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WORK AND LEARNING

A Toolkit of Learning Strategies

From Joe Raelin

For the Jobs to Careers
Peer Learning Conference

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Instructional and Work-Based Strategies

Instruction can enhance work-based learning strategies through its various formats. It can be:

- front-loaded

- back-loaded

- just-in-time

- self-instructed

- on-the-job

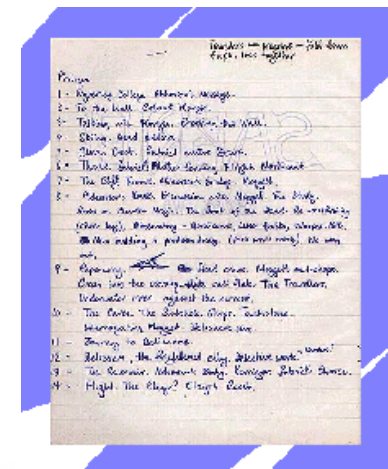# Learning Environments that Promote Work-Based Learning

- workplace culture values collaborative learning

- workplace has open career structure

- the learner has access to knowledge resources

- learner has contact with other learners

- learner's tasks are important to the organization

- learner's tasks require ongoing knowledge and skill development

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Journalizing

- Vehicle to integrate the inner and outer parts of our lives

- Method to gain insight into our reasoning and actions

- Lens to view experience before, during, or after an event

- Vital tool for reflecting on:

  - projects

  - learning team

  - everyday experience

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Journalizing - Questions To Help Get Started

- What are your plans for an intervention?

- What are you feeling in the moment?

- How have you processed the experience?

- What are your feelings now?

- How do you evaluate the experience?

- What new insights have been revealed?

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Journalizing – Two Sample Approaches

The Row

Approach

The Column

Approach

_____

_____

_____

_____

Journalizing – Example

Site: Asante

Occupation: Informatics Technician

Competency: Ability to organize data in files for easy retrieval

Work-based activity to learn competency: Assigned to organize computer filing system so files can be more easily identified.

Reflective practice/Assessment: Students keep journals to document and reflect on the process.

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Be 'SAGE' in Mentoring

- ■ *Surrender*

- ■ *Accept*

- ■ *Gift*

- ■ *Extend*

Source: C. R. Bell, *Managers as Mentors* (1996).

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Facilitation Functions

- The administrative dimension

  Attend to team meetings and procedures

- The content dimension

  Assist with project design and operation

- The process intervention

  Intervene to help the group with its interpersonal dynamics and development

- The feelings dimension

  Acknowledge the emotional element of member relationships

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Some Facilitator Roles

- Reflector **[*Prime*]** - asks questions to foster reflection

- Expert - shares information from his or her experience and knowledge

- Instructor - teaches tools and techniques

- Colleague - offers his or her personal opinion and perspective

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Facilitators' Intervention Strategies

- <u>Prescriptive</u> - deliberately offer advice and direction

- <u>Informative</u> - offer leads or ideas about how to proceed

- <u>Confronting</u> - challenge members on such issues as their current process, evolving relationships, restricted intellectual frameworks

- <u>Cathartic</u> - address emotional undercurrents and seek to release tension

- <u>Catalytic</u> - provide a framework to encourage the development of an idea or remove a blockage

- <u>Supportive</u> - display care or offer empathy

Facilitation Andragogical Behaviors

- listening and attending
- clarifying goals, agendas, and norms
- promoting airing of problems from diverse viewpoints
- openly but sensitively confronting conflict or disagreement
- looking at the underlying assumptions operating in a situation
- revealing one's own assumptions and inferences
- being aware of inconsistencies between one's beliefs and actions
- giving feedback in a nondefensive way
- encouraging the soliciting and receiving of feedback
- reflecting on self and on the process of the group
- allowing and encouraging the airing of emotions and feelings
- encouraging members to take ownership of their own learning
- reinforcing an open and participative environment

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Toward Facilitation Teaching

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• Instead of asking questions that have a preconceived correct answer, probe while suspending all presuppositions

• Instead of first jumping in to provide expertise, let participants offer their solutions to each other

• Instead of masking lack of knowledge, admit fallibility along with a view on how all might approach the problem at hand

• Instead of allowing participants to downplay their experience, reinforce the deep value of their practice-knowledge

• Instead of over-preparing lecture presentations, introduce new material using multiple methods and entry points

• Instead of requiring concept-based reports from the field, encourage participants to journal on their experiences

• Instead of encouraging opinion-giving, invite participants to ask good genuine questions to bring out the collective knowledge of everyone

• Instead of seeking consensus on a controversial topic, express tolerance for a resolution of indeterminacy in order to promote ongoing reflection on the topic

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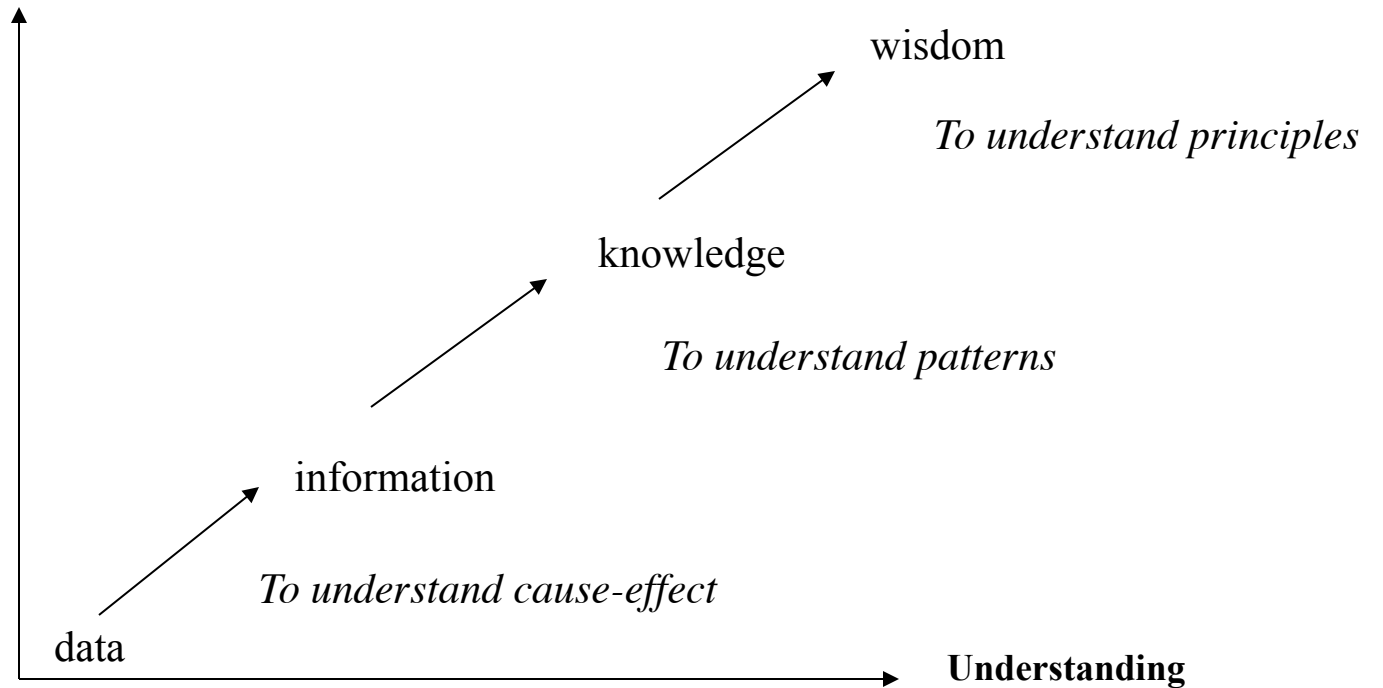
What's a Good Question?

- Is open-ended, rather than close-ended
- Challenges assumptions – even one's own
- Asks for illustrations
- When asking "why," applies it to future plans as much as to past actions
- Keeps the focus on the speaker, not on the questioner
- Doesn't place the speaker on the defensive, doesn't interrogate
- Doesn't presume that the questioner already knows the answer
- Is based on human curiosity or knowledge gathering

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Deeper Questions

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Relationships

wisdom

To understand principles

knowledge

To understand patterns

information

To understand cause-effect

data

Understanding

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Clarifying Assumptions

- ## An assumption:

  - Any belief, idea, hunch, or thought you have about a subject. Our assumptions tend to guide our behavior

- ## Why clarify them:

  - We get into trouble when we start believing that our assumptions and inferences are fact. Since we all have different assumptions about a subject, it's important to clarify and challenge them before we begin to work together.

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Reflective Exercise

Here are some possible questions to ask of your 'client'?

- Who thinks it's a problem?
- Who might have another point of view?
- What difference would it make if it were solved?
- Would this be a problem anywhere else?
- What resources or information do you need to solve it?
- What's the worst outcome? Are there any contradictions?
- What one thing could you do to make the problem different? Are any patterns emerging?
- What's prevented you from solving the problem before?

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Critical Moment Approach

- What happened (story of the moment) and how is that significant to you?

- What created the largest impact – either positive or negative?

- What issues does this story raise?

- Are there any contradictions or paradoxes?

- What questions do you hear? What are you trying to figure out?

Source:
Joy Amulya, University of Colorado

The Seven Hats Exercise

Gray: You tend to point out any omitted details or facts. You like to ask about the protagonist's assumptions.

Yellow: You like to ask about the benefits of the initiative and what difference it will make if it succeeds.

Black: You point out the cautions, contradictions, and constraints and ask about the things that can prevent the initiative from succeeding.

Green: You point out the ways that any cautions, contradictions, or constraints can be overcome.

Orange: You like to propose alternative solutions. You may bring out some wild ideas or look for emerging patterns.

Blue: You tend to focus on next steps or emerging principles or ask if the protagonist is ready to implement.

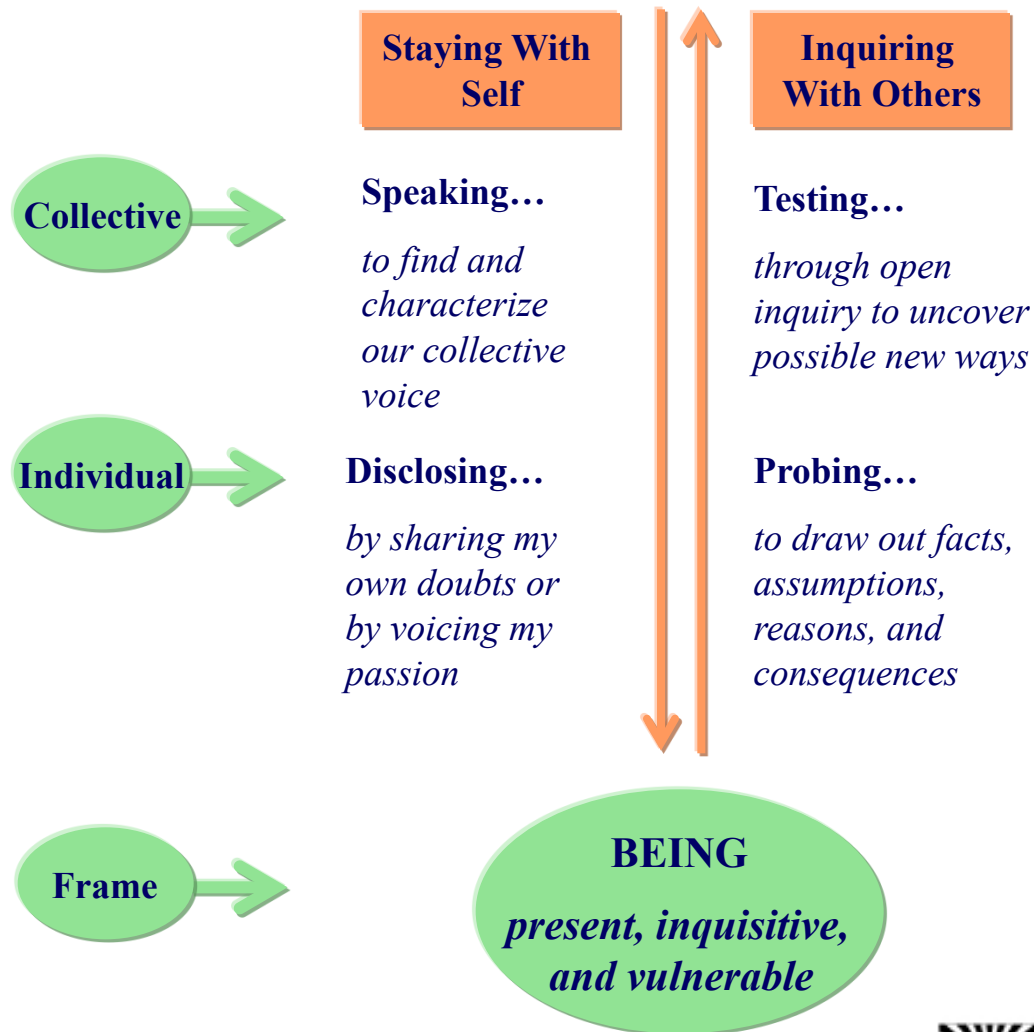**Red:** You like to ask about any gut feelings toward the plan.

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Why Should You Consider Reflecting More With Others

- Are you happy with your own participation in the team?
- Are you happy with others' contribution to the team?
- Are you taking advantage of all that your teammates have to offer?
- Do you find that you are fully capable of improving the team?
- Are you happy with what you are learning from the experience?
- Is the experience serving to enhance your leadership skills?
- Are you happy with your intervention with other stakeholders?

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The Five Skills Of Reflective Practice

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Collective

Individual

Frame

Staying With Self

Inquiring With Others

Speaking…

to find and characterize our collective voice

Testing…

through open inquiry to uncover possible new ways

Disclosing…

by sharing my own doubts or by voicing my passion

Probing…

to draw out facts, assumptions, reasons, and consequences

BEING

present, inquisitive, and vulnerable

Source: Joe Raelin, Northeastern University

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The Skills in More Detail

BEING

Creates a climate for reflection in the group. It asks that we experience or describe situations, even our own involvement in them, without imputing meaning.

SPEAKING

Calls for speaking with a collective voice to find collective meaning in the group. It attempts to characterize the state of the group at a given time.

DISCLOSING

Asks that members find and speak with their own voice in order to disclose their own doubts and assumptions as well as voice their impatience and passion.

TESTING

Makes an open-ended query to the group to attempt to uncover new ways of thinking and behaving. It asks the group to consider its own process, including its norms, roles, and past actions.

PROBING

Inquires directly with a group member to understand the facts, reasons, assumptions, inferences, and possible consequences of a given suggestion or action.

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Team Reflective Practice Exercise

1. Take some private moments to think of an issue that you believe is affecting the team's performance.
2. When ready, have one member describe what he or she has observed.
3. Explain what you see as the possible impact on the team.
4. Ask other team members to react to what you have said (the inquiry phase).
5. Ask a member to clarify and summarize what the team has heard.
6. Proceed to suggest ways to deal with the issue, if the team decides that it is a problem worth tackling.

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Team Involvement Activities

1. One or more members can be charged with keeping a diary of events and experiences for later examination.

2. Members can be invited to visit others in their work settings to observe them as they experiment with new behaviors and practices. Later during a team meeting, feedback can be given to those who were observed.

3. Questionnaires and other assessments can be introduced from time to time to evaluate the group's or particular individuals' styles, experiences, progress.

4. Members can be encouraged to interview each other and bring results to the entire group.

5. The facilitator can survey members of the group and develop a descriptive model of team behavior to be shared with the entire group.

6. Members with a creative flair can be asked to make drawings or other expressive works to tap both conscious and unconscious aspects of experience.

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