



CREATIVITY

in



Guidelines and tools for applying creativity in adult education and training

Piret Jeedas

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Training materials created during Latvian, Estonian and Finnish adult educators' cooperation project "Let's Find and Use Your Creativity".



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CONTENT

INSTEAD OF INTRODUCTION THREE THOUGHTS FROM ADULT EDUCATOR	4
WHERE ARE YOU, CREATIVITY?	8
CREATIVITY IN A LEARNING GROUP	11
SOME SIMPLE WAYS TO FIND YOUR CREATIVITY	14
MY PERSONAL STORY	16
METHODS AND PRINCIPLES TO SUPPORT CREATIVITY IN A GROUP	17
DIVERGENT PHASE OF CREATION PROCESS	19
APPRECIATIVE CONVERSATION	23
WALKING YOUR TALK	25
TAKE ANOTHER ANGEL	26
EMERGENT PHASE IN CREATION PROCESS	27
OPEN SPACE	27
WORLD CAFÉ	31
LEARNING JOURNEY	33
IDEA HUNT	34
CONVERGENT PHASE IN CREATION PROCESS	36
METHOD 123	36
PRO-ACTION CAFÉ	37
PICNIC OF CELEBRITIES	39
INSTEAD OF SUMMARY A PERSONAL STORY.....	41
References.....	44
Other resources	44
About the Author.....	45
About the NGO Partnerlus.....	46

INSTEAD OF INTRODUCTION THREE THOUGHTS FROM ADULT EDUCATOR

I have been active in the field of adult education for more than ten years. I believe it to be an interesting area: it offers number of challenges, opportunities to grow and constantly invites to try something new. As a trainer you need to be ready for the unexpected, open to solve any emerging problems during the training. As well for acceptance, that sometimes the methods being used do not support achieving learning goals. But we have been given a tremendous ability to reflect on our experiences and therefore try again next time.

As a practitioner I have always enjoyed the creative potential of being an adult educator. I love experimenting with different methods, create connections between different fields and question the current ways of understanding and doing. I am grateful for these moments, when you notice the burst of creativity in a learning group. These moments make me sincerely believe, that as trainers we have a big responsibility in creating an empowering learning environment. We have to believe that each and every one of us in nature is creative, though quite often the learners themselves may not be aware of that. During writing this booklet I discovered that as adult educators we are actually **practitioners of creativity** - someone, who is constantly discovering and using his/her creativity.

The following thoughts are inspired by my previous experiences and were firstly expressed during Tool Fair 2012¹ – a learning space for trainers in youth field². But I believe that these ideas are worthy spreading around. Tool Fair is also one example of creating a learning space using very simple tools. I will share more on that at the end of the booklet.

Current booklet aims to open creativity in adult learning, share some simple ways to find new ideas and offers some methods to support the emergence of creativity in a group. Ivika Nõgel and Astrid Org, the participants of current project, are sharing few personal

¹ http://issuu.com/mitteformaalne/docs/ajakiri_ilu_2012_finaal/1

² <http://www.mitteformaalne.ee/meetodimess-2012.html>

insights regarding creativity in their work. Some of the methods being introduced are widely used in Art of Hosting network, f.e. open space, world café, pro-action café etc.

As a note, from this booklet you will not find methods that draw attention to drawing, using clay, doodling etc. Working with hands is just one way for expressing creativity. It is much more challenging to create a learning space that supports the emergence of creativity natural to every human being simply working together, having meaningful conversations and harvesting collective wisdom.

My first thought – CREATING NEW

As a trainer I have always considered important to create something new. There are different ways to do that, incl creating new and unique training programs, improve current methods or discover new ones. My need to create something or renew my working methods might be influenced by personal boredom – it just doesn't excite me to walk the same path again and again. In creation process itself I experience learning about myself as a human being. I realize that old ways of working are not sufficient anymore. Working with peers always helps to have something new to be used in training.

I love to notice, look around and gather new insights from different fields of practice and then find a way to use them as a trainer. Tom Kelly, the leader of think – tank IDEO has once said that new ideas come from watching, smelling and listening. As simple as that. But it also takes a practice and mindfulness in developing your abilities to do that. Nature has been my best teacher in helping me to become better in noticing.

My wish for you now is - whenever you prepare a new training course ask yourself some questions: what if...? What haven't I done before? What if I would try this... next time?

My second thought – UNLEARNING

In order for something new to be born, we first need to create space for it. Sometimes it is needed to put aside everything you know. But how one forgets what he/she already knows? There are number of ways to support unlearning. For example, pick up something you have never done before. I worked as a waitress in a small café last summer. I really wanted to know what does it mean to serve the clients? Am I able to communicate freely? Make it a memorable experience? Today I feel that I succeeded and there were number of people who came back.

Another way is to change some of the tools. I am not really a musical person. Meaning, I cannot sing (although I love it), or read notes. But I still find lots of joy in making music. And sometimes I experiment with groups of people making some sound together. I am not good at writing poetry, but from time to time I try to catch the essence of the training in the format of poetry.

Therefore, there are simple ways to forget what you now, in other words – unlearn. Make small little changes in your current way of working, f.e. engage learners, cooperate with those hard to handle, add graphic facilitation tools to your practice, take the learning group to an unexpected places etc.

My wish for you now is - whenever you prepare you next training, do something that you have never done before. Take up something that asks you to challenge yourself.

Third thought - I LOVE CHANGES

It seems somehow self-evident that as supporters of learning and growth we just love changes. With such an enthusiasm we ask learners to analyse themselves, change

something by asking number of questions: what are your next three steps..., if there was one thing to change, what could it be...etc. And yet we all know that when we return to everyday routine, we tend to forget the new quickly.

A friend of mine recently asked me: “Piret, why are you afraid of changes?” I was really taken by this question and started to wonder, is it true that someone who supports learning, willing to take up new things, including changing the world, is afraid of changes? And I must admit that indeed there is this thin line between going along with changes and returning back to old ways of doing. So thanks to that question I have started to think more about my own relationship to change. And I have realized one thing that it is really difficult to support somebody else’s change processes without going through them myself. I need to host my own change as deeply as possible in order to support others. As soon I discover that change is about my own passion or purpose, I find it easier to accept everything that comes along with change.

Therefore I wish that you take a moment and ask yourself: what is my relationship to change? What supports me to host meaningful change processes in my life?

A great deal of creativity into your life,

Piret Jeedas

**Adult educator, host of participatory processes, space creator for meaningful learning,
author of the booklet**

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WHERE ARE YOU, CREATIVITY?

When was the last time you noticed how creativity unfolds in a learner? The birth of creativity in a learning group? Or how the entire group started to selforganise and therefore untackle all of one's creativity? Sometimes we see aspects in learners that even learners themselves are not even aware of.

Creativity is in our nature, it is who we actually are as human beings. **Creativity is the ability to see new associations and possibilities in current situations, to think and act differently.** Based on our current situation we are able to find new and useful solutions to complex problems. Creativity is both an act, creating something new. But it is also a result, a product, new idea, a piece of art. (Kolk 2005).

Frans Johansson (2008) claims that the explosion of **everything new arises from the meeting point of different fields.** In other words, changes and discoveries with an impact are born not so much in one particular field, but on the crossroad of different disciplines. (Johansson 2008). **Diverse learning groups, where different people meet, are therefore potential crossroads for creativity burst.** But as Johansson (2008) claims, we use this potentiality not so often: it is more likely that we get stuck in the same discipline or field, ethnic or cultural group. What if, as adult educators we consciously take the most out of the crossroads?

Creativity is the accidental combination of concepts. In reality it is quite difficult to realize where new concept or an idea comes from, as it is quite often accidental, coming from nowhere and almost a matter of pure luck, argues Johansson (2008). In a learning group, one can experience the same: working with other learners on a question that matters can totally grasp you. At the end nobody from the group can ever think of, whose idea was it or where did it come from. It is essential to develop the capacity to be totally opened – body, mind, soul – in order fully grasp the unexpected idea.

As an adult educator we can create a diverse, inspiring and open learning environment, where our creativity can expand beyond wildest imagination. But it also means that as a trainer one is curious as well and willing to experiment. There are number of methods to support learning, but it is more important to develop new ones.

In order to find new solutions we can develop the capacity to do it systematically and it needs to be practiced (Maripuu 2013). Therefore, in order to expand one's creativity, we need to be the **practioner of creativity**. Recent research in Harvard reveals (Tutton 2009) that there five capacities describing innovative people. Well enough, they might as well describe the practitioner of creativity:

Associating: *The ability to connect seemingly unrelated questions, problems or ideas from different fields.*

Questioning: *Innovators constantly ask questions that challenge the common wisdom. They ask "why?", "why not?" and "what if?"*

Observing: *Discovery-driven executives scrutinize common phenomena, particularly the behavior of potential customers.*

Experimenting: *Innovative peoples actively try out new ideas by creating prototypes and launching pilots.*

Networking: *innovators go out of their way to meet people with different ideas and perspectives.*

What if as trainers and practitioners of creativity we support the capacity building of these abilities? By just practicing. What tools can be used to help the learners to build their capacity of innovation?

WORDS of WISDOM

As long as you do everything with joy and love, one finds creativity in everything.

Creativity is a state of mind: everything can be turned into piece of art. It depends on our personal attitude only.

Each and every one of us can practice creativity. It only takes discipline.

You find inspiration through action.

As soon as you step out from your comfort zone or take risks you find contact to your true creativity.

Be here and now in order to create something.

But aside your ego as it tells you quite often that you are going to fail.

Give up your perfectionism, even for a while, as you tend to become afraid of a failure in taking the first steps.

For creativity in you become more curious and put aside your fears.

The key to creativity:

- be in contact with your inner child (make mistakes, be curious);
- be ready to learn;
- dare to forget.

Don't turn your life into one-dimensional identity. Life is actually multi-faceted. Become curious of different disciplines.

Don't turn your life into dead ritual. Let there be moments, that cannot be explained and mysteries that remain unresolved. May there be actions that people consider you crazy for. A person who is 100% sane is actually dead.

Bring crazy things into your life, as it also brings new meaning.

Liina Kolk, presentation at Liivakella Seminar

CREATIVITY IN A LEARNING GROUP

For an idea or innovation to be meaningful and lasting, it needed to arise from the unique conditions of people and place. People only support what they create. (Wheatley & Frieze 2011)

It takes people and space to meet for a meaningful idea to be born. As adult educators it is our task to create a space and relationship between people so that ideas can fly around freely. It is about creating a learning environment where we can freely and openly speak to each other. Only through that space of openness we can solve even most challenging problems. We can also guide the creativity process in a meaningful way.

There are number of processes learners might experience in creation process that we need to take into account:

- *a moment of anxiety: current task is hard to solve or there is a lack of will to do it in a traditional way;*
- *the need to find internal motivation to solve the problem;*
- *readiness to map out the current information;*
- *spontaneous search for the new;*
- *experiencing dead end or not knowing;*
- *taking time to digest;*
- *finding the right solution;*
- *creative action for common purpose (Kolk 2005).*

Understanding these processes gives opportunity for an educator to find tools to support learners, f.e. ways to map current information (mind-map), support dealing with anxiety (self-analysis, moment of silence, sharing in a circle etc).

The creativity process can also be divided into three phases: ***divergence, emergence, convergence***. Each of these phases is different and it is important for a trainer to know where we are in the process and what is needed in each phase.

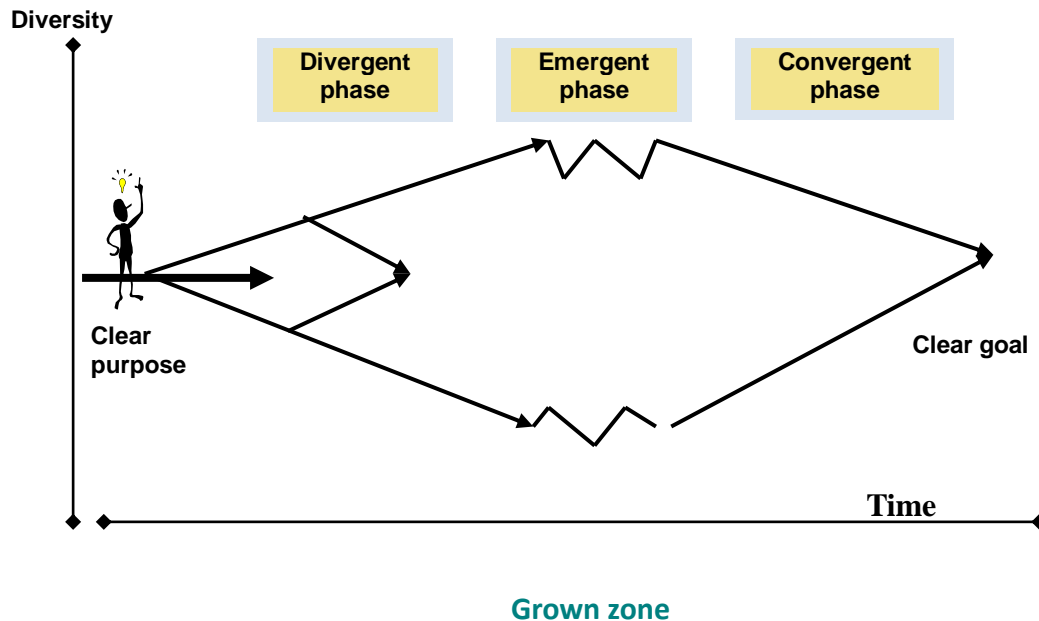


Figure 1: three phases of creativity

Divergence is about becoming present, tuning into, creating relationship and safe learning environment. It is a phase of seeking common purpose: a clear shared purpose gives the collective direction. It is important to ask the right questions, understand the essence of the problem in order to understand shared purpose. If you close the divergent phase too soon, the level of newness or innovation will be less.

During this phase number of ice-breakers or group-building exercises are encouraged. Also telling inspirational stories, watching video-films, carrying out an experiment in order to challenge oneself.

It is also a phase of divergent thinking that typically generates alternatives, has free-for-all open discussion, gathers diverse points of view and unpacks the problem. It might also bring

along the space of chaos braking current routines or way of understanding. In a learning group chaos could be born out of not knowing, the misunderstanding of the purpose of the training or its need.

Between the divergent and convergent phase, is fondly known as the 'groan zone' or emergent phase. It is the phase where different ideas and needs are integrated. It may require us to stretch our own understanding to hold and include other points of view. We call it the groan zone because it may feel messy, an uncomfortable stretch, but it is also the phase where the new solution emerges.

A safe space for experiencing chaos is needed and a time for self reflection, walking in the nature, writing into a notebook, sharing your feelings-ideas in a group etc. As learners are engaged with solving tough problems it is a room for collective wisdom to arise. F.e. in open space session one might find passionate or even conflictiing conversations, but slowly you notice self-organising and taking responsibility.

The convergent phase is goal-oriented and focused, linear, structured and usually subject to time constraints. It is focused on getting results and may require quick decisions. It means evaluating alternatives, summarising key points, sorting ideas into categories and arriving at general conclusions. It is important to give time for reflection, put down next steps, create action plans.

In conclusion, every learning processes carries these three phases. As trainers we can use different methods to support learning in each phase. In current booklet number of methods are descirebd based on these phases.

SOME SIMPLE WAYS TO FIND YOUR CREATIVITY

Sometimes we might get the feeling that tuning into your creativity takes time, resources and lots of energy. David Lynch has said that good ideas are actually flying around in the air. Our task is to catch them, only. We don't have to drive for miles to find inspiration, read number of books or take part in number of international training events (though they may be useful as well). In every moment we can actually be faced with something new.

As an adult educator you can use simple ways to develop one's creativity as well support the learners. The following suggestions can be used in combination with other methods in this booklet.

In search for new ideas (Sticky Wisdom 2002)

- *In every week take a different means of transport to work. Notice people around you and speak to them.*
- *Read newspaper, listen to radiostation or watch TV-station that you normally don't.*
- *Once a month have a lunch with somebody from different field of work. Ask them to share what are they currently working on. Ask feedback for your project.*
- *Once a week go out from your ordinary working environment.*
- *Ask your family members to solve some of your current challenges.*
- *Take time to solve some of your problems. Find three alternatives before you pick one.*
- *Organize a fresh-up-day for your team. Go to places you usually wouldn't go. Do something together you normally would not do.*
- *Take a walk in the park. Take time to go with the flow.*
- *Follow music or book charts.*
- *Once a year write a new job description.*

Turn things around (Johansson 2008)

1. Think about current situation, product or service. Write down most self-evident words or sentences related to this situation, product or service.

f.e. I am organizing training events and there is a need to arrange accommodation for everybody. *I write down: people sleep in beds, trainer*

works in a working space.

2. Ask your colleague to turn these words around.

F.e. people sleep under the tree, trainer works in a kitchen etc.

3. When your colleague has written down the ideas, look at them together and explore how you can use these results in your work.

Making connections where there seems there isn't any (Johansson 2005)

- Buy a few magazines that you usually do not read. Choose a random page and try to find association with the text and your current problem. If you do not find any, choose the next page. Do not stop before you find the association.
- If you are writing a book on training methods, look into cook-books for inspiration.

Everyday practice (Maripuu 2013)

- While solving everyday situations, ask yourself: how can I solve it in a different way?"

Please take some time, sit comfortably, look out of the window and write down ten recommendations to burst your creativity as a trainer.

10 ways to burst MY creativity as a trainer

MY PERSONAL STORY – creativity in my work as a trainer

Ivika Nõgel, adult educator, NGO Partnerlus

I am one of those trainers who believes that creativity is the corner stone of any learning process. Without creativity we only follow the guidelines and remember the facts. But in a current world there is not much to do with the given answers – so much is dependant on the situation. Therefore learning today means flexibility in applying what you have learned, combining the new with the old, experimenting with new approaches and making adjustments when it is needed.

My role as a trainer is to support the unfolding of creativity in learners and the capacity to select what is important from the information field. I am not the only source of wisdom. On the contrary, great deal of valuable thoughts are actually coming from learners.

There are number of ways to create creative learning environment. I start from the physical place – creating airy and comfortable room, where we all can look at each other. Openness is supported by braking boundaries. I love sitting in a circle.

I help to tune the learners into learning from each other mode by being an equal participant in the group. I sit in a circle with others following the same rules as learners.

To break down the boundaries or anxiety in the group I use short activities or games. As adults we play as long as we realize what is the point of “playing”. I have noticed that energy is being arisen during activites where people are surprised or can laugh. Sometimes I use storytelling. Of course, I am not the only creator of methods: I also use well-known methods like open space, world café, circle, appreciative inquiry etc.

The potentiality for learning is born while seeking for collective wisdom. Therefore I use exercises in dyads or bigger groups. Sometimes it feels that active thinking process can be even more tireing than just listening to the lecture. But at the same time the active thinking processes makes learners more content with the training.

What about drawing, working with hands, making some music? Are these activities also part of creative training? **Situation where learners spontaneously start expressing their ideas with visual symbols, music or body movement, is a perfect sign that a really inspireing and creative learning space is being born and learners are engaged with all of their senses.**

METHODS AND PRINCIPLES TO SUPPORT CREATIVITY IN A GROUP

My personal story – creativity in my work as a trainer

Adult trainer needs creativity, when she/he meets with the learners. You might have prepared yourself well, followed the programme, and printed the materials. Still, all preparation may seem useless, when you meet with the learning group. Instead of 20 participants, there is only 5. The working space is not what you expected. There are questions in the air that reflect some tension or conflict in the group. What you know for sure – you need to take a creative approach. Creative trainer meets the needs of the learners and current situation. She/he connects the needs and current situation with the purpose of the training and uses prepared materials if needed. Creative trainer creates a situation, where the learner becomes the creator – making connections, noticing new angles, taking actions never taken before. **Creative methods are a key to unlock the wisdom of the learner and come closer to internal source of power.**

Astrid Org, adult educator, NGO Partnerlus

In addition to prepared materials different methods are part of our training toolbox. From this booklet you can find methods that can be used with large groups and support meaningful conversations among learners. There are number of ways to modify the methods, but through touching their true essence we can unfold their potential to support creativity in a group.

Before using any of these methods it is relevant to remind ourselves of some of the basic principles:

- *before using any methods look at the need and purpose of the training.*
- *consider the size of the group. There are methods that can be used with smaller groups (up to 20) and there are methods that can support engaging even more than 1000 people (f.e. open space). Look also ways to combine them.*
- *these methods support the equal partnership between everybody in the group. F.e. in the circle everybody is equal despite of background, age, status or experience.*
- *take time to prepare, including setting the physical place. Make sure there is enough space to move around.*

- there might be some chaos during using these methods. As a trainer be ready to face uncertainty and support people in chaos.
- make sure to harvest the learning while using these methods. During collective search for meaning or new understanding many new insights or ideas may be born.

As a trainer you need to believe in the potential use of these methods in order to support creativity and engagement.

In case of a bigger group, cooperate with colleagues. Co-create the learning space together with learners.

Be willing to let go of control and let the participants take initiative and responsibility for learning.

Before using any of these methods, explore the purpose...

new solutions, sharing responsibility, new motivation, learning, well-being of the group, problem solving, new awareness, collecting feedback, building responsibility, sharing ideas, solving conflicts, creating meaning, personal growth

DIVERGENT PHASE OF CREATION PROCESS

Arrival, tuning into, group-building

The following methods could be used in the divergent phase of creation process and therefore support arrival of the learners, tuning into each other, as well purpose of the training, getting to know each other, feeling of the group and opening up to creativity.

THE CIRCLE³ - oldest way of being together

The circle, or council, is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversation for thousands of years. The circle has served as the foundation for many cultures.

What transforms a meeting into a circle is the willingness of people to shift from informal socializing or opinionated discussion into a receptive attitude of thoughtful speaking and deep listening and to embody and practice the structures outlined here.



The circle is ready (Anneli Ohvril)

The components of the circle

Intention

- Welcome Start-point
- Centre and Check-in/Greeting
- Agreements
- Three Principles and Three Practices
- Guardian of process
- Check-out and Farewell

Space: chairs in circle

Materials: paper, talking piece, bells, if needed principles on the wall.

Time: depend on the size of the group, up to 1 h

³ Reference: *Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversation that Matter, Workbook, ALIA 2011*

INTENTION

Intention shapes the circle and determines who will come, how long the circle will meet, and what kind of outcomes are to be expected. The caller of the circle spends time articulating intention and invitation.

WELCOME OR START-POINT

Once people have gathered, it is helpful for the host, or a volunteer participant, to begin the circle with a gesture that shifts people's attention from social space to council space. This gesture of welcome may be a moment of silence, reading a poem, or listening to a song - whatever invites centering.

ESTABLISHING THE CENTER

The centre of a circle is like the hub of a wheel: all energies pass through it, and it holds the rim together. To help people remember how the hub helps the group, the centre of a circle usually holds objects that represent the intention of the circle. Any symbol that fits this purpose or adds beauty will serve: flowers, a bowl or basket, a candle.

CHECK-IN/GREETING

Check-in helps people into a frame of mind for council and reminds everyone of their commitment to the expressed intention. It insures that people are truly present. Verbal sharing, especially a brief story, weaves the interpersonal net.

Check-in usually starts with a volunteer and proceeds around the circle. If an individual is not ready to speak, the turn is passed and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken. Sometimes people place individual objects in the centre as a way of signifying their presence and relationship to the intention.

SETTING CIRCLE AGREEMENTS:

The use of agreements allows all members to have a free and profound exchange, to respect a diversity of views, and to share responsibility for the well-being and direction of the group. Agreements often used include:

- We will hold stories or personal material in confidentiality.
- We listen to each other with compassion and curiosity.
- We ask for what we need and offer what we can.
- We agree to employ a group guardian to watch our need, timing, and energy. We agree to pause at a signal, and to call for that signal when we feel the need to pause.

THREE PRINCIPLES:

The circle is an all leader group.

1. **Leadership rotates** among all circle members.
2. **Responsibility is shared** for the quality of experience.
3. **Reliance is on wholeness**, rather than on any personal agenda.

THREE PRACTICES

1. To speak with intention: noting what has relevance to the conversation in the moment.
2. To listen with attention: respectful of the learning process for all members of the group.
3. To tend the well-being of the circle: remaining aware of the impact of our contributions.

GUARDIAN

The single most important tool for aiding self-governance and bringing the circle back to intention is the role of the guardian. To provide a guardian, one circle member at a time volunteers to watch and safeguard group energy and observe the circle's process.

The guardian usually employs a gentle noise-maker, such as a chime, bell, or rattle, that signals everyone to stop action, take a breath, rest in a space of silence. Then the guardian makes this signal again and speaks to why he/she called the pause. Any member may call for a pause.

CHECKOUT AND FAREWELL

At the close of a circle meeting, it is important to allow a few minutes for each person to comment on what they learned, or what stays in their heart and mind as they leave. Closing the circle by checking out provides a formal end to the meeting, a chance for members to reflect on what has transpired, and to pick up objects if they have placed something in the center. As people shift from council space to social space or private time, they release each other from the intensity of attention being in circle requires. Often after check-out, the host, guardian, or a volunteer will offer a few inspirational words of farewell, or signal a few seconds of silence before the circle is released.

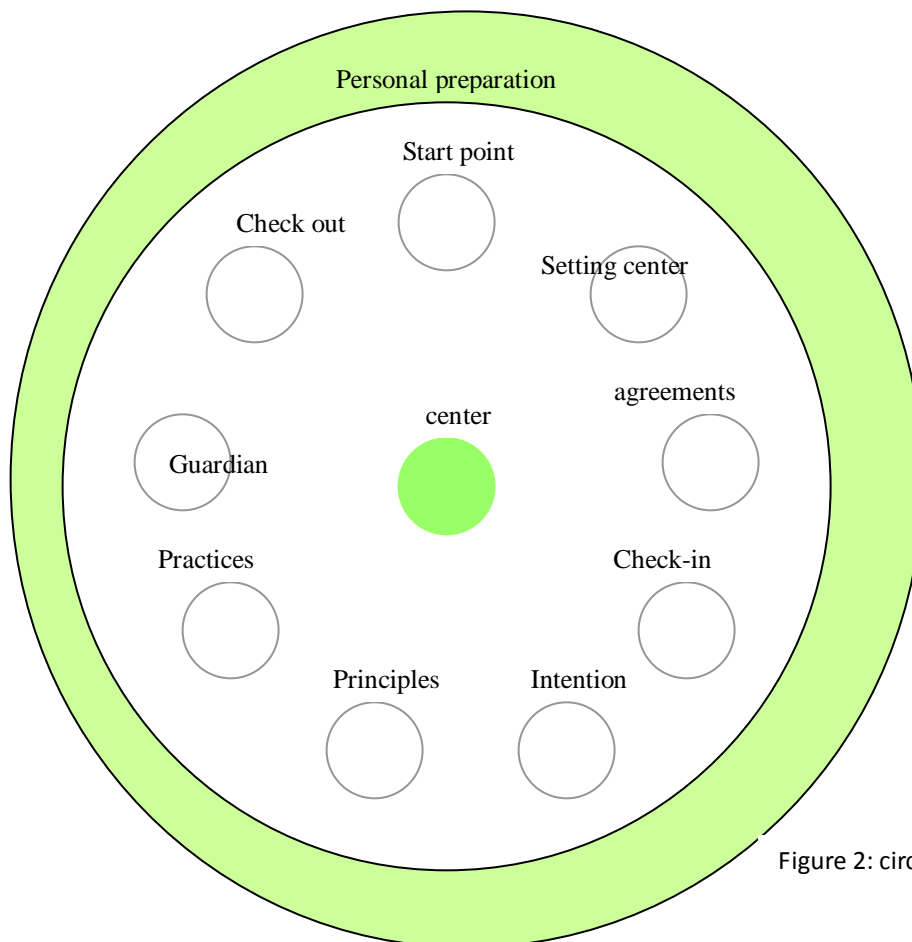


Figure 2: circle, Peer Spirit

Resource: <http://www.peerspirit.com>

APPRECIATIVE CONVERSATION - in every community something works

Conversation is one of the simplest forms of expression among human beings. Still, there is a distinct difference between conversation and a conversation. Conversation comes from latin: *con* means „together“ and *versare* „turn around“. Therefore a conversation is about turning things around.



Everything we do as human beings happens in a conversation. Conversation means taking action. Conversations are the source for change. Through conversations we create space for something to shift and getting answers to our questions.

Appreciative conversation means that we concentrate on what is working. In order to create positive change for future, rather look on what is working. By appreciating we notice the potentiality of human beings.

Assumptions

- *In every community something works.*
- *What we focus on becomes our reality.*
- *Reality is created in the moment—there is more than one reality.*
- *The act of asking questions influences the community in some way.*
- *People have more confidence and comfort to journey into the future when they carry forward parts of the past.*
- *If we carry forward parts of the past, they should be what is best.*
- *It is important to value differences.*
- *The language we use creates our reality.*

Space: circle

Materials: paper, pens, flip chart

Time: depends on the size of the group, 1-2 h

Preparation

Set the context for the conversation and what do you want to focus during the conversation, f.e. future of the organization, creativity in a team, appreciative leadership etc.

Then create the questions. Brown ja Isaacs (2005) note that **good questions** are

- simple and clear,
- thought-provoking,
- generates energy,
- focuses inquiry,
- surfaces assumptions,
- opens new possibilities.

You can create a handout sheet for everybody or use flipchart paper for questions. Example of a conversation questions: topic - creativity as a trainer.

- *Please share a story from you practice, where have you really experienced the creativity in a learning group? Where and when did it happen, who were involved, what was your role?*
- *Without being modest, what do you really appreciate in yourself, in your work? What are your strengths and good qualities you bring to your practice?*
- *As you take a look into your future, how do you see yourself as a trainer in 5 years? What are doing then? How do you support opening up the creativity in a group?*

Flow

Give enough time and space for the conversation to happen and encourage participants to make notes.

After conversation it is important to reflect the essence of the conversation. There can be time for mirroring: what did I notice? What was unclear? What could be your focus? Conversation could be hosted in dyads or group of three.

To harvest the key elements of the conversation as a whole group a world café method could be used to explore the conditions that made supporting creativity possible. Next step would be creating a model based on these conditions. It can be challenging as coming to one common model can be quite time consuming.

Resource: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>

WALKING YOUR TALK – inspiration and clarity by just walking

Walking your talk is a simple and powerful way to build connections between people, get to know each other and search for clarity in life. It is highly recommended to be in the nature and give enough time.

Preparation

Learners are encouraged to think about the challenges or problematic situation in their life or work and write them down in the notebook. Questions should be personal and relevant for the learner.

Space: park, forest

Materials: questions on paper, pen, paper notebook

Time: depending on the size of the group, 1-2 h

Flow

Each learner finds a partner from the group for a walk. First each of the partners introduces their situation, problem or dilemma. While just talking possible perspectives could arise.

The conversation could get deeper by introducing some questions on the way. Envelopes with questions could be hanging on buildings or trees. When the couple arrives to the envelope a question is drawn, read out and while walking to the next point the answers are sought. Some examples:

- *What do you really want?*
- *What is important to you today?*
- *Are you really happy?*
- *What are you creating in your life, in the world?*
- *How shall I move forward?*
- *What is the next simple step?*
- *What opportunities do I still have?*
- *What else?*
- *What is in my heart?*
- *What wants to express?*
- *What wants to be born?*
- *What are you willing to change?*
- *What stops you from moving forward?*
- *What does it really mean?*
- *How do I overcome my fears?*
- *What would satisfy me?*
- *Who am I?*
- *How do I live my heart wide open?*
- *What am I really afraid of?*
- *What am I willing to give up?*
- *How to listen?*
- *What do you need to let go of?*
- *What am I really saying?*

After the walk learners are encouraged to make notes regarding what emerged during the walk, any

feelings, emotions, thoughts etc. If the group is ready people can share their experience in a bigger group.

TAKE ANOTHER ANGEL – simple way to wake up your creativity

As a trainer you can warm people up to use more of their creativity in a group.

Preparation

Enough paper for each participant and a pen.

In action

Each learner gets three pieces of paper, preferably different colour.

Ask them to write:

- first paper: an object (what it is?). F.e. a table.
- second paper: a function (what can be done with that?). Doesn't have to be connected with the first object. F.e. painting.
- third piece of paper: characteristics of the object (how does it look like, smells etc?). Doesn't have to be connected with the first object. F.e. sweet.

*Space: in the circle,
later in small groups or
pairs*

*Materials: pieces of
paper for each
participant, pens, flip-
chart paper*

Time: 1 h

Create three piles of paper of each category or colour. Ask people to form dyads and pick a piece of paper from each pile. Combining the words ask participants to come up with 5-10 new ideas: it could be new method, idea, service or product.

Instead of dyads smaller groups can be formed. Ask people to introduce their ideas to a bigger group.

Resource: www.maripuu.eu

EMERGENT PHASE IN CREATION PROCESS

Inquiring deeper, questioning, problem solving, creating new solutions

The following methods could be used in the emergent phase of creation process to explore themes/questions/challenges that matter and more deeply. It is a phase for creative problem solving and new solutions.

OPEN SPACE⁴ – everybody takes the responsibility

The goal of an Open Space Technology meeting is to create time and space for people to engage deeply and creatively around issues of concern to them. The agenda is set by people with the power and desire to see it through. Typically, Open Space meetings result in transformative experiences for the individuals and groups involved. It is a simple and powerful way to catalyze effective working conversations and to truly invite organisations to thrive in times of swirling change.

Preparation

You need **one main room** big enough for all the participants to be seated in a circle freely. The recommended seating arrangement is a circle: this symbolizes togetherness and equality among the participants. In case of a larger group you may place the seats in two or three circling rows (see Figure 3). A4 sheets and writing supplies will be placed in the center of the circle. Users of the Open Space technique have developed a custom to place various meaningful things in the center (stones, flowers, etc.).



Figure 3: Open Space circle

One wall should be free to serve as an information board where people can attach notes with their questions. It is important to guarantee easy access to the wall. The means for attachment are either duct tape or adhesive clay.

⁴ *Open Space – described in english during Minu Eesti Möttetalgud 2009*

In addition to the main room you need places for **conversation circles**. In case of a larger room you can set up 2–3 (or more) conversation circles inside the room: so the groups can feel the growing flow of power. Also hallways, staircases, outdoors, auxiliary rooms can serve as rooms for conversation circles. We recommend tagging the conversation circle rooms beforehand (e.g. with letters A-B-C-D-E-F-G, also see the matrix of time and room below). The conversation circle rooms will have papers (paperboard sheets) and writing supplies (markers).

The code of conduct in the Open Space is based on four principles and one law, which will be written on paper:

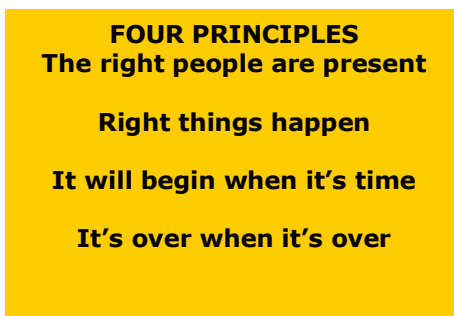


Figure 4: principles of open space



Figure 5: the law

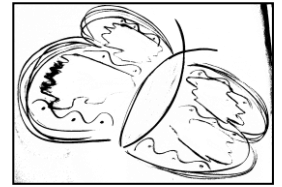
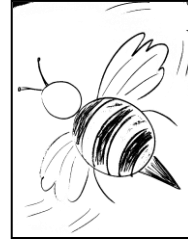
The principles may be written on a single paper or separate sheets. The law may be illustrated with footprints. Pursuant to the law of two feet the persons who find themselves in a situation where they don't learn or say anything use their two feet and move to a more useful place.

You also need additional signs:

- Be ready for surprises
- Passion and responsibility
- Bee
- Butterfly

**BE READY FOR
SURPRISES**

**PASSION AND
RESPONSIBILITY**



Figures 6,7,8,9: principles of open space

The Open Space is always full of surprises (Figure 6): You never know what results people will reach or what kind of conversation circles take place. The birth of productive thoughts is only possible thanks to the passion and dedication of people (Figure 7).

During conversation circles one may fulfill different roles as a bee (Figure 8) or a butterfly (Figure 9). The first moves from one discussion to another, occasionally sharing their thoughts and taking something along. Butterflies may just sit and ponder alone for a while, but a while later a spontaneous conversation circle has evolved around them.

Depending on the size of a group the same sign may be repeated. Posters have to be high enough and clearly visible. The signs are helpful for the facilitators, reminding them of which topics to discuss.

In every conversation corner there could be the form of a report:

NAME
CONVENER
PARTICIPANTS
FLOW OF CONVERSATION
SUMMARY, NEXT STEPS

Flow

The group convenes in a circle and is welcomed by the caller. The facilitator provides an overview of the process and explains how it works. The facilitator invites people with issues of concern to come into the circle, write the issue on a piece of paper and announces it to the group. These people are "conveners." Each convener places their paper on the wall and chooses a time and a place to meet (see figure below). This process continues until there are no more agenda items.

The group then breaks up and heads to the agenda wall, by now covered with a variety of sessions. Participants take note of the time and place for sessions they want to be involved in. Conversation circle convene for the rest of the meeting. Recorders (determined by each group) capture the important points and post the reports on the news wall. All of these reports will be harvested in some way and returned to the larger group.

Following a closing or a break, the group might move into 'convergence', a process that takes the issues that have been discussed and attaches action plans to them to "get them out of the room."

The group then finishes the meeting with a closing circle where people are invited to share comments, insights and commitments arising from the process.

Timetable and time/place matrix on the wall (Figure 10)

The wall is part of the room where the conversation questions on paper will be attached. The wall should also have a time/space matrix enabling the participants to determine the time and place for the discussion of these questions swiftly and easily.

PLACE TIME	A	B	C	D	E	F
11.30-13.00	How to --- Aksel Haav	How...	How...	How...	How...	How...
13.00- 14.00	How to connect ...? Mai Makk	How...	How...	How...	How...	How...
14.00-14.30	Summaries					
14.30-15.00	Closing circle					

Figure 10: time and place plan

Resource: <http://www.openspaceworld.org/>, My Estonia Brainstroming Event, ALIA workbook

WORLD CAFÉ – bringing together different perspectives

The World Café is a method for creating a living network of collaborative dialogue around questions that matter in real life situations. It is a provocative metaphor...as we create our lives, our organizations, and our communities, we are, in effect, moving among ‘table conversations’ at the World Café⁵. It is build on assumptions that:



- *The knowledge and wisdom we need is present and accessible.*
- *Collective insight evolves from honouring unique contributions; connecting ideas; listening into the middle; noticing deeper themes and questions.*
- *The intelligence emerges as the system connects to itself in diverse and creative ways.*

World Café is a great way of fostering interaction and dialogue with both large and small groups. It is particularly effective in surfacing the collective wisdom of large groups of diverse people. The café format is very flexible and adapts to many different purposes—information sharing, relationship building, deep reflection exploration and action planning.

Space: tables with 4-5 chairs

Materials: papers, pens, markers, flip-chart paper

Time: 2-2,5 h

When planning a café, make sure to leave ample time for both moving through the rounds of questions (likely to take longer than you think!) and some type of whole-group harvest.

Preparation

Spacious room to set up the tables: have 4-5 chairs around the round table. Have enough space to move around. Create a hospitable space: have some background music playing as people arrive, offer some tea and coffee.

⁵ The World Café Resource Guide

Flow

Seat 4-5 people at café-style tables or in conversation clusters. Set up progressive rounds of conversation, usually of 20-30 minutes each—have some good questions! Introduce the principles of the world cafe:

- *focus on what matters,*
- *contribute your thinking and experiences,*
- *listen to understand,*
- *connect ideas,*
- *listen together for patterns, insights, deeper questions,*
- *play, doodle, draw!*

Ask one person to stay at the table as a “host” between conversation rounds and invite the other table members to move to other tables as ambassadors of ideas and insights. Ask the table host to share key insights, questions, and ideas briefly with new table members, then let folks move through the rounds of questions. After you’ve moved through the rounds, allow some time for a whole-group harvest of the conversations.

An example:

First round: what does creativity mean to me as a trainer?

Second round: what conditions help to unfold the creativity in a learning group?

Third round: what could a model for supporting creativity look like?

Based on the purpose of the cafe a number of ways to name them can be used – strategy cafe, future cafe etc. This method can be combined with other methods from this booklet.

Resource: <http://www.theworldcafe.com/>, ALIA workbook

LEARNING JOURNEY – searching for different perspectives

Learning journey is a simple yet powerful way to search for different perspectives while solving any problem or finding new solutions. During learning journey a contact is created with strangers, therefore it might be a challenging exercise for some. There might be fear that people are not willing to communicate with learners. Therefore the encouragement by the trainer to trust the process is really needed.

Preparation

Journey is part of a longer process where a group of people is solving current problems. It can also be used in the process of testing new ideas and getting feedback. As important part of the journey is meeting new people, make sure that the space allows that, f.e. next to a busy street, conference centre, nearby small town or village.

Although people can journey on their own, it is recommended to work in a group of 2-3 people. Take time for the journey.

Space: circle, place to meet with strangers

Materials: papers, pens

Time: 1-2 h

Flow

Before heading on a journey participants share with each other:

1. What do you hope to hear? What are your assumptions?
2. What are you curious about?

It is important to stay curious throughout the whole journey. Take time to talk to 2 or 3 people regarding the issue/topic. Instead of ready-made questions, listen to the partner and create questions on the spot. Notes can be made, but leave the interpretation of what has been said behind. It is important to be listener and observer.

After returning from the journey, take time to digest your experience and reflect upon the following questions:

- 1 what did I hear?
- 2 what did I felt?

3 what did I saw?

4 what surprised me?

With fellow learners share, f.e. in a world café format, what was discovered during the journey as a whole and how that can help to solve the current issue? What perspectives emerged regarding new solutions?

Resource: Change Lab, www.reospartners.com

IDEA HUNT – looking for good ideas

Idea hunt is a simple and creative way to solve current issues and find innovative solutions. Idea hunt is inspired by a board game Da Vinci (<http://www.maripuu.eu/ideemang/>). It is a good alternative when you don't have a game with you.

Preparation

Learners are seated in groups of 4-5 people. You can imagine that in one big room there could actually be more than hundred working groups working simultaneously. There is a common task, problem or question on the table. F.e. how to teach creativity in elementary school?

Space: tables for 4-5 people

Materials: papers, pens, markers

Time: 1 h

Flow

For the first 10 minutes people use simple brainstorming techniques to generate the first ideas. Therefore each member from the group chooses one idea he/she would like to work on during the following time.

Each table is given an envelope with different tasks (see for some examples below). Each participant draws one task, reads it out loud and then each participant develops his/her initial idea further based on the given instructions. 20-30 minutes could be given to fulfil these tasks in a row. At the end each participant shares in a group what other ideas he/she came up with. Collectively the group chooses most profound solutions to be introduced to other groups.

USE PROVERB Each member of the group says one proverb. Everybody uses this as a source for inspiration to develop the idea further.	SEARCH FOR INSPIRATION Grasp for the closest magazine, and just open it. Put your finger on one of the words. Each participant uses this word as a source of inspiration to develop the idea further.
CHANGE THE CHARACTERISTICS Name one means of transportation or part of a house and its characteristics. Each person uses these characteristics to develop his/her idea further.	WHAT'S NEW? What was the latest news you heard or read? Each participant uses this news as a source of inspiration to develop the idea further or come up with a new idea.
TAKE A BREAK Take a 5 minute silent break and walk around. Look out of the window. After coming back see, if you got a new insight or came up with a new idea.	FIND YOUR INNER CHILD Children are sincere and see things from a different perspective. Look at your idea through your inner child. Make developments based on that.

CONVERGENT PHASE IN CREATION PROCESS

Future and action plans, making meaning

The following methods can be used to support the convergent phase of creation process, it is time to fine tune the new ideas, create action plans and give meaning to the learning process.

METHOD 123 – Let's do it!

Quite often we have arrived to the moment as a group that there is a great willingness of getting things done and have very concrete actions plans created. A time and space is needed for that. Method 123 was first used during Tool Fair 2012 and has been inspired by initiatives like Garage48, Startup Weekend, Hackday, Hack4Kids etc. The basic assumptions are:

- *less talk, more action;*
- *create a prototype in a limited timeframe;*
- *the teams are formed on the spot.*

Space: circle, empty wall, different working spaces

Materials: papers, pens, markers, flip-chart paper, tape

Time: 2 h

It inspires people to participate as the conditions for working are usually extreme, but there is a chance to arrive to very concrete results.

Preparation

Participants are sitting in a circle. There are markers and pieces of paper in the middle of the circle. There is an empty wall for participants to put up a piece of paper with the initial idea. Have enough break-out spaces for the teams to work. Each space should have materials, incl flip-chart papers, markers, pens, clay etc.

Flow

Process host introduces the task, principles of the working process. Each person with an idea is asked to write the idea down and introduce in 90 sec. When all ideas are introduced people self-organise

around the ideas. The number of ideas can be limited: some ideas may have people to work on, others will be left out if nobody joins. The ideas will be developed further within limited timeframe (f.e. 120 min). After the development phase prototypes or action plans are introduced in a bigger circle (f.e. in 120 sec).

During Tool Fair there was the following task – create a new training method that can be used all over the world. The following conditions set the frame: choose a topic and a target group, name the need, resources that are needed, how the method is used, the facilitators, time.

PRO-ACTION CAFÉ – let's bring something new alive

The Pro Action Café is a space for creative and action oriented conversation where participants are invited to bring their call - project - ideas - questions or whatever they feel called by and need help to manifest in the world. The concept of Pro Action Café is a blend of 'World Café' and 'Open Space' technologies. It was first conceived by Rainer von Leoprechting and Ria Baeck in Brussels, Belgium.



As a conversational process, the Pro Action Café is a collective, innovative methodology for hosting conversations about calls, questions and projects that matter to the people that attend. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between café tables, cross-pollinate ideas, and offer each other new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, organization or community.

As a process, the Pro Action Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of good work.

Preparation

Ideally create a large circle in one part of the room and enough café tables with 4 chairs in another part (if the size of the room does not allow this, then participants will move the tables and chairs themselves as soon as the agenda is created). Dress the tables with flipchart paper, colour pens and

markers as basic café set up. Prepare the matrix for the agenda setting of the session with the right amount of sessions according to the number of participants divided by 4.

You need 2 ½ to 3 hours for a good Pro Action Café.

Flow

Start with a quick check-in circle to connect to the purpose of the session and with each other. If check-in has already taken place as part of a longer process, go straight to building the agenda.

Invite participants step forward with their call and in that way ask learners for the help you need to move your project into action. People with a call stand up, speak it and write it on the agenda that corresponds to a numbered café table.

Count the amount of participants divide by 4 that gives the amount of callers with projects that can be worked - with f. ex. 40 people you can have maximum 10 callers with each their project. **The principle is first come first serve.** If you have less callers add chairs to café tables but no more than 5 at each table. During this process each contributing participant (those who do not step forward) get to support 3 of the different projects.

When the agenda has been created invite the callers to go to their numbered café tables. There will be 3 rounds of conversation in café style of 20 to 30 minutes - each guided by a few generic questions to help deepen and focus the conversations:

Round 1:

What is the quest behind the call /question/ project? - to deepen the need and purpose of the call.

Give the host some time to reflect on the question first (7-10 min) and then have the others join the first round.

Round 2:

What is missing? – when the quest has been deepened, explore what could make the project more complete and possible.

Give the host some time to reflect on the question first (7-10 min) and then have the others join the first round.

Round 3:

- ***What am I learning about myself?***
- ***What am I learning about my project?***
- ***What next steps will I take?***
- ***What help do I still need?*** – to help bring it all together for caller and his/ her project.

Give the host some time to reflect on the question first of the 4 questions above and harvest their key insights.

Then a last round where 3 new contributors visit the tables to listen to the harvest of the caller, their learning, their steps, help needed – and then offer any insight and any further support.

Between each round create breaks for the contributors to have a drink, relax together and get ready to support another caller in their quest/ project.

Last step is to meet in the circle and invite the callers from each table to share answers to these 2 questions:

- **What am I grateful for?**
- **What are my next steps?**

If there is time the whole group reflects shortly on: **What applications do we see for practicing Pro Action Café in our contexts?**

End the Pro Action Café with a collective gesture to appreciate the work done and the gifts offered and received.

Resource: ALIA Workbook, <http://sites.google.com/a/pro-action.eu/pro-action-caf-/how-to-become-a-host/hosting-kit>

PICNIC OF CELEBRITIES – creating meaning together (based on Vogt)

Every learning process comes to an end. There is time to create meaning together and reflect on the key learning and give feedback to the training. Instead of filling mere sheets of feedback paper, a more creative approach could be taken which invites playfulness.

During the picnic of famous people a number of important people meet and talk about something important. In this case they focus on the course that is

Space: circle

Materials: papers, pens, markers, tape, flipchart paper

Time: up to 1 h

just about to come till the end: f.e. creativity in adult education.

Flow

Learners form small groups of 3-4 people and they choose which characters they will be performing (f.e. famous speakers, politicians, actors etc). In a group each person chooses more specific character who he/she will be performing, f.e. which actor.

Together as group they first analyse the content of the training course, its value, and impact. What was useful? What could be done differently? What was less important? What is the feedback to the trainers? What was the key learning? It is important to bring out the arguments, as well concrete examples to support the argument.

The content of the feedback, including the main messages, are co-created as a group (30 min). Then a way for performing their point of view is selected.

Each group performs their conversation at an imaginary picnic (5-7 min). It is invited to be as playful as possible. If there is possibility even clothes could be given to dress up.

INSTEAD OF SUMMARY A PERSONAL STORY

about creativity during Tool Fair...

It is a great opportunity as well a challenge to create new methods as a trainer. There are number of tools and methods available all over the world that can be modified to meet the needs of current learning context. It is even more exciting to look for new approaches from different field of discipline. Still while modifying it should be important to hold to the core of the method.

In 2012 I was approached by an offer to help to host a 3-day Tool Fair, a gathering of trainers in youth field in Estonia. A number of key words were selected as the themes for this gathering – improvisation, creativity and innovation. So for me and my colleague Hannes Lents it firstly meant asking ourselves – how to create in inspiring learning space to explore these themes and therefore help to build the capacity of trainers? As one of the key words was innovation, then it seemed almost self-evident that we have to be practicing innovation and creativity ourselves. We started with physical space creation: a number of elements were hanging on the ceiling. All participants received a small gift package representing the themes of the event. We created the atmosphere of a Fair by playing music and making some announcement as the participants arrived. A special magazine was launched to capture the harvest and learning of each participant. Some old magazines were used by learners to create their own first cover. In addition to Method 123 described before there were couple of new additional elements⁶ used I will describe below

⁶ Petcha Kutcha and Lunch Beat is also published in the summary of Tool Fair, http://issuu.com/mitteformaalne/docs/ajakiri_ilu_2012_finaal/1

Petcha Kutcha, 10 images and 100 sec

Each and every one of us has faced with the challenge to express their ideas shortly. At the same time being emotional and inspirering. Petcha Kutcha is a form of expressing your ideas from Japan. Originally it was a meeting place for young designers to meet, share their ideas, express their work and meet other people. The format is very simple: express your idea with 20 images and 20 sec.

During Tool Fair we asked the facilitators of working groups to introduce the theme and content of their theme group based on Petcha Kutcha. We modified the original method and framed it as follows: 10 images and 100 seconds. The presentation gave a short overview what the workshop will be about and therefore participants could choose a group most relevant to their learning needs. We also imposed and created one extra slide presentation for those willing to offer a workshop on the spot. A couple stepped forward and presented the slides without even knowing the content. Worked out really well and was lots of fun.

For more inspiration, check out: <http://www.pecha-kucha.org/>.

What happens if we switch the space for a second...

Each and every one of us has found him/herself in a situation during a training or seminar that the content is too intense and some movement is needed. How to create this space where we can freely step out of thinking mode and move to other sources of sensing? I believe that for the first



time in the history of training and learning Lunchbeat was offered for 20 min. Basically a time you come together into one room and just dance. There were three principles introduced to take part in Lunch beat.

1st rule: *if it's your first time at Lunch Beat, you have to dance.*

2nd rule: *if it's your second, third or fourth time at Lunch Beat, you have to dance.*

3rd rule: *you don't talk about your job at Lunch Beat.*

The inspiration for Lunch Beat came from the actual Lunchbeat movement that is becoming more and more popular. The girl behind it is Molly Ränge who wanted to combine two of her passions – dancing and working. She just noticed that after long weekend of partying it was hard to concentrate

on work and she was searching for ways to both party and work. Therefore an idea emerged to create a time to dance during daytime for one hour. Nowadays Lunch Beat movement is just moving around the world.

Check out your next party place: <http://www.lunchbeat.org>.

These are just few examples how to create an inspiring place for learning and creativity. It just takes courage to step out of the ordinary, get inspiration from others and keep on experimenting. We as trainers are always examples ourselves: if we are the practitioners of creativity it also inspires the learners to get in touch with theirs.

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About the Author

Piret Jeedas has been working on the field of adult education and training as host, educator and process leader for more than ten years. Her background is in adult education and training (both BA and MA in andragogy, Tallinn University). She is keen on new initiatives and is therefore dedicated to bring participatory methods to our everyday life and practice (www.kaasamine.ee). She is willing to learn from wise people, incl Peter Senge, Otto Scharmer, Juanita Brown, Adam Kahane. She is a long term training partner for Youth in Action Programme in Estonia. She has helped to host the strategy creation process for NGO Partnerlus.

She is learning about learning together with her students at Tallinn University. She is a big fan of nature, enjoys the spirit of friendship and good food.



NGO Partnerlus was born in 2002 with a purpose to help building social capital. Today a number of social projects and trainings are offered. Number of communities and unemployed people are target group of the projects. Though it mainly operates in Southern part of Estonia, there is always will to cooperate with other organisations in Estonia and beyond.

The project "Let's Find and Use Your Creativity" was initiated by colleagues from Latvia - SIA PAC Agenda and Finland - Creavit Media Osk.

The main focus of the project is to share experiences and practices of building creative learning environment in adult education.

Most probably something else will be born out of the project, though nobody knows exactly what...Let's stay open.

The materials and guidelines will be shared on the website: <http://www.creatrix.lv>