next session

## MATERIALS

Pen & paper (or note cards)

Alternatively, you could ask students to write their reflections on an online discussion forum.

## TIME

Allow 3-5 minutes for students to write.

Allow yourself some time to read through the responses.

Allow a further 10-15 minutes to discuss the responses in the following session.

## PROCESS

At the end of a session, ask your students to respond, in writing, to the question: “What was the one thing so far in this session that you would like to have more explanation about?” They can write on their own paper, you could hand out small note cards (there is a template at the end of this resource), or you can post the question to an online class discussion forum.

Collect the responses at the end of class and discuss the issues with your students in the following lesson, or post the responses online.

Whichever format you use, it is a good idea to collate the responses into a resource for your students.

## OVERVIEW

This exercise is inspired by the Muddiest Point. The “Muddiest Point” was a teaching assessment technique developed by Dr. Frederick Mosteller, a Harvard University professor of statistics, in 1989. Asking students to reflect on their misconceptions encourages deep conceptual learning (Wandersee, Mintzes and Novak, 1994).

This version of the activity has been redesigned to adopt a strengths-based approach (Harvey, 2014), supporting student development of their meta-cognitive skills as they reflect on what they know and what they need to know.

By asking students to reflect on their own learning, and asking self-assessment questions on a regular basis, we encourage them to think deeply and critically (Resnick, 1986). Variations include changing the reflective question so you focus on the most “interesting” or most “surprising” point, for instance (Carlson, n.d.).

## REFERENCES

Carlson, A. (n.d.) Centre for Instructional Innovation & Assessment, <http://pandora.cii.www.edu/cii/resources/modules/muddiestpoint/>

Harvey, M. (2014). Strengths-based theory and practice. In D. Coughlan & M. Brydon-Miller (Eds), *Encyclopaedia of Action Research*. London: SAGE.

Resnick, L. B. (1986). *Education and learning to think*. Special Report. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education.

Wandersee, J.H., Mintzes, J.J., & Novak, J.D. (1994). Research on alternative conceptions in science. In D.L. Gabel (Ed.), *Handbook of research on science teaching and learning* (pp. 177-210). New York: MacMillan.

# Seeking clarity template

1

Please answer the 2 questions below in 1 or 2 brief sentences.

**What was the one thing so far in this session that you would like to have more explanation about?**

**In other words, what was least clear to you?**

# Drawing with two hands

## APPLICATION

The exercise has many applications ranging from a fun warm up exercise to a reflective exploration of the experience of using both hands simultaneously. Applications include:

1. Warm-up exercise prior to reflective activity
2. Mindfulness activity such as when learners reflect in and on (Schön, 1983) the experience of using both hands simultaneously
3. Focusing activity while reflecting on something else
4. Encouraging creativity, adaptability and flexibility
5. Integrating cognitive and affective learning
6. Offering new ways of approaching reflection.

## MATERIALS

You will need the following materials for each person:

- Three pieces of unlined paper, as large as practicable for the workspace
- At least two coloured biros, felt pens or pencils.

## TIME

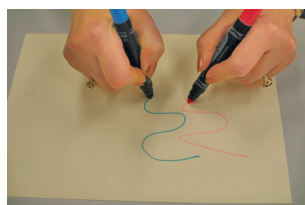
Allocate a minimum of 35 minutes comprising:

- Five to ten minutes for explanation and set up;
- Five minutes for each of the three processes (total of 15 minutes);
- Five minutes for personal reflection; and
- Ten minutes at least for group reflection, depending on your purpose for using the exercise.

## THE PROCESS

The process involves a three part drawing exercise followed by personal and group reflections:

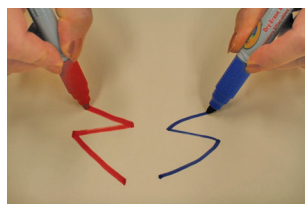
### 1. FOLLOWING



Taking a pen in each hand, draw with both hands at the same time but not touching each other. The dominant hand leads and the non-dominant hand follows (copies) the lead hand around the page exactly

and at the same time. Encourage learners to switch lead hands so that the non-dominant hand also leads to allow maximum flow and flexibility. Encourage learners to use the whole page and continue the process for at least five minutes.

### 2. MIRRORING



Take a new page and with a pen in each hand, draw a mirror image using both pens at the same time. Continue mirror drawing for at least five minutes, longer if the process is being used as a reflective tool.

Encourage learners to use the whole page and continue the process for at least five minutes.

### 3. FREE FLOW



On a new page, allow both hands to draw freely in their unique way. Encourage learners to use the whole page and to vary the speed at which they draw. Continue this process for at least five minutes.

### 4. PERSONAL REFLECTION

Immediately after the drawing exercises encourage learners to reflect in writing on their experience.

Encourage free flow of reactions, ideas and thoughts and suspension of judgement or editing for the first few minutes. Allow at least five minutes for personal written reflection.

### 5. GROUP REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

The degree of group reflection and discussion will depend on the purpose for which the exercise is being used, however even the most light-hearted of warm up exercises can be mined for reflective learning through the use of a few key questions.

The experiential learning cycle (Figure 1) proposed by Kolb (1984) provides a model for facilitating personal and group reflection. Another model that may be used for reflection on and debriefing experience is that proposed by Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985).

## OVERVIEW

This exercise combines drawing with both hands simultaneously, and in three different ways, with personal and group reflection.

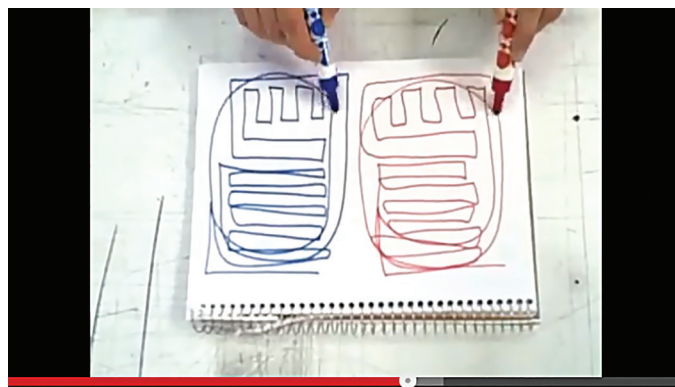
Combining art making, writing and verbalising about the art has been linked to integration of left and right brain hemispheres (Hass-Cohen & Carr, 2008).

Utilising the cognitive and affective learning functions of these hemispheres has been called whole person learning (Yorks & Kasl, 2002).

The exercise may be used to encourage reflection, creativity, whole brain activity, whole person learning, mindfulness, which has been linked to enhanced cognitive and academic performance (Shapiro, Brown & Astin, 2008), and focussed concentration.

The exercise has been adapted from the YouTube video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7ETueOn4Y&feature=related>





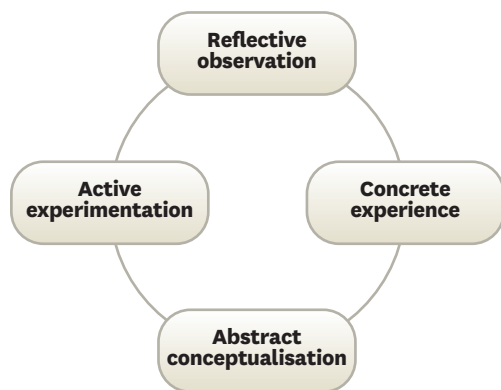


Figure 1. Experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984)

Questions for personal or group reflection for each stage of the cycle may include:

## CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

- What am I feeling / thinking during (each of) these activities?
- What's happening in my body / my felt sense during each of these activities?

## REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

- What did I do?
- What happened?
- What did I feel / think / experience during each activity?
- Was there any difference in how I felt / thought / what I experienced during each activity?

## ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION

- How did each activity influence or detract from my reflection / learning?
- What can I learn about (e.g. myself, others, topic, specific reflective issue) from this experience?
- How can I apply this learning?
- What other applications are there for this activity?
- What could I do differently?

## ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

- What happens if I do this?
- What changes or adaptations are needed?
- How might this be done?

This learning and teaching resource was developed by the Macquarie University Creative Reflection Learning Circle, a participative action research project funded through the 2012 Innovation and Scholarship Program.

## REFERENCES

- Boud, D., R. Keogh & D. Walker. (Eds.) (1985). *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning*. London: Kogan Page.
- Hass-Cohen, N. & Carr, R. (Eds.) (2008). *Art therapy and clinical neuroscience*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
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- Yorks, L. & Kasl, E. (2002). Toward a theory and practice for whole-person learning: Reconceptualizing experience and the role of affect. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52 (3), 176-192.

## APPLICATION

This is a simple activity you can use at the beginning of end a session (such as a tutorial) in order to engage students with course content and to stimulate new ideas.

Applications include:

- ice-breaker activity with a new group
- group or individual reflection
- stimulate ideas for writing
- encourage group discussion

## MATERIALS

Fortune cookies – 1 for each member of the class

## TIME

Allow students about 2-3 minutes to reflect on their fortune, and then another few minutes for each student to share their reflections. If you are time poor, or have a larger group, you could ask a few volunteers to share, or students could form smaller groups.

## THE PROCESS

Give each participant a Chinese fortune cookie and ask them to open it, but not to read the fortune aloud or to share it with anyone else.

Ask your students to think about how this “fortune” may relate to a particular topic or theme. Ask students to write notes if they would like as they will be asked to share their ideas.

Go around the class or ask for volunteers to share their fortunes and their reflection.

## OVERVIEW

This activity was adapted from a resource by Dave Lehman (2005), and it is a creative way to encourages students to think differently about a topic using text-based reflective prompts.

Reflective prompts can help generate evaluative reflection on past behaviours (Rodway et al, 2010). Reflective prompts are often used in reflective journal writing.

Johns’ model of structured reflection (2000) supports the need for the learner to work with a supervisor throughout their learning experience. He refers to this as guided reflection, and recommends that students use a structured diary (see pages 21-22). Johns’ model (1995), which is influenced by seminal work by Carper (1978), is based on five cue questions which enable the learner break down their experiences and reflect on the process and outcomes. This activity is a flexible way to prompt creative reflection in a classroom setting.

## REFERENCES

- Carper B (1978) Fundamental patterns of knowing in nursing. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 1 (1), 13-23.
- Johns C (1995) Framing learning through reflection within Carper’s fundamental ways of knowing in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 22 (2), 226-234
- Johns, C. (2000) *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner: a reflective and holistic approach to clinical nursing, practice development and clinical supervision*. Oxford: Blackwell Science.
- Lehman, 2005, *Fortune Cookie Warm Up*, [http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/Reflection%20%20and%20Community/fortune\\_cookie.pdf](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/Reflection%20%20and%20Community/fortune_cookie.pdf) accessed 6/11/2014
- Rodway, P., Schepman, A., Reynolds, D. Hartley, P., & Coleman, G. (2010). *The Role of Reflection in Enhancing Academic Skills: An Empirical Investigation. Final Report*, <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/4391>, accessed 14/11/2014

# Imagine a tea cup

## APPLICATION

This exercise works well as a planning ahead activity and can be used for a number of applications including:

1. An ice-breaker activity with a new group
2. A warm-up exercise at the beginning of a session
3. Encouraging creativity
4. Stimulating the imagination

## MATERIALS

An Open Mind

## TIME

Allow approximately 3 minutes for class reflections, then another 5-10 minutes to for the group to describe what they imagined.

## THE PROCESS

Ask your group to close their eyes and imagine a cup and saucer.

Give the group a moment to visualise the cup and saucer, then instruct them to pick up a teaspoon and hit the side of the cup with it.

Wait a few more moments, then ask the group to now balance the spoon across the cup.

Ask the group to open their eyes and then ask the following questions:

- Describe the cup you imagined.
- Was there tea in the cup?
- Was there a sound when you hit the cup?
- How did you balance the spoon?

Group members can then discuss and compare what they imagined.

## OVERVIEW

This exercise is adapted from a chapter on developing design education through encouraging designerly thinking by Ken Baynes (1989).

Baynes defines design as “the ability to imagine and then bring about desired changes in places, products and communications” (p. 70). Drawing on psychological studies, Baynes suggests that this ability to bring about change depends on “ability to form in the mind a complex and realistic model of external reality or imagined things” (p. 71).

While written in a design context, this exercise can be used in a various disciplines and settings to encourage reflection, creativity and mindfulness. The diverse variety of imagined teacups generated by the group can act as a powerful reminder that we are all creative.

## REFERENCE

Baynes, K. (1989). The Basis of Designerly Thinking in Young Children. In Anthony Dyson (ed), *Looking, Making and Learning: Art and Design in the Primary School*, Bedford Way Papers 36, Institute of Education: University of London, pp. 70- 85.

# Noticing five things

## APPLICATION

This exercise is best used at the beginning of a session in order to encourage your students to refocus their attention.

Applications include:

- practice the experience of 'being'
- aid to reflective practice
- whole person learning
- an ice-breaker activity with a new group

## MATERIALS

Mindful attention

## TIME

About 4-5 minutes

## PROCESS

Students, or colleagues are to sit comfortably.

The teacher guides them through this short, mindful and focusing exercise in four steps. Allow about one minute for each step. The teacher guides by asking:

1. Notice five things you can see.
2. Notice five things you can hear.
3. Notice five things you can feel in contact with your body (e.g. your feet in your shoes, the air on your face, your back against the chair and the fabric of your clothes touching your legs).
4. Now bring together all 15 things at the same time (the five things you could see, the five things you could hear and the five things that you could feel).

## OVERVIEW

This mindful exercise encourages students to pause and refocus, allowing deeper engagement with learning and observation.

Mindfulness can be understood in terms of a practice that is available to anyone to encourage the development of qualities such as awareness, insight and compassion (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Mindfulness can facilitate reflective practice. By encouraging students to become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, it allows them to learn how to reflect (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Furthermore, if students are encouraged to be mindfully aware of their surroundings and their relationship with it, it becomes possible to think beyond themselves and provide insights into the perceptions of others (see Bolton, 2010, p. 15; Leigh & Bailey, 2013: p. 165-166).

Mindfulness can also offer the practitioner "an opportunity to deepen relationship with themselves; and a chance to see and do things differently" (Nugent et al, 2011, f7).

## REFERENCES

- Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*, 3rd edition, Sage: London.
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# Body parts debrief

## APPLICATION

This is a fun debriefing activity that is best used in smaller classes, or small groups at the end of a session. Applications include:

- fostering a safe environment for students to share and reflect
- encourages your students to reflect on the role of emotion in learning

## MATERIALS

Objects that are shaped like or symbolise each body part, or alternatively, you can bring in images of each body part.

A list of body parts is provided, but you may also wish to add others that you think of:

Brain	Liver	Heart	Foot
Ear	Lungs	Hand	Spine/Bone
Eye	Nose	Stomach	

## TIME

Allow a few minutes for your students to reflect and/or write, then allow each student about 2-3 minutes to share their responses to the class or in small groups.

## THE PROCESS

Ask each participant to select a body part from the bag. Then ask them to respond to at least one reflective prompt attached to the body parts either within a group, or they can write a journal entry.

The following metaphors can be used for each body part:

**Brain:** Share something new you learned about yourself, a teammate, or the class.

- What thoughts do you have?
- What did you learn through your experience?

**Ear:** Describe something you heard, or something that was hard to hear.

- What was a good idea you heard?
- What was something that you really listened to?
- Was there some feedback that was difficult for you to hear?

**Eye:** Share a vision you had for yourself or the class, something you saw, or an observation you made.

- What was something new that you saw in yourself or someone else?
- What vision do you have for yourself/the class?
- What qualities do you see in yourself?
- How did you see yourself perform within the class?
- What was an important observation you made?

**Foot:** Reflect on what you will leave with today

- What is something (an idea, something learnt) you will “walk” away with after today?
- Was today a good balance or is there something else you need to know more of?

- What direction would you like to see the class go?

**Hand:** Reflect on a moment in which you felt supported, or felt that you would like to offer a hand to support someone else

- In what way did the class or an individual support you?
- Who is someone you would like to give a hand to (applause or congratulate) for a job well done?
- How did you or will you lend a hand (support the class)?

**Heart:** Name something you felt, or a feeling you experienced.

- What is something you experienced that pulled at your heart strings (that heightened or activated your emotions)?
- How did you feel?

**Liver:** Explain a moment when you felt you were able to “digest” or “metabolise” something new.

- Do you have an example of being able to “break down” something into smaller parts or understandings
- Was there a moment when you were able to build or “metabolise” a new piece of knowledge?

**Lungs:** Share about how an experience has challenged you or motivated you to think differently.

- When was a time when you needed to take a deep breath?
- Was there an experience when you felt like you wanted to yell aloud or scream?

**Nose:** Tell us about what you feel “smells good” about a particular experience.

- Have you ever stuck your nose (enquired) in somebody else’s business?
- What was something that “stunk” (smells or feels bad) about the activity?
- What is something that “smells fishy” (or you are still questioning) about what you learned?

**Spine/Bone:** Think about your strengths and your class’s strength or “backbone.”

- What do you consider your backbone / the class’s backbone?
- Who/what is integral to the class’s success?
- What is a strength you have identified for yourself or the class?
- Have you thought of areas where you could develop strengths?

**Stomach:** Explain something that took guts or a strong stomach (personal strength) for you to do, or pushed you outside of your comfort zone.

- What pushed you outside your comfort zone?
- Where there any sick feelings you have felt before?
- Was something hard to stomach (difficult to understand, tolerate or digest) for you?

## LEARNING AND TEACHING CENTRE

Created by the Macquarie University Reflection for Learning Circle  
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# Body parts debrief

## OVERVIEW

This simple debriefing activity was developed by Michelle Cummings (n.d.), and designed to foster a safe environment to encourage students to reflect.

The original model for this activity includes reflective prompts that invite participants to identify their deficits. This version of the model has redesigned the prompts to adopt a strengths-based approach (Harvey, 2014), supporting students to reflect on their individual and class strengths in relation to learning.

This exercise also encourages students to reflect on the role of their emotions in their experiential learning.

The role of emotion in learning has often been overlooked in educative and reflective studies, but there is a growing body of literature which highlights the important role that emotion has to play in both learning and in reflection. Day & Leitch, for instance, maintain that feelings and emotion play a crucial role in the development of learning since it is through our subjective emotional world that we makes sense of the world (Day & Leitch, 2001, p. 406). Raelin (2001) suggests that “emotions can act as catalysts for reflection” (cited in Ghaye, 2007, p. 153).

By teaching students how to become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, it enables them to learn how to reflect (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

## REFERENCES

- Cummings, M. (n.d.). *Effective Debriefing Tools and Techniques*. Downloaded 5 March, 2014: <https://onlineteachingandlearning.wikispaces.com/file/view/Processing+Effective+Debriefing+Tools.pdf>
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# Circular response

## APPLICATION

This exercise can be used to facilitate class discussion around a particular topic in a way that enables all students to contribute. The optimal size for this exercise is 6-8 participants but it can also work in larger tutorial groups. Applications include:

- providing all students with the opportunity to participate in learning through class discussion
- encourages active listening skills
- develops critical and informed thinking skills

## MATERIALS

**None** (although you could have a copy of the activity's 'rules' to remind students of this reflective process).

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## Time

Three minutes for each student to talk, then another 10-15 minutes group discussion

## PROCESS

Ask your participants to sit in a circle so that they are all able to see each other.

The group chooses and agrees on a relevant theme to discuss. This could be something that has emerged in the lecture or assigned readings for the week, or could apply to the course more broadly.

Nominate a volunteer to begin the discussion. This person speaks for three minutes on the chosen topic.

After three minutes, the first person must stop speaking, and the discussion moves to the person sitting to their left.

The next person is also allowed the same amount of time to speak, but they must begin by paraphrasing what the previous speaker said, and then demonstrate how their response is related to the previous comments.

After three minutes, the second speaker stops and the person to their left becomes the third speaker, and so it goes until the discussion has moved all the way around the circle.

Participants are to adhere to the following set of rules (and these should be displayed clearly for the class to see):

1. No one may be interrupted while speaking.
2. No one may speak out of turn in the circle.
3. Each person is allowed only three minutes to speak (if you have a larger group, you may shorten the length of time).
4. Each person must begin by paraphrasing the comments of the previous discussion.
5. Each person, in all comments, must strive to show how his or her remarks spring from, or respond to, the comments of the previous discussant.

After each discussant has had a turn to speak, the floor is opened for general conversation, and the previous ground rules are no longer in force.

## OVERVIEW

This exercise is from Brookfield and Preskill's book on using discussion as a way of teaching. Brookfield and Preskill argue that many students find it hard to acquire attentive listening skills.

The circular response exercise is used as a way of democratising participation, promoting continuity, and providing students with the experience of the effort required to listen respectfully (Brookfield & Preskill, 1999, pp. 64-65).

## REFERENCES

Brookfield, S. D. & Preskill, S (1999). *Discussion as a way of teaching: Tools and techniques for university teachers*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.



# Daydreaming for productive reflection

3

## APPLICATION

This activity can be used to encourage students to think imaginatively and creatively. Applications include:

- Encouraging creative and innovative thinking
- Engaging students in productive reflection
- Improving emotional intelligence
- Stimulating critical thinking skills

## MATERIALS

An open and flexible mind

## TIME

5-10 minutes

## PROCESS

Ask participants to sit in a relaxed position. Ask them to close their eyes, take a deep breath and let the breath out slowly. Speak slowly and calmly, and encourage them to relax. Then ask them to let their minds wander freely for a few minutes – perhaps they'll visit other places, see strange images, or hear odd sounds.

After 2-3 minutes – ask people to open their eyes and return to reality. Then call on people and ask where they went and what they experienced.

Ask a series of discussion questions such as:

- Where did you go? Did you leave the room? What did you experience? Did you experience anything strange or impossible or beautiful?
- Did you have difficulty with this exercise? If so, why? Were the present conditions a problem? Under what conditions might you be able to perform better?
- Were you surprised by how far your daydreams took you? How so?
- Do you think daydreaming might have any practical value? In what way?
- How might an artist or inventor use the daydream deliberately for creative purposes? How might you do the same?
- What stops us from daydreaming more than we do?

Alternatively, you could ask the participants to respond in writing about their experience.<sup>1</sup>

## OVERVIEW

This activity was adapted from Epstein's *The Big Book of Creativity Games* (2000, pp. 73-75). Recent studies in education research suggest that engaging students in productive mindful introspection and self-directed, internal processing can be beneficial for students, improving both their socioemotional well-being and academic skills (see Immordino-Yang & Sylvan, 2010; Yeager & Walton, 2011). Immordino-Yang, a professor of education, psychology and neuroscience suggests that 'relaxed daydreaming' is particularly important for processing the "social and emotional implications of everyday situations and relationships and connecting them to personal experiences and future goals" (Immordino-Yang et al, 2012: 359; see also Baird, Smallwood, & Schooler, 2011). This exercise is a focused internal activity that is "potentially important for making meaning of new information and for distilling creative, emotionally relevant connections between complex ideas" (Immordino-Yang et al, 2012: 359).

## REFERENCES

- Baird, B., Smallwood, J., & Schooler, J. W. (2011). "Back to the future: Autobiographical planning and the functionality of mindwandering." *Consciousness and Cognition*, 20 (4): 1604–1611.
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- Immordino-Yang, M. H., & Sylvan, L. (2010). "Admiration for virtue: Neuroscientific perspectives on a motivating emotion." *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 35 (2): 110–115.
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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Epstein, R. (2000). *The Big Book of Creativity Games*. McGraw Hill: New York, pp. 73-75





# Images as reflective prompts

## APPLICATION

This exercise can be used as a short class activity, or incorporated into a regular class or tutorial in order to engage students with course content and to stimulate new ideas. This exercise has a number of applications including:

- ice-breaker activity with a new group
- group or individual reflection
- stimulate ideas for writing
- encourage group discussion

## MATERIALS

A large stack of postcards.

Alternatively, you can use:

- photos, or
- a series of images copied from art/photography books, etc.
- a collection of magazines and students can choose a photo that resonates with them

## TIME

5-15 minutes

## METHOD

The facilitator asks the class to split into pairs or small groups. Provide each group with a pile of postcards, images, or magazines and ask them to spread the images out so that everyone in the group can see them.

Ask group members to select an image that best represents the answer to a particular question or a series of questions that you can tailor to your class and needs.

For example, if you were to use this as a learning activity, you could ask your group to select an image that best represents:

- The most important learning point in the lecture/tutorial
- A particular theory or methodology

Each member of the group takes up to a minute to share their reflections with their group, explaining the idea and its relevance to the picture. At the end of the activity, have a class discussion asking people to describe anything interesting that they may have learned. For instance, you could ask them if the image provided a different perspective on a topic, or if one of their group members offered another way of looking at an idea.

## OVERVIEW

This exercise encourages participants to use different parts of the brain, to think creatively.

Sometimes people can find it difficult to understand or articulate an idea through language. Using an arts-based approach to learning can often help stimulate new ideas (see Gadamer, 1989; Casey, 2009).

## REFERENCES

Gadamer, H. (1989). *Truth and method*, 2nd Edition, trans. J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall. Crossroad: New York.

Casey, B. (2009). Arts-based inquiry in nursing education. *Contemporary Nurse*, 32 (1–2), 69–82.

## APPLICATION

The exercise can be used to introduce participants to reflection in a non-threatening but creative way.

Applications include:

- Stimulating creativity
- Cultivating mindfulness and inner awareness
- Encouraging embodied learning

## MATERIALS

Students should be advised of the following in advance:

Please bring one of the following to class in order that you can document reflection in a manner of your choice:

- a camera or a phone which has a camera function;
- a digital recorder;
- a video camera;
- art supplies such as coloured pencils or pastels and paper, string, model clay etc.;
- pen and paper
- a laptop or iPad
- any other materials which might help you capture or document reflection

Students should be provided in class with the templates attached at the end of this resource as part of the explanation.

## TIME

45 minutes in total is recommended, however, this will depend on the context and purpose of the exercise. A minimum of 10 to 15 minutes should be allocated for exploration.

- 5 minutes for explanation
- 20 minutes for the exploration
- 20 minutes for group reflection and discussion.

## THE PROCESS

Ask participants to explore nearby surroundings, and observe and document either an object (e.g. something that they have not noticed there before, or something that they have seen in a new way), a feeling they have during the exploration, an experience that occurred during their exploration, or a sense of something that evolved as a result of their exploration (e.g. could be completely unrelated to the setting but important to the individual simply because they have had a few minutes to slow down and reflect on things).

Whilst participants are doing this, ask them to think about:

- What they see
- How they feel
- How this observation connects to their broader situation

- What this means to them
- What it might imply about future experiences
- Why they chose the medium that they did.

Once participants return from their explorations, ask them to share their documentation and reflections with the group, should they wish to do so.

## OVERVIEW

This exercise has been adapted from Smith's book *How to be an explorer of the world* (2008). This activity aims to give participants the opportunity to engage in creative reflection and mindful awareness through an exploration of their physical surroundings. Encouraging students to become mindfully aware can assist with developing accurate observation and communication skills, and the ability to use "implicit knowledge in association with explicit knowledge, and insight into others' perceptions" (Bolton, 2010, p. 15). This activity also stimulates embodied self-awareness by encouraging students to be aware of what is happening within the physical and physiological self, and how that relates to emotions, feelings and thoughts (Leigh & Bailey, 2013: p. 167). The teaching of embodied self-awareness provides a valuable tool for learning reflective practice. (Leigh & Bailey, 2013, p. 167).

## REFERENCE

Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London: Sage.

Leigh, J. & Bailey, R. (2013). Reflection, reflective practice and embodied reflective practice. *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy: An International Journal for Theory, Research and Practice*, 8 (3), 160-171.

Smith, K. (2008). *How to be an explorer of the world*. Portable Life Museum. New York: Penguin group,

## How to be an Explorer of the World

1. Always be looking (notice the ground beneath your feet).
2. Consider everything alive and animate.
3. Everything is interesting. Look closer.
4. Alter your course often.
5. Observe for long durations (and short ones).
6. Notice the stories going on around you.
7. Notice patterns. Make connections.
8. Document your findings (field notes) in a variety of ways.
9. Incorporate indeterminacy.
10. Observe movement.
11. Create a personal dialogue with your environment. Talk to it.
12. Trace things back to their origins.
13. Use all of the senses in your investigations.

\*Taken from Smith, K. (2008). *How to be an explorer of the world*. Portable Life Museum. Penguin group, New York, p. 5

## You are an Explorer

Your mission is to document and explore the world around you as if you've never seen it before.

- Take notes.
- Collect things you find on your travels.
- Document your findings.
- Notice patterns.
- Copy.
- Trace.
- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Record what you are drawn to.

\*Taken from Smith, K. (2008). *How to be an explorer of the world*. Portable Life Museum. Penguin group, New York, p. 11

## APPLICATION

This exercise can be used at the end of a course or subject in order to reflect on what has been learned over a particular time period. Applications include:

- Reflective revision of course material
- Encourages students to reflect on different perspectives and to make links in creative ways

## MATERIALS

A pair of dice

Whiteboard or black board

## TIME

5-10 minutes

## THE PROCESS

The facilitator draws up a table with 2 columns, with the rows numbered 1-6 on the left and two headings. The two headings are determined by the facilitator and therefore can be anything related to the subject being studied, for example:

	Methodology	Challenges
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Or:

	Topics	Issues
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

The facilitator then asks the group for ideas to fill up the first column until there are 6 ideas listed under the first column.

Repeat the process for the next column.

Ask for a volunteer to roll the dice, and use the numbers to discuss how the corresponding columns on your table are linked. For example, if the student rolled a 2 and a 4, then the class would discuss 'topic 2' and how it relates to 'issue 4'.

You may repeat the process however many times you like.

## OVERVIEW

This activity was adapted from Epstein's *The Big Book of Creativity Games* (2000, pp. 149-151). This activity is a participant-directed processing technique that encourages collaborative reflection and creative thinking. Tremmel (1993) argues that in order to learn through reflection, it is important to gain fresh and differing perspectives. The reflective mind is not simply theoretical, but is "flexible and pliable... it is, moreover, the mind that has the capacity to reach into the center of confusing situations, to see itself, and to shift the base of its operations..." (Tremmel, 1993, p. 436). This exercise encourages participants to think on-the-spot, and to make links or gather insights that they may not have thought about initially.

## REFERENCES

Epstein, R. (2000). *The Big Book of Creativity Games*. McGraw Hill: New York.

Tremmel, R. (1993). Zen and the art of reflective practice in teacher education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 63 (4), 434-458.