Opening doors on creativity

Resources to awaken creative working
Opening doors on creativity: resources to awaken creative working

Author: Emma Coats, Independent Consultant and Creative Arts Practitioner.

Contributors: Jan Dewing, formerly Senior Fellow (Work-Based Learning), Practice Development RCN Institute; now Independent Nurse Consultant; Associate Lecturer, School of Education, University of Ulster; Visiting Fellow, School of Health, Community and Education Studies, University of Northumbria.

Angie Titchen, Senior Research and Practice Development Fellow, Royal College of Nursing Institute; Clinical Chair, Knowledge Centre for Evidence-Based Practice, Fontys University for Applied Sciences, The Netherlands.

Reviewers: Rita Devlin, RGN, Dip N (Lon), BSc (Hons), MSc Lifelong learning Practice Development Co-ordinator, Ulster Community and Hospital Trust, Northern Ireland.

Jane Stokes, RN, MA, DPSN, Cert. Ed. Lecturer in Practice Development, City University London; Associate Fellow Practice Development RCNI.

Jonathan Webster, BA (Hons), MSc, DPS(N), RGN Consultant Nurse, Older People, University College, London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust; Associate Fellow Gerontological Nursing and Practice Development, Royal College of Nursing; Faculty Fellow, University of Brighton.

© 2006 Royal College of Nursing Institute

You are free to copy this resource in its entirety for your own use and suggest that others access the resource for themselves. However, we do not support multiple copying, partial copying or adaptation of the written materials from this resource for your own use. You are free to make adaptations in your own practice, but we ask that you do not change the original written text. The materials developed in this resource may be used by members of the International Practice Development Collaborative at Practice Development schools and conferences under the same conditions. Permission to use the materials at other schools or events must be sought from the RCN Practice Development Team. The author(s) of the materials, and RCN copyright, must always be acknowledged.

Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks to the reviewers, and especially to Jan Dewing for her contributions to this resource and co-authorship of the Palette of resources; and to Angie Titchen for her contributions, including most of the imagery. Thanks to Sharon Usher, at The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, for some of the inspiring images and her permission to photograph them; to Janette Edwards for swift and down-to-earth copy editing; and to Trícia Berhardt for her contribution and design skills. Finally thanks to all the hundreds of healthcare participants who have taken part in the examples (in Section B of this resource) and made them a living reality.

Cover photograph: The open doorway into the inner courtyard at The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, symbolising opportunities for creative working.

Section A title page photograph: Part of the inner courtyard, The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay.

Unacknowledged photos were downloaded from clipart.

© 2006 RCNI
Author and contributor biographies

Emma Coats, Independent Consultant, Facilitator and Coach. I specialise in creative approaches to continuing professional development and organisational change. I trained at The Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education and with various creative arts practitioners. My particular interest is in how the imagination and creative expression contributes to innovation and participatory change. I work with individuals, groups and teams in the public, community and private sectors. My work in healthcare includes creative approaches to practice development, lifelong learning, education and research with nurse practitioners and educators in universities, hospices and hospitals in the UK. I have also facilitated creative workshops for healthcare practitioners at a number of national conferences.

Jan Dewing, formerly Senior Fellow (Work-Based Learning) Practice Development, Royal College of Nursing Institute; now Independent Consultant Nurse; Associate Lecturer, School of Education, University of Ulster; Visiting Fellow, School of Health, Community and Education Studies, University of Northumbria. I was involved in developing a range of work that provides opportunities for practitioners to learn more about practice development in their workplaces and in providing practice development tools and resources for use in the workplace. I continue to be interested in using several creative methods as part of active learning with practice development work, both for my own learning and to help others to learn in more creative and fun ways.

Angie Titchen, Senior Research and Practice Development Fellow, Royal College of Nursing Institute; Clinical Chair, Knowledge Centre for Evidence-Based Practice, Fontys University for Applied Sciences, The Netherlands. I am involved in using creative arts media within healthcare practice development, evidence-based practice and practice development research that is collaborative, participative and practice-based. I am developing, with others, a theoretical framework for this work and practical processes and methods using creative arts media. I explore ways of helping people to investigate and transform aspects of self, teams, workplaces, organisations, cultures, practices by accessing and expressing their creative imagination using artistic forms and products.
Introduction

Who is this resource for? ................................................................. 3
Aims of the resource ........................................................................ 4
Intended learning outcomes .............................................................. 4
Resource structure ........................................................................... 4
  Key to symbols .............................................................................. 5
How to use this resource ................................................................. 6
  Preparation .................................................................................... 6
  Materials required .......................................................................... 7
  Working on your own and finding a creative companion .......... 8
  Continued professional development ................................................. 8
Origins of this resource ...................................................................... 9
Feedback .......................................................................................... 9
Endpoint ............................................................................................ 9

Section A Developing your creativity ................................................. 10

Overview .......................................................................................... 11
Aims and structure of the four activities ............................................. 11
  Materials ......................................................................................... 12
Learning outcomes ............................................................................ 12
Guidance on developing a creative attitude ....................................... 12
Preparation for each activity .............................................................. 13
Activity 1 .......................................................................................... 14
  Evaluation ....................................................................................... 18
  Endpoint ......................................................................................... 18
  Moving on ....................................................................................... 19
Activity 2 .......................................................................................... 20
  Evaluation ....................................................................................... 24
  Endpoint: reviewing your creative statement ................................. 24
  Moving on ....................................................................................... 24
Activity 3 .......................................................................................... 25
  Evaluation ....................................................................................... 28
  Endpoint: reflecting on your learning .............................................. 28
  Moving on ....................................................................................... 28
Opening doors on creativity

Activity 4 ............................................................................................................... 29
Evaluation ............................................................................................................. 33
Endpoint ............................................................................................................... 33
Next stage of the resource .................................................................................. 33

Section B Facilitating others ........................................................................... 34
Overview ............................................................................................................. 35
Learning outcomes ............................................................................................ 35
The role and style of the facilitator ..................................................................... 36
Structure of the examples .................................................................................... 37
Example 1 ........................................................................................................... 38
  Learning points to support your facilitation practice ........................................ 41
Example 2 ........................................................................................................... 48
  Learning points to support your facilitation practice ........................................ 50
Example 3 ........................................................................................................... 52
  Learning points to support your facilitation practice ........................................ 55
Example 4 ........................................................................................................... 58
  Learning points to support your facilitation practice ........................................ 60
Next stage of the resource .................................................................................. 61

Palette of resources ......................................................................................... 62
Purpose and content ........................................................................................... 63
Path 1 Further reading, websites and practical examples .................................... 64
Path 2 Information on the creative cycle ............................................................. 82
Path 3 Warm-up and relaxation activities, and working with guided visualisation 88
List of references ................................................................................................. 94
Feedback sheet .................................................................................................... 95
Introduction
Welcome to *Opening doors on creativity: resources to awaken creative working*. We are very pleased to offer this resource for practitioners in nursing, and other healthcare practitioners, who have a responsibility for, or an interest in, systematic practice development and its associated areas, such as evidence-based practice, clinical leadership or clinical governance. We hope it will provide a ‘spark’ to ignite your enthusiasm for using more creative ways of thinking about practice development, develop your practical skills and confidence with creativity, and enable you to facilitate learning activities for others using new skills and creative facilitation. *Opening doors* combines creative activities, imagery, practical ideas and mini case examples. It seeks to extend further the ability of practitioners to liberate their own feelings and thinking and use innovative strategies with others, for the purposes of practice transformation within person-centred, evidence-based care.

This resource has been prepared within a creative and reflective mode of learning that we refer to as *active learning*. So there are lots of activities for you to do so you can make your own self discoveries about creativity. There are also reading suggestions, learning points and practical examples of creative strategies to deepen your knowledge and for you to use or adapt to support practice transformation.

The term ‘practice’ refers here to any kind of practice in health, e.g., clinical practice, practice development, education and research, leadership and management development, for the purposes of improving patient care.

Exploring our own creativity can enable greater emotional intelligence and provide the opportunity to learn more about ourselves and the ways in which we relate to patients and colleagues in the workplace (Freshwater, 2004). From this exploration, we can enhance our own
Opening doors on creativity – Introduction

professional effectiveness in patient care and how we nurture creative workplace cultures.

Recent developments in reflective practice, more active methods of learning (such as clinical supervision and action learning) and systematic practice development seek to emphasise the importance and significance of the whole person (practitioner and patient) and attempt to challenge habitual ways of thinking and acting.

This resource grew from the work undertaken by the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Practice Development Team over the last decade with colleagues in the RCN-funded Seizing the fire collaborative inquiry (Arts Council England, 2005), and more recently from the report Creative arts and humanities in healthcare: swallows to other continents (Coats et al., 2004), which looks at the needs of patients, staff and healthcare organisations in relation to the arts. The report identifies the need for healthcare practitioners:

‘to be encouraged and facilitated to use their creative imagination in finding ways of developing and sustaining humanistic caring practices’ and ‘to develop expertise through gaining knowledge and experience in working with the arts in healthcare’

(Coats et al., 2004: 9)

The report called for greater investment in developing arts-based strategies in healthcare, including distance learning, for the benefit of patients and staff.

This resource contributes to that identified need. In addition, the resource complements the work of the International Practice Development Collaborative in its use of creative arts in practice development schools (see the RCN Practice Development news and events webpage: http://www.rcn.org.uk/practicedevelopment/news), and the co-operative inquiry into practice development theory undertaken by the International Practice Development Colloquium (see, for example, McCormack and Titchen, 2006). (The International Practice Development Collaborative is a body of organisations that designs, runs and evaluates international practice development schools. The International Practice Development Colloquium is a group of practice developers who are generating an international practice development theory. In mid-2006, the International Practice Development Colloquium was taken under the umbrella of the International Practice Development Collaborative.)

Who is this resource for?

This resource has been developed for people who have a responsibility for development, change or facilitation, whatever their role or profession. We start from the basis that you are curious about your own and others’ creativity, that you may have some creative experience, and would like to bring creative methods into your work.

Our intention is to enable you to develop or deepen your connection with your own creativity so that you develop confidence in the experience of being creative, and also learn from and adapt what
Opening doors on creativity – Introduction

others have done. Opportunities for creative practice are only limited by what is appropriate and achievable in particular contexts.

The examples provided here are models for you to use but should not be studied as definitive! Your knowledge of your own workplace needs will lead you into generating your own creative solutions as your confidence and skill grow.

We very much hope you enjoy this resource and that it inspires you to find ways to enable your own and others’ creativity to grow within your practice settings.

Aims of the resource

The aims of this resource are to:

• provide creative activities to develop confidence in your own creativity
• provide inspiration and guidance for the creative facilitation of others by providing facilitation examples for the purposes of:
  – releasing others’ creative imagination for effective problem-solving and collaborative working
  – generating energy and commitment in novel ways
  – working with groups or teams to develop a shared vision
  – exploring effective culture transitions with groups
  – evaluating projects or programmes using creative methods
• act as a signpost/resource for your creative development.

Intended learning outcomes

In working with this resource, you are provided with the opportunity to:

• build your own confidence and develop your creativity by practising different creative activities using a range of creative materials
• make a creative statement and action plan to clarify your ideas for introducing creative methods in your own workplace/organisational settings
• develop understanding and insight into how to design and facilitate creative processes with others, and manage the challenges involved.

Resource structure

This resource has two main sections:

• Section A: Developing your creativity (p.10) contains activities for developing your own creativity and clarifying your creative aspirations for your work, to enable you to build confidence and
think through how you want to apply creativity in your workplace contexts.

- *Section B: Facilitating others* (p.34) contains practical examples for creative facilitation of individuals, groups or teams. You may be interested in adapting the practical examples for your own use, or taking bits and pieces from different examples and creating a new hybrid that suits your situation. In doing this, however, please respect RCN copyright as indicated at the beginning of this resource.

We suggest that, because of the way the resource is designed, you will find it helpful to print out each section as you start to work through it and undertake the learning activities described.

This resource has been created in colour, which we hope will make looking at the electronic file or colour printout more enjoyable, and make its component parts more distinguishable from each other. However, it has also been designed on the understanding that many people will print it out in black and white.

At the end of the resource you will find a *Palette of resources* (p.62), which includes:

- further reading
- details of useful websites
- information on courses in creativity
- examples of the use of creative arts in a variety of settings and contexts
- theories about the creative process
- examples of warm-up and relaxation activities
- details of the use of guided visualisation
- a list of the references used in this resource
- a feedback sheet for comments on this resource.

There are many photos of nature in this resource. These have been chosen to show how our creativity is often awakened when we are working in nature – including, for example, working in your own garden (see the photo on p.93).

**Key to symbols**

- You will see this butterfly symbol throughout the resource. It appears where we recommend that you make notes to support your learning.

- You will see this sun symbol in *Section B* to alert you to think about a specific point in the resource, as this may assist your continued learning.
How to use this resource

We recommend you print out this information or make notes from it as guidance.

Preparation

Preparing to facilitate, using creative methods, needs to begin with your own experience of working creatively. Before facilitating others, it is essential to have gained an embodied understanding. This means first participating in creative activities yourself, so that you appreciate what working creatively feels like, looks like, and sounds like, learn how you and others are affected and what the needs and challenges are. Starting with yourself enables you to become attuned to the potential of this way of working and your feelings and needs. In turn, this will help to sensitise you to the kinds of needs others are likely to have when you bring creative processes into your work. Let’s look in more depth at the two main sections in this resource.

Section A: Developing your creativity

This resource is organised so that you can first explore and work through a series of creative activities. The activities will support you to develop your own creative abilities, and deepen your personal understanding of being creative and the kinds of outcomes you can achieve. Learning from your own experience in this way will also help you discover what you feel is important to attend to when facilitating others to engage with creative processes.

You will need to have a room where you can be quiet and uninterrupted, and do the activities in your own time.

We recommend that you organise your learning by keeping reflective and evaluative notes about each activity in Section A, for example:

- what you found easy and what you found difficult
- what you discovered or found surprising
- how you managed any difficulties
- any changes you would make to the activity for your own or others’ needs
- any ideas sparked by the activity that you would like to apply in your working context, and issues to be managed to achieve this.
Section B: Facilitating others

We recommend that you then study this section, which has a series of facilitation examples with key points about issues to attend to. You may choose to use these examples as they are set out in this resource, or adapt them in ways that suit your context. Keep reflective notes about Section B by thinking about:

• what you found useful in each example
• specific situations you would consider it for
• any changes you would make if you decide to use the example
• what you would pay attention to and need to manage if you use or adapt the example.

Materials required

The basic materials you will need as you work through this resource are:

• a notebook and pen
• some paper (white A4 or coloured card, or flipchart paper)
• a pack of crayons, pastels or felt-tip pens
• some old newspapers, magazines or postcards
• scissors
• sticky tape
• glue sticks.

Do add anything else you are drawn to, e.g.:

• paints – plastic bottles of ready-mix paint in colours you like, brushes (they don’t have to be expensive), some paper plates to pour paint on, and jars or plastic cups to hold water
• modelling clay or children’s clay
• glitter, etc.

Browse in children’s shops or local stationery shops or other shops which are good value for these materials. A budget of £10 should be ample to start you off.

You might also like to have candles, any music that inspires you, a camera (not essential), and some of the activities will invite you to use small objects from your home or working environment and bits from nature (leaves, etc). If you don’t want to use them that is fine, as there are choices for materials in each activity.
Opening doors on creativity – Introduction

**Working on your own and finding a creative companion**

Opening up to your creativity, and facilitating others using creative methods, is a journey of progression. The journey usually begins with feelings of awkwardness and uncertainty and evolves into excitement, confidence and clarity. Creative learning invites a balance of, and trust in, your imagination, intuition and judgement.

Most people tend to start off by exploring their creativity on their own, and by attending workshops. Feel free to explore your creativity as far as you can on your own by following the activities in this resource, and by going on workshops that interest you. As you build confidence and knowledge you may find it useful to find a creative companion (or you may prefer the term coach or mentor). This could be someone from your personal or professional life who is also interested in developing their creativity and that of others.

A creative companion is like a learning partner with whom you can discuss issues and ideas, share and support each other’s learning, and feedback on the results of your creative activities. You may like to consider this if it feels feasible for you.

**Continued professional development**

When considering how you want to incorporate creativity into your practice, the learning framework we recommend is:

- Learn from your own experience. For example, following the activities for working with yourself in this resource, and becoming a participant in workshops or on courses facilitated by creative organisations, other RCN facilitators, creative practitioners and artists. (See the *Palette of resources*.)

- Keep reflective notes of your experiences, learning and challenges and questions you ask of facilitators about their creative practice (for example their intent, and how or why they facilitate in particular ways), as well as learning from your own experience. To help with learning from your experience, there are short reflective questions accompanying the activities in this resource.

- Consider whether you can arrange for a creative companion who practises creatively to coach you in your development.

- Co-facilitate with someone who is more experienced than you, so that you can learn from your joint work as facilitators.
This resource has evolved from the work of a number of practitioners developing the role of the creative imagination and the use of creative media in healthcare practice. The knowledge and experience which inform the resource comes from four main sources:

- Creative work from the late 1990s up to 2006 by independent practitioners and healthcare professionals in primary, acute and higher education settings and at RCN Practice Development Schools, now known as International Practice Development Collaborative Schools; from work undertaken within the RCN Practice Development team; through workshops and papers given at national and international conferences, and via publication in articles and books.


- Development of and participation in a series of workshops in 2003 on the creative arts and humanities in healthcare funded by the Nuffield Trust, with published report (Coats et al., 2004).

- Over the last few years, the work of the International Practice Development Colloquium has further extended our repertoire and expertise in using creative arts in co-operative inquiries.

We welcome any comments you may have on your experience of using this resource, how you have used your enhanced creativity in your work and any outcomes for you, your service users/patients as well as your ideas for improvements or changes. (See the Palette of resources at the end of the resource for the feedback sheet.)

Before starting Section A, make sure you have some time and a comfortable space to support your learning, and a notebook and pen to hand. You will then be guided about other materials to use – from the list under Materials required (p.7) – as you continue through Section A.
Section A
Developing your creativity
Overview

You will be offered the opportunity to develop your connection with your own creativity by working through a series of four activities. You will recall from the intended learning outcomes in the Introduction (p.4) that the activities are designed to build confidence in your creativity and think through your aspirations for applying creativity in your workplace contexts.

Each activity takes between 45 minutes and an hour to complete. You will probably need to find your own time to do them in, independent of work commitments. You may want to set aside a day of your own time, or set aside an hour a day for four days spreading your days over a few weeks.

The activities have been planned in a developmental sequence, and we strongly recommend that you work through them in the sequence described. You may want to do each activity on your own, or with colleagues, or with a creative companion if you have one.

Doing the activities will expand your learning about your self, and its centrality to creativity. This may be something you haven’t considered before – how do you feel about seeing yourself as core to creativity?

Take a few moments to reflect on this question and make a note about your thoughts and feelings. However, if you have considered the self as central to the creative process, take a moment to reflect on what you wish to explore further about the self and note down your thoughts. (You may remember that we explained the butterfly symbol in the Introduction to the resource – it appears where we recommend that you make notes to support your learning.)

Aims and structure of the four activities

Each activity is designed to enable you to work with your imagination and introduce you to working with a range of creative materials so that you gain practice in using your imagination, expressing yourself creatively, and experimenting with different materials.

The four activities are:

1. Creative exploration: getting started by understanding your current views about your creativity.
2. Creative aspirations: making a creative statement of your dreams and ideas for developing creativity in your working life.
3. Creative breakthrough: exploring how creativity can bring about insight or transformation.
4. Creative review and action plan: an exploration of what being creative means to you now, and developing a work-based action plan.

There are also four elements to each of the activities:

- a brief self-assessment to kickstart your thoughts and feelings
• a photographic image as a possible source of inspiration and reflection
• a creative exercise with a choice of options so that you can try out different creative methods
• a brief evaluation.

**Materials**

In these activities you can use a variety of materials. (Some are listed under *Materials required* in the *Introduction* to this resource (p.7).) In each activity we have suggested materials which you may like to use. Choose the ones you are attracted to, even if they’re not something you’re familiar with, as you will be guided in how to use them in the activity. A list of materials is given in each activity in recognition of the fact that some people may choose to print out one activity at a time.

**Learning outcomes**

By exploring these activities you will:
• gain an understanding of what’s important to you about creativity
• become clear about what your creative aspirations for your work are
• learn how to apply a creative method to a current challenge in your life
• clarify how you want to develop creative practice at work.

Each activity has a structure to follow, and broad learning outcomes as described above. Other outcomes are likely to be:
• discovering which materials you enjoy using
• finding out how the imagination can act as a source of insight and help you think in new ways
• learning about your own expectations, beliefs and feelings about being creative, which will aid you when facilitating others
• building confidence in your own creative abilities, and getting ideas about methods you may want to use in your work.

**Guidance on developing a creative attitude**

Being creative is about having a sense of discovery, experimentation and play. A key challenge of being creative is staying with the unknown as you engage in an activity and trusting that you will get to an outcome, as this will be a process of discovery, rather than knowing the outcome in advance. Working creatively is contrary to most workplace practice, where the emphasis is on rational and analytical processes and procedures to ensure predetermined outcomes.
There can be a pressure therefore for certainty, clarity or critical self-questioning such as ‘What’s the point of this?’, ‘I feel awkward/silly/uncomfortable …’ etc. This is normal! Starting to work creatively can be uncomfortable because you will probably be working outside your normal comfort zones. We grapple with this challenge each time we work creatively. We recommend that you give yourself reassurance when facing any critical or self-conscious thoughts and feelings, and as you gain experience you will find that being creative becomes freeing, energising and exciting!

Negative capability is a phrase used to describe a creative frame of mind. It is based on a statement written by the poet Keats in a letter dated 21st December 1817:

‘capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason’

(Gittings, 1970: 43)

It is an invitation to tolerate the unknown without knowing the answers in advance. So, as much as you can, support yourself to have an open frame of mind while doing the activities, try not to prejudge, and evaluate your progress after you have completed a whole activity.

**Preparation for each activity**

Make sure you have a quiet and uninterrupted space, and can allocate up to an hour to do the activities. Print out or make a note of the guidance for reflecting on and evaluating the activities from the *Introduction* (p.6). You may want to set up some quiet music in the room. Decide whether you want to do the activities with any colleagues or a creative companion if you have one. For each activity read through the description in the activity box, and follow the instructions below it.
Activity 1
Creative exploration: getting started by understanding your current views about your creativity

Purpose
Practise using the imagination and creative materials to explore what is important to you about creativity.

Learning outcome
Deepen your appreciation of your imagination and connect to your creative potential.

Time required
50–55 minutes

Materials
You will need:
- a notebook and pen
- some sheets of plain paper (size A4 or bigger of any quality or colour)
- some spare magazines or newspapers
- glue stick
- scissors
- sticky tape
- drawing materials, e.g.:
  - crayons
  - felt-tip pens
  - pastels
  - paints.

(If you have a digital camera and access to a printer, have it available, but this is not essential to doing the exercise, as there is a choice of materials to use.)

If you use paints, have some plastic covering, an old sheet or newspaper to protect your floor or table, brushes, a paper plate as a palette and a jar/plastic cup of water, some paper roll or tissues.

Structure of activity
1) Self assessment and your notebook. (3mins)
2) Reflections on the photographic image and your notebook. (3mins)
3) Creative exercise and your materials. (40mins)
4) Evaluation of activity and your notebook. (5mins)

Self assessment (3mins)

Take a few moments to note down your thoughts and feelings of how connected you feel with your creativity at this point in time using these two cues:
• In what ways do I experience creativity in myself?
• How creative do I feel at work?

You will be asked to return to your evaluations at several points as you work through the activity so you can update them and capture your development and progress.

**Reflections on the photographic image (3mins)**

Use the image and the words below it to stimulate your imagination by spending a few moments looking at it. Then respond to the image using the following cues:

• Note down any immediate thoughts, feelings or ideas about creativity in response to the image and words. (If nothing comes to mind, that’s fine.)

• Secondly, reflect on and note down anything you feel creatively connected to – experiences, ideas, methods, people, resources. (Perhaps this resource is the first anchor point for you, or you may have other creative experiences and resources which are significant for you.)

*Two shells
illuminated by light
anchored in time and space.*

*Is your experience of your creativity well-formed
or just coming into being?*

*Perhaps cyclic or even stuck,
dormant or in lively growth …*

*like the shells, creativity takes time to form.*
When you have reflected on the image, and finished your notes, move onto the third part of the activity.

**Creative exercise (40mins)**

Please read the following Guidance and Preparation before beginning the exercise, *Using your imagination as a source of insight.*

**Guidance**

The exercise enables you to use your imagination as a source of insight about your creativity and to explore working with creative materials. You will find it useful to set aside any preconceptions or fixed ideas about your creativity. This will help you to feel freer to connect to your creativity and give expression to your ideas.

It is also useful to make a note of or acknowledge thoughts and feelings you experience during the activity. These may be positive or negative: creativity includes both. When you facilitate others they are very likely to have similar thoughts or feelings especially if working with their imagination for the first time in a work context. By becoming aware of your reactions and responses, you will be better prepared for how others may think and feel and be available in supportive ways for them.

For example, while writing this section, Emma was surprised by the image of an upside-down open umbrella coming into her mind. After some reflection, she understood the image to confirm the need for structure (the shape of the umbrella) and openness to the unknown (the clear space inside the umbrella) when being creative. You may also be surprised by your own insights and imagination as you do the exercise!

**Preparation (10mins)**

Read through the four options below before you start. Choose one to work with and print it out. Make sure your materials are to hand before you start, and that you have uninterrupted time and space. Give yourself half an hour to fulfil the exercise. (You may find yourself using more or less time for any part of the exercise depending how quickly you work.) For each option you will be asked to hold a question in mind as a way of stimulating your creativity.

**Using your imagination as a source of insight (30mins)**

**Option a: Using pictures**

Hold loosely at the back of your mind the question: *What is important to me about creativity?*

Using a few old newspapers, magazines or postcards take 15 minutes to go through them in an attentive and quiet way and discover which pictures (not the newspaper or magazine stories or words) have a resonance for you in response to the question.
Cut out or put aside any pictures you are drawn to, and take five minutes to lay them out on one or more sheets of paper and stick them down. You may not know why you choose the pictures at first, but it will become clearer as you reflect on them. Trust your intuition and imagination and just select those pictures that capture your interest and attention.

Take a further 10 minutes to add key words or phrases around the pictures about what it is you like about them, and any ideas they evoke in you about creativity. Note any surprises or challenges in doing the exercise.

**Option b: Using your indoor environment**

Hold the same question loosely in your mind: *What is important to me about creativity?*

Allow the question to float to the back of your mind, shut your eyes for 30 seconds, and let yourself settle, then open your eyes and let your attention wander around the space you are sitting or standing in. Take five minutes to notice which thing or things you pay particular attention to.

Something may grab your attention quickly, and you find yourself gazing at it, or you pass over something and then find you are drawn back to it. It may be objects in the room, pictures, the view, part of the structure of the room or furniture. Look at whatever it is closely and also from further away.

If you have a digital camera, take photos of what you are drawn to and print them.

Alternatively take 15 minutes to roughly draw them on paper (regardless of whether you have any experience of drawing). Allow what you draw to emerge through your hand. This is not about making judgements about artistic ability. It is about engaging your creative imagination from a place of curiosity, suspending judgement and supporting yourself to be in a process of absorbed play, making a drawing that is as rough and childlike as you want it to be. You could do a drawing with your opposite hand to your dominant one, which may give you more permission to make a messy drawing!

Then take a further 10 minutes to add to your drawings or digital pictures any additional notes or ideas about the things that caught your attention, what they say to you about creativity, and any surprises or challenges in doing the activity.

**Option c: Using the outdoor environment**

Hold the same question loosely in mind: *What is important to me about creativity?*

Then go for a slow, 15-minute walk in your local environment or somewhere close by that is practical for you in terms of time and distance, and notice what your attention is drawn to (whether it is buildings, a part of nature, a person or something else). Just let yourself be aware of what holds your attention.
You will need to have a quiet mind to do this, because the intention is to let something in your environment capture your attention in response to the question. If your mind is full of other things, delay your walk until you feel relaxed, with a calm mind. If you have a digital camera, take it with you to capture what you pay attention to. Or take your notebook for notes or rough drawings.

When you return give yourself a further 15 minutes to note any ideas provoked by the items that caught your attention, plus any surprises or challenges. You may also wish to add to any drawing you have done in more detail.

Option d: Using ideas or images from your inner world

Focus on the question: What is important to me about creativity?

Give the question meditative attention: take 2–3 minutes, shut your eyes and gently and loosely hold the question in your mind.

Notice if, after a while, an image, word, phrase or colour(s) comes into your awareness. You may not know why they have appeared.

Then open your eyes, and take 10–15 minutes to draw or paint whatever came to mind. This can be a very rough and childlike drawing or painting.

Finally take 10–12 minutes to note down any ideas about what came to mind, how it connects to your question, and any surprises or challenges you encountered.

N.B.: If nothing comes to mind doing the activity this way, either choose one of the other methods, or notice if anything pops into your mind over the next day about creativity, and then draw or note it down as above.

Guidance note

Whichever option you choose, a way of thinking about how to open up to your creative imagination is to pay attention to what flirts with you! Notice what you notice, even if you can’t make sense of it or understand it straight away. If you find you want to give more or less time to any part of the options, please do so.

Evaluation

Having worked through Activity 1, return to the evaluation points you printed out from the Introduction (p.6). Review them, and take five minutes to add any further thoughts or ideas to your notebook. You might find it useful to look at the learning outcomes for Section A again (p.12). Have you been able to identify all your learning?

Endpoint

You now have a baseline, a source of insight about your creativity. You can think of it as a ‘creative audit’ – to help clarify what you feel
connected to, what is important to you about creativity, and surprises or challenges you dealt with in being creative.

If you did this activity with colleagues, or have a creative companion, arrange some time together to share any insights and learning. When sharing, you are acting as witnesses and companions for each other. Being a creative companion is not about interpreting and judging someone else’s creative work. It is about seeking to understand what is important to the other person about what they have made and learnt from doing the activity. If you are not sharing this with another, be a creative companion to yourself and reflect on your overall learning and your insights or the challenges that you managed.

Moving on

The next step is Activity 2 – Creative aspirations: making a creative statement of your dreams and ideas for developing creativity in your working life. This focuses on your creative aspirations for your working context. You will need to define what you mean by your workplace, especially if you work in or across several settings or you work in more than one organisation. Choose the workplace you most wish to explore or are most drawn towards.
### Activity 2

*Creative aspirations: making a creative statement of your dreams and ideas for developing creativity in your working life*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Purpose</strong></th>
<th>Experience the use of creative methods to vision your creative aspirations for your workplace.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning outcome</strong></td>
<td>Discover your creative intentions for your work and how to develop them in a creative way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time required</strong></td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
<td>You will need:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a notebook and pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• some sheets of plain paper (size A4 or bigger of any quality or colour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• spare magazines or newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• glue stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• scissors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sticky tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• drawing materials, e.g.:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- crayons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- felt-tip pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- pastels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- paints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you use paints, have some plastic covering, an old sheet or newspaper to protect your floor or table, brushes, a paper plate as a palette, a jar/plastic cup of water, and paper roll or tissues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You can also use objects from your home if you want to (e.g., small ornaments, or anything which is a source of inspiration for you in your environment), and from nature (leaves, flowers, conkers, etc. depending on the time of year), a candle and any music that inspires you (not essential).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Structure of activity</strong></th>
<th>1) Self assessment and your notebook. (3mins)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Reflection and your notebook. (5mins)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Creative exercise and your materials. (40mins)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Evaluation of activity and your notebook. (5mins)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Self assessment (3mins)**

Take a few moments to note down your current thoughts and feelings about:

- your confidence and learning needs for bringing creative methods into your work
- any ideas you have as a result of doing *Activity 1* (Creative exploration) about how creativity could be useful in your workplace context. (If you do not have any ideas yet, that is fine.)

Keep these notes with you as you will add to them as you work through this exercise.

**Reflections on the photographic image (5mins)**

Use the image on the next page and the words beside it to stimulate your imagination by spending a few moments looking at it, and then note down your thoughts and ideas using the following cues:

- What are my dreams for applying creativity in my working life?

This question asks you to build on your self-assessment by taking a broad and open approach to creativity at work. You may have some ideas noted down from your assessment. Use this image to develop your notes by reflecting very broadly on the needs of your working environment and your role. Note down any ideas that come to mind about:

- where, why and how creative methods could be useful
- the kinds of outcomes you want to achieve through using creative approaches.

You may have clear ideas or vague ones. Don’t dismiss any ideas at this point in time. This stage is divergent thinking – thinking broadly and capturing any ideas you become aware of. You will move into convergent thinking – focusing in on particular ideas – at the next stage of the exercise.
When you are ready, move onto the third part of the activity, which will enable you to further explore your work-based aspirations.

**Creative exercise (40mins)**

Please read the following Guidance and Preparation before beginning the exercise, *Making a creative statement using free imagination*.

**Guidance**

This exercise focuses on developing the notes you have made by making a creative statement to support and clarify your ideas. As in *Activity 1*, you will be working with your creative imagination. Acknowledge positive or negative thoughts and feelings you may have while doing the activity and any challenges or surprises you encounter as you work through the exercise. It is also useful to ‘follow accidents’. For example, perhaps you spill some paint, or pick a colour you didn’t mean to, or spodge a mark, etc. When working creatively, accidents or mistakes can add to what you are doing and provide an unexpected benefit by taking you in an unanticipated direction.

**Preparation (10mins)**

Read through the exercise before you start. Choose which option you want to do and print it out. Set out your materials near you before you start, and make sure you have uninterrupted time and space. Choose whether you would like to light a candle, play some music, or simply work in silence. Allow half an hour to do the exercise. (Feel free to
Opening doors on creativity – Section A

give more or less time if that is what you need, but make sure you give enough time to really engage with the exercise.

**Making a creative statement using free imagination**

*(30mins)*

Read through the notes you have made from the first two stages of this activity, and decide which are the two most important ideas for you at this point in time. Your ideas may be a single word, a phrase or a sentence. Select the two ideas which have most value for you and which you want to work towards to implement.

Transfer your two ideas by copying them onto different sections of a large sheet of plain paper. (Or write each idea on two sheets of A4 or larger.)

Choose which of the two key ideas you want to work with first. The next step will be to develop the first idea by making a creative statement to support it. Take 15 minutes to do this, using one of the three options below.

**Option a: Newspaper/magazine pictures**

Choose some pictures from newspapers or magazines which have a resonance for you in relation to your idea. The pictures you choose might demonstrate qualities connected to your idea, challenges to be faced, or goals to be achieved. Your pictures might also convey what you would be doing, seeing and feeling and what others would be doing if your idea was being fulfilled. Place the pictures you select on your sheet of paper near the idea in a sequence that feels right to you.

There are no right or wrong ways of choosing the pictures or placing them on the paper. Simply choose pictures which draw your attention. You are creating a ‘collage’: a selection of images that when placed together tell a story about what is important and significant about the idea you are developing. You may be surprised by the pictures you choose, or you may have in mind a clear sense of the kind(s) of pictures you want.

**Option b: Painting or drawing and using objects**

Instead of selecting pictures, you may want to draw or paint some images from your mind that capture the qualities, challenges or goals connected to your idea. For example, an image you might associate with your idea could be sunshine or a storm, or a flowering tree, etc., i.e. any image from your imagination which is relevant to the development of your idea. Whatever images come to mind, draw or paint them in as rough and childlike a manner as you want onto your sheet of paper to reflect qualities, challenges and goals connected to your idea. You could also place objects from your environment on the same sheet of paper to represent different aspects of your idea.
Option c: Writing a poem

Alternatively, you could develop your idea by writing a short poem, which draws out your thoughts and elaborates qualities, challenges and goals connected to your idea. You may want to add some pictures from your magazines, or add a drawing or objects to your poem if that feels right.

It may not be clear to you at first what the significance is of the objects you choose, the pictures or drawings that you do, with regard to developing your idea. You may first feel inspired to do something intuitively, which then makes sense rationally later, as you review what you have done. On the other hand, you may be very clear how you want to develop your idea – it will be different for each individual.

When you have made a creative statement for your first idea, then develop the second one, giving yourself a further 15 minutes. You may want to use the same option or a different one.

**Evaluation**

Having worked through *Activity 2*, return to the evaluation points you printed out from the *Introduction* (p.6). Review them, and take five minutes to add any further thoughts or ideas to your notebook. You might find it useful to look at the learning outcomes for *Section A* again (p.12). Have you been able to identify all your learning?

**Endpoint: reviewing your creative statement**

When you have finished *Activity 2*, your creative statement becomes a source of information. If you are sharing this work with a creative companion or colleagues, agree some uninterrupted time where you can discuss your creative statement together. Use what you have created as a means of establishing your commitment to your two ideas. Describe your creative statement. Share what excites you about it, what challenges you. Explore how it can help you clarify the next step to take. Maybe your companion notices other things about it – reflect on those together.

If you are not sharing this with a companion, take some time on a different day from that on which you complete the activity to reflect on it yourself. What do you feel about your creative statement, its challenges and ideas? What is the next step it inspires you to take? What support do you need to begin to take your ideas forward?

**Moving on**

The next step is *Activity 3* – Creative breakthrough: exploring how creativity can bring about insight or transformation.
Activity 3

Creative breakthrough: exploring how creativity can bring about insight or transformation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Experience the use of creative methods to transform a challenge.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcome</td>
<td>Discover how giving creative expression to feelings can transform blocks and create new understanding about what to do in a given situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time required</td>
<td>55 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>You will need:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a notebook and pen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• some sheets of plain paper (size A4 or bigger of any quality or colour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• spare magazines or newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• glue stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• scissors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sticky tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• modelling clay (not essential)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• drawing materials, e.g.:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- crayons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- felt-tip pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- pastels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- paints.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you use paints, have some plastic covering, an old sheet or newspaper to protect your floor or table, brushes, a paper plate as a palette, a jar/plastic cup of water, and paper roll or tissues.

You can also use any objects from your home, workplace or the natural environment that are a source of inspiration to you, and a candle or any music that inspires you (not essential).

Structure of activity

1) Self assessment and your notebook. (3mins)
2) Photographic reflection and your notebook. (5mins)
3) Creative exercise and your materials. (40mins)
4) Evaluation of activity and your notebook. (5mins)
**Self assessment (3mins)**

Take a few moments to note down your current thoughts and feelings about a challenge that feels frustrating (or very frustrating!) at work and which you feel blocked about. Make sure this is a challenge that you are able to influence.

Jot down your feelings about it, and what the difficulties of the challenge are.

Keep your notes close by as you will use them during the activity.

**Reflections on the photographic image (5mins)**

Use the images below and the words between them to stimulate your imagination by spending a few moments contemplating it, and then note down your thoughts and ideas using this cue:

- Are there any associations, insights, or questions the spiral provokes in relation to your challenge?

If nothing comes to mind immediately, give yourself a short meditation on the spiral. Focus on it in your mind, shut your eyes, sit comfortably and let the image simply be in your awareness. After a couple of minutes, see if any new ideas or thoughts about your challenge come to mind and note these down – however wacky or vague your thought(s) may be!

The spiral might guide you to develop your own image. If you see an image coming to you in your mind, or you feel you need to draw one, just go with that and then use the image you have created for any further insights or ideas. You might also find that any insights or ideas come to you as a poetic response.

When you are ready, move onto the third stage of the activity, even if the spiral doesn’t inspire any associations or ideas. (Don’t worry if the spiral doesn’t inspire you, as not every image in this resource will necessarily do that for every reader.)
Opening doors on creativity – Section A

Creative exercise (40mins)

Please read the following Guidance and Preparation before beginning the exercise, Working creatively with difficulties.

Guidance

This exercise focuses on using creative methods to work with feelings and blocks in order to transform your relationship to a challenge. As in the previous activities, you will be working with your creative imagination. Acknowledge any positive or negative thoughts and feelings you have while doing the activity and any difficulties or surprises you encounter as you work through the exercise.

Preparation (10mins)

Read through the exercise before you start. Choose which option you want to do and print it out. Set out your materials near you before you start, and make sure you have uninterrupted time and space. Allow half an hour to do the exercise.

Working creatively with difficulties (30mins)

Take a few moments to reread the notes you wrote about your challenge at the beginning of this activity.

The next step is to represent your feelings creatively. The intention is to use your materials to help channel your energy and stimulate insight or a sense of transformation about your challenge. Take 15 minutes to do one of the following four options.

Option a: Painting or drawing

Do a rough painting or drawing to show what you feel about this challenge. You can do this by choosing colours to represent feelings and blocks. Use paints, crayons, or pastels to put your feelings on paper (size A4 or bigger) in any way you wish. You might want to simply splash colours on, or paint or draw what you feel into particular shapes, or as cartoon or stick-like characters. If your sheet gets messy, that’s fine!

Option b: Modelling clay

Use modelling clay to represent your feelings. Mould the clay into different shapes that capture the quality of the feelings or blocks you have.

Place the moulded material onto a sheet of paper (size A4 or bigger). If you also want to use any objects from home, work or nature to represent your feelings, then add them to your sheet of paper.
Option c: Newspaper/magazine pictures

Choose some images from your collection of newspapers or magazines that reflect your feelings and blocks, and stick these images onto paper (size A4 or bigger), in any sequence you wish.

Option d: Combining materials

You can of course combine your materials as well, so you could choose two or three different materials from the above options to represent your feelings about this challenge.

Guidance notes

When you have represented how you feel using one of the options above, make some notes about how the challenge seems to you now, including any changes in your perception of it. You may find that you feel calmer and clearer about it.

If you do feel clearer, take 10–15 minutes to plan the steps you now want to take to solve the challenge (as far as you are able to) and draw up a realistic time frame in which to achieve these steps.

If you don’t feel clearer, take a break from this activity. When you are ready, (which could be the same day or another day) take 10 minutes to reflect on, and make some notes about, the first step you can take that will help to move you forward in relation to this challenge, even if you are unclear how the overall challenge is going to be solved or dealt with. Give yourself a date by which to achieve this first step.

Evaluation

Having worked through Activity 3, return to the evaluation points you printed out from the Introduction (p.6). Review them, and take five minutes to add any further thoughts or ideas to your notebook. You might find it useful to look at the learning outcomes for Section A again (p.12). Have you been able to identify all your learning?

Endpoint: reflecting on your learning

When you have finished Activity 3, you might like to discuss how the exercise went with your creative companion, if you have one, or reflect on it yourself and how it helped or challenged you! Notice what difference it made to give creative expression to your feelings. By giving attention to feelings creatively, it is possible to create a new perspective, or changes in attitude that can enable a person to act in new ways.

Moving on

The next step is Activity 4 – Creative review and action plan: an exploration of what being creative means to you now, and developing a work-based action plan.
**Activity 4**

*Creative review and action plan: an exploration of what being creative means to you now, and developing a work-based action plan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Review your learning from the first three activities and create an action plan for developing your creative practice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning outcome</td>
<td>Clarify what you are going to commit to in terms of creative practice and how you are going to move forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time required</td>
<td>1 hour 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Materials | You will need:  
  - a notebook and pen  
  - some sheets of plain paper (size A4 or bigger of any quality or colour)  
  - some spare magazines or newspapers  
  - glue stick  
  - scissors  
  - sticky tape  
  - modelling clay  
  - any objects from your environment that inspire you  
  - drawing materials, e.g.:  
    - crayons  
    - felt-tip pens  
    - pastels  
    - paints. |
| Structure of activity | 1) Self assessment and your notebook. (15mins)  
2) Reflections on the photographic image and your notebook. (10mins)  
3) Creative exercise and your materials. (40mins)  
4) Evaluation of activity and your notebook. (5mins)  

If you use paints, have some plastic covering, an old sheet or newspaper to protect your floor or table, brushes, a paper plate as a palette, a jar/plastic cup of water, and some paper roll or tissues.
Self assessment: creative review (15mins)

Gather your notes and the creative work you have done from the first three activities in Section A. Take a few moments to look through it all. Consider how your creativity has developed as a result of doing these activities. Note down your thoughts and feelings by reviewing:

- how your understanding and knowledge of your creativity has changed
- anything that has been difficult and anything that has been easy
- how confident you feel now about expressing yourself creatively compared to your confidence level before using this resource.

Keep your notes with you as you will add to them in this activity.

Reflections on the photographic image (10mins)

Use the image and the words below it to stimulate your imagination by spending a few moments looking at it, and then note down your thoughts and ideas using the following cue:

- What have you gained as a result of using this resource:
  - Have you let go of any assumptions or preconceptions about your creativity?
  - Do you have a new sense of the possible or impossible?
  - Consider any opportunities or experiences you want to introduce into your life that will assist your creative development (for example, courses or books, workshops, or making a regular commitment to expressing your creativity).
Opening doors on creativity – Section A

Indian Head Resort – Lincoln, NH

The clown
a playful character
who connects with the imagination
bringing fresh ways of being in the world

Add your thoughts and ideas in response to the image to your notes. If you have difficulties with the image of a clown this is OK – can you identify what your feelings are? Is there an image you can use instead?

When you are ready, move onto the third stage of the activity. This is about devising an action plan.

**Creative exercise (40mins)**

Please read the following *Guidance* and *Preparation* before beginning the exercise, *Making an action plan*.

**Guidance**

As in the previous activities, you will be working with your creative imagination. Acknowledge any positive or negative thoughts and
feelings you have while doing the activity and any difficulties or surprises you encounter as you work through the exercise.

Preparation (10mins)

Take a few moments to decide the focus of your action plan from one of the following three options:

- steps to take to develop your creativity further, as you need more experience and confidence before facilitating others
- ways of incorporating creative methods into your work as a developer or facilitator
- a combination of the above.

Having selected the focus of your action plan, read through the exercise before you start and print it out. Set out your materials near you before you start, and make sure you have uninterrupted time and space. Allow half an hour to do the exercise.

Making an action plan (30mins)

Reflect on the question: What are my next steps for developing creative practice? Jot down your ideas, which may be small steps you want to take, or a project you want to initiate in relation to the focus you have chosen (from the three options above).

Then take 15 minutes to start your action plan by using creative materials to represent your next steps using one of the following four options.

Option a: Using objects

Choose some objects to represent your next steps and place them on a piece of paper (size A4 or larger).

Option b: Newspaper/magazine images

Select some images from your newspapers or magazines that capture the qualities of the steps you want to take and stick them onto a piece of paper (size A4 or larger).

Option c: Drawing or painting

Use your crayons or paints to make a picture – in as simple a way as you want – that represents the steps you want to take.

Option d: Combine your materials to represent your steps

To complete your action plan, take another 15 minutes to write (on a second sheet of paper) the specific actions you need to take to fulfil each of your next steps, including any resources or support you need, and how you will know when you have been successful – and any surprises or insights evoked by the creative response you have made.
**Evaluation**

Having worked through Activity 4, return to the evaluation points you printed out from the Introduction (p.6). Review them, and take five minutes to add any further thoughts or ideas to your notebook. You might find it useful to look at the learning outcomes for Section A again (p.12). Have you been able to identify all your learning?

**Endpoint**

If you have a creative companion, share your action plan with them, and discuss how you are going to take it forward, or share it with your team or colleagues. Once you have taken the first step, note your feelings and thoughts about what happened, and make any amendments to the rest of the plan as needed.

**Next stage of the resource**

Congratulations! You have now completed the four activities in Section A. You may find it useful to look at the Feedback sheet at the end of this resource and jot down your draft responses to the questions now that you have completed Section A. Once you have studied the rest of the resource, you may have other points you wish to make on the feedback sheet.

In Section B you will find four examples of creative methods that have been used in healthcare practice. Study them to support your learning, and use or adapt them for application in your own context.
Section B
Facilitating others
Overview

This section provides several examples of creative facilitation methods used with groups and teams in healthcare so that you can pick up further ideas about methods you may want to use. They are presented as mini case studies for you to read and reflect on, so that you can extend your knowledge of creative practice.

There are four examples for working with groups of various sizes:

1. Visioning the future.
2. Creating cultures of effectiveness.
3. Exploring the meaning of technical and emancipatory practice development.
4. Evaluating creatively.

Each example includes a description of the purpose, outcome and key activities of the creative method used, with learning points to help you. You can use these examples for purposes similar to those set out here, or as methods to adapt in any way you wish to suit your own context – perhaps also incorporating other ideas or inspiration you’ve gained from doing the activities in Section A.

It will take you about 20 minutes to study each example, or less time if you simply read them! Do make sure you read each one, as each example is followed by additional learning points to support you. There is also a short reflective exercise on facilitation skills so that you can think about the skills you bring to facilitation and how you would adapt them for creative work.

Throughout this section you will meet the two symbols explained in the Introduction to this resource:

The butterfly symbol appears where we recommend that you make notes to support your learning.

The sun symbol appears to alert you to think about a specific point in the resource, as this may assist your continued learning.

Learning outcomes

Section B is designed to expand your knowledge about creative facilitation by providing practical examples for you to study, question and reflect on. By studying these examples you will have the opportunity to:

- develop your understanding of how to design and facilitate creative processes with others and meet the challenges involved
- learn about issues to focus on in relation to managing different creative activities with groups
• consider how you might want to adapt or use the examples to achieve objectives in your own workplace setting(s).

Keep a notebook with you and use the evaluation guidance from the Introduction (p.6) to keep track of your thoughts, ideas and feelings as you study the examples.

The role and style of the facilitator

In creative facilitation the role of the facilitator is to create a supportive environment and space, which enables participants to take the plunge to be creative themselves. The facilitator will be using a mix of supportive and challenging skills to create safety and encourage participation by attending to needs, and explaining the purpose and structure of the session.

The facilitator will move between being directive and non-directive, being a participant or demonstrating, and observing or holding the space as required. The role of facilitator calls on skills of using judgement and intuition, rational and imaginative abilities. It also requires the ability to use courage by role-modelling being in the unknown, in a discovery frame of mind and waiting to arrive at outcomes, rather than focusing on predetermined agendas. You need to be comfortable with supporting a wide range of feelings amongst participants, which may include anxiety, excitement, playfulness, frustration, feeling upset and feeling delighted!

Reflective exercise (10mins)

Have your notebook to hand and take a few moments to jot down your thoughts and feelings about the skills you bring to facilitation or change roles. Depending on whether you have already facilitated others, your knowledge of facilitation may come from your own experience as a facilitator and/or from observing others facilitate.

If you have not facilitated others, there are likely to be skills you use in your existing work that are also components of facilitation practice, i.e. how you relate to others, negotiate with and lead people, how you support their needs and how you meet challenges with individuals, groups or teams.

• Make a note of the skills that you feel are important in relation to the practice of facilitation.

• Reflect on your experience of doing the activities in Section A. Think about any skills you discovered from doing those activities. What skills did you use to support yourself to do the activities? Did you get stuck at any point, and if so, what skills did you use to enable yourself to get unstuck? Add the skills you used from doing the activities in Section A to your notes. The skills you used will be relevant to the qualities you need to demonstrate when facilitating others creatively.

• Finally, think about any questions, uncertainties or doubts you have about facilitating others creatively. Make a note of these. As you
study Section B, consider how the examples, and the learning points that follow each example, can help with any area of uncertainty you may have.

Keep these notes with you so that you can continue to add thoughts and ideas as you study this section.

There are further suggestions and learning points to aid the development of a creative facilitation style in Path 2 in the Palette of resources (p.82).

Structure of the examples

The four examples in this section are summarised in box style to give you an overview. Each box is followed by a description of the key activities used in the example. There are also learning points to help your understanding of the process and method used. The Endpoint of each example provides the opportunity to make reflective and evaluative notes.

The next step is to read through the examples with your notebook to hand for comments and ideas, and to track your thoughts and feelings about the four examples. We suggest you use your notebook as a learning log. You may like to make notes about what inspires you from these examples and your thoughts about how you could use or adapt them for your own workplace needs. It will also be useful to note any challenges they raise and how you could overcome them if you decide to use or adapt the examples given.
## Example 1

**Visioning the future: a day-long workshop to create a new strategy for the Developing Practice Network (formerly the Practice Development Forum)**

### Context and purpose
The Network needed to revitalise itself and engage members in a participatory strategy to create an effective future. The day was presented as discovering the 'current story' and 'new story' for the Network. A vision-into-action process was used to stimulate engagement, find out views and feelings, and release energy and ideas in a fun and energising way.

### Group size
Around 40 people - practice developers, facilitators, trainers, nursing and allied health practitioners from primary, acute and education settings from different regions of the UK.

### Outcome
A new strategy was created and committed to from the joint views and ideas of the 40 people attending the session.

### Time
11am–4.30pm including lunch and tea breaks.

### Materials/resources
There were:
- a lot of felt-tip pens and crayons
- two flipchart easels with pads and marker pens
- a large room with chairs around the sides
- two co-facilitators.

### Key activities
1) Introduction and ice breaker activities (for getting to know people and group forming - see the *Palette of resources* (pp.88–90) for ice breaker ideas). (20mins)

2) Exploring the Network's current story in small groups of 2-6 people. (30mins)

3) Sharing current story and theming the feedback. (30-40mins)

4) Exploring the new story (same small groups as above). (30mins)

5) Sharing the new story and identifying priorities. (60mins)

6) Forming vision-into-action teams and closing the day. (30mins)
Before you read further, take a moment to think about whether there are objectives in your workplace that could be successfully met by this type of approach. For example, enabling a group, a team or a department to generate a new identity and strategic action plan.

The example is explained in more detail below, followed by useful points to reflect on. You don’t need to use the method exactly as set out here, but can adapt it in ways to suit your own workplace or the groups you are working with.

**Workshop process**

Let’s look at the six key activities in more detail.

**Key activity 1**

Introductions about the session’s purpose, and activities to create connections between participants. Participants then divided into random small groups. Each group had a sheet of flipchart paper and some crayons/felt-tip pens.
Key activities 2 and 3

The groups were given 30 minutes to explore the current story. They were asked to:

- discuss their views and feelings about the Network, and how connected/disconnected they felt to/from it
- create a composite image – in any way they wished – to reflect the essence of their discussions
- decide who would present their drawing to the whole group.

During this activity the facilitators participated by working together as a pair doing the activity themselves.

The group was then asked to share the current story in two stages:

- a gallery viewing: all the groups laid their drawings out on the floor so that everyone could wander around to look at them and share informally what they could see, what they felt about the drawings or what they imagined the drawings conveyed
- each small group then verbally presented their drawing to the whole group, and key themes were captured by the facilitators on flipchart sheets.

Key activities 4 and 5

After lunch, the morning’s feedback was summarised by the facilitators. The same groups then worked on the new story. Each group was asked to:

- discuss what they wanted the Network to be/become
- change/amend/add to their pre-lunch drawing to reflect the new discussion, either by making changes to the image they produced in the morning, or by producing a new image
- note practical ideas/action steps to assist what participants wanted the Network to become.

The small groups then verbally presented their new story, with the facilitators capturing key themes on flipchart sheets. The whole group was then asked to vote for which themes (from both the morning and afternoon) should become priority ideas to be taken forward and developed.

This was done by numbers of hands and group discussion. Depending on time and group size, it can also be done by asking people to put stick-on dots next to points.

Key activity 6

Finally, vision-into-action groups were established to lead on and develop the priority ideas. Areas of the room were allocated to the priority ideas, and participants sorted themselves into vision-into-action groups to realise the key ideas for developing the Network.

The work of the vision-into-action groups was then developed through e-mail and further meetings.
Comment

The vision-into-action process was very effective in drawing out (literally!) participants’ views, feelings and ideas for revitalising the Network’s purpose and creating commitment to its future direction. The majority of participants had not experienced this method before, and engaged with it energetically. The images created (for example, a question mark hanging in space, which was then transformed into an exclamation mark well anchored to the ground) helped to succinctly capture perceptions and generate practical ideas for the Network’s future identity and purpose. Images acted as ‘anchors’ of participants’ views, providing a holistic picture that could instantly be understood, and creating shared understanding of both challenges and aspirations for the Network’s future.

Learning points to support your facilitation practice

Make sure you have your notebook to hand so that you note ideas from the learning points. Have you got questions or areas of uncertainty from the reflective exercise you did on the role and style of the facilitator (p.36)? If so, see whether these are answered or clarified by the learning points. (If these points don’t answer your questions, there are further learning points in each of the three remaining examples.)

We will look at the following topics:

- ☐ timing
- ☐ flexible facilitation
- ☐ aid to planning a workshop
- ☐ attending to the beginning of creative sessions
- ☐ attending to the end of creative sessions.

Timing

If you use this workshop as a guide, you can alter timings depending on group size and energy, people’s availability, the task and group relationships, so you may find you need more or less time for different sections of the workshop.

Flexible facilitation

During any creative session the prepared running order often changes, as you need to use your judgement to balance out three aspects:

- ☐ the real-world realities of participants’ needs
- ☐ attending to what emerges during the workshop
- ☐ meeting the workshop objectives.

You will need to decide whether you, or you and your co-facilitator(s), participate in activities perhaps as a pair or by joining different groups, or whether you stand back more and observe the process in which
participants are engaged. It is possible to participate and keep an eye out/feeling for how participants are working. You will need to make a choice based on your experience and feeling for what you can manage well and what is appropriate for the group with which you are working.

**Aid to planning a workshop**

Once you have prepared a draft running order, you can actively imagine participating in the whole workshop. This gives new information and insight into where you need to amend or change the running order, and is a way of critiquing and checking what you are planning to do. You can receive direct feedback from your imagined participation, which is richer than designing a workshop only from an intellectual point of view.

**Disney’s Strategy (Dilts, 1996: 88)**

This is a useful approach to creative planning. The strategy recommends discriminating between and using three aspects of our intelligence:

- the dreamer
- the realist
- the critic.

This approach has been adapted by the authors of this resource as a means of planning creative sessions and workshops.
The *dreaming self* is your broad vision and ideas.

The *realist* represents the real world constraints you have to manage:
- time and space available
- objectives and learning needs
- size of group
- resources available for the workshop – materials and numbers of facilitators
- resources to be supplied to participants such as handouts, etc.

Other important factors to take into consideration are:
- your assessment of the group’s likely knowledge and experience of what you will be facilitating
- what they will have been doing before the workshop
- what they will be doing afterwards.

Consideration of these factors helps to provide guidance on useful ways to start and end the session, and on how to link the session to where people have come from and what they are going on to do next.

The *critic* represents the range of needs and feedback you anticipate from the people participating in your workshop. By imaginatively participating in your workshop by putting yourself in participants’ shoes in advance, you can use your own feedback of being a ‘participant’ to:
- check whether you have given enough time to different elements
- check whether the sequencing of the workshop feels appropriate
- incorporate any unexpected learning that comes by imaginatively critiquing what you are planning to offer.

You can also test out your ideas with friends or colleagues through discussion or an actual rehearsal.

By using these three aspects of yourself you will help to give yourself a strong foundation in terms of what you facilitate and how you facilitate.

**Attending to the beginning of creative sessions**

This includes preparing:
- to support yourself as the facilitator
- the space you are working in
- the group you are working with.

**Preparing yourself**

It can be useful to invite an image to arise in your imagination to represent the essence of your intent for any session that you are facilitating. For example, one of the authors of this resource, Emma, has found that in some of her facilitation work her image is of being a bridge between the known and the unknown, or sometimes it can be a
garden in which new things can grow. The image acts as a carrier of intent and as a point of focus and grounding. If you can, take some quiet moments before you start to facilitate and use your image to help focus your energy and ground yourself.

Preparing the space

Allow enough time to influence or change the space you are working in before your meeting or session starts. With workshops you may find it much more conducive to put chairs into a circle or horseshoe, rather than having them in straight lines! So you may want to change the furniture in a space, perhaps bring flowers, or anything else that feels right, and make sure there are tables or floor-space for laying out creative materials.

Preparing the group

Think about this in terms of ‘setting the scene’. Each group with which you work will need an introduction to the purpose and intent behind any creative activity you are facilitating. Sometimes this may be short – five minutes or so, and sometimes longer – 10–20 minutes with questions. What you say will depend on the people you are facilitating, and your intent and assessment of the likely prior experience of your participants to creative ways of working.

Contextual intelligence is a term for thinking about what the needs of a particular group/team, etc. are. It is useful to know in advance what kinds of work are done by the people whom you will be facilitating, and what their exposure to creativity in the workplace is likely to be. (This experience may range from zero to a lot of experience.)

Use your assessment to then think through the purpose of the creative activity or session you are facilitating and what you need to say about it to help connect people to the purpose. Some people may need detailed explanations, others much less explanation and just simple encouragement to have a go. Invite participants to ask any question they feel they need to. As part of your evaluation it is also useful to ask for feedback on what does and doesn’t help in setting the scene.

The practice Emma has developed to prepare groups of up to 20 when facilitating half-day or whole-day sessions creatively is:

• introducing the session – discussing purpose, structure and giving an overview of the creative processes to be used
• inviting participants to chat in small groups of two or three about their responses to what she has said, including hopes and fears
• asking the small groups to share their responses so that the group and the facilitator understand where people are at, and what support or clarification is needed
• agreeing ground-rules: for example, confidentiality, and any other ground-rules agreed by the group.

If you are co-facilitating a group of more than 20, you can draw out hopes and fears by dividing the group into two subgroups. Each subgroup shares their hopes and fears onto a large flipchart sheet,
which members discuss with the co-facilitator. When finished, each subgroup visits the other subgroup so that there is an overall understanding of where the group as a whole is at.

For longer time periods, an option generated by the International Practice Development Collaborative at their week-long practice development schools is to invite participants to write statements about their hopes, fears and expectations on sticky notes. This is done at the beginning of the week. The statements are put up on flipchart sheets in the first morning for people to look through them. At the end of the week, each person reclaims the ones they wrote and responds to their beginning statement on the opposite side of the sticky note, or on another sheet. This enables accurate comparison for evaluation purposes.

**Attending to the end of creative sessions**

Some options on how to finish the session are:

- straight-forward discussion and evaluation
- inviting participants to convey the essence of their experience in a few words, or by describing an image from their imagination
- sharing verbally something they are leaving behind, and what they are taking with them
- taking ten minutes in pairs to use their imagination to make a simple drawing about the benefits and challenges of the session, and then verbally summarise the drawing with the rest of the group.

Your options will depend on group size and energy, the needs at the end of the session, and your judgement about what is appropriate.

**Endpoint – overall reflection**

Make notes of your thoughts and feelings about what you have found useful from this example and the learning points. You may also want to consider any situations in which you could use the example, and reflect on the following questions:

- Would you need to adapt the method?
- What support would you need?
- What challenges would you face, and how would you manage them?
- What would your aims be and how would you know you had been successful?
In the garden of a beautiful house, Angie found a mandala worked into the stonework of some steps. A mandala is an archetypal symbol in the form of a circle with equal-sized segments. Angie decided to use the mandala as a focal point for creativity. The photo above shows how a group of practice developers used the symbol to experiment with how to make sense of, and to synthesise, evidence that has been gathered creatively for evaluation of a practice development initiative.

**Moving on: Example 2**

The next example describes the use of culture collages (working with pictures from newspapers and magazines and objects from home or working environments – described in full below). This offers a different choice of method to Example 1, and may be more appropriate if people are less comfortable with drawing.

Culture collages are creative ways of describing and analysing workplace cultures. A collage may consist of:

- visual images (from newspapers and magazines)
- key words
- objects and sculptures placed on flipchart paper, card, etc., or in a specific space in a room.

To create the culture collage, use crayons, paints, pastels, charcoal or any other drawing materials. Objects may be from nature, or everyday materials such as keys, string, etc. brought from home or the workplace.

Sculptures may be made out of everyday objects in the room, clay or people. A people sculpture (often called a tableau) is formed by one or more people taking up a still gesture or stance which represents
something important about the workplace culture they are describing. The people in the tableau may be sitting, kneeling, standing, or lying down. They are likely to have particular expressions on their faces and to have their arms and hands in specific gestures that convey the nature of the culture they are expressing. Sculpting of people to represent situations has its origins in forms of theatre for social change such as Image Theatre (Boal, 2002). Participants may also choose to use clay to create shapes which are meaningful to them as illustrations of aspects of their workplace cultures.

A culture collage can have as little or as much in it as participants want. Participants choose freely which materials they want to work with.

The *Creating cultures of effectiveness* workshop in *Example 2* takes place within a number of week-long practice development schools run by the International Practice Development Collaborative (IPDC), of which the RCN is a partner, in the UK and internationally.

The other IPDC partners are Fontys University for Applied Sciences (The Netherlands), Foundation of Nursing Studies (UK), James Cook University (Australia), Monash University (Australia), Northern Sydney Central Coast Health (Australia), University of Ulster (UK), Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand) and Waikato District Health Board (New Zealand).
### Example 2

**Creating cultures of effectiveness workshop**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Context and purpose</strong></th>
<th>The aim of the session is for participants to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• creatively identify attributes of cultures (both effective and less effective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• generate the attributes of effective cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reflect on the relationship between culture and practice development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reflect on the relationship between themselves and their own workplace culture now and in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Group size** | A workable size group (20–25) where participants share something in common about their workplaces. The main group is divided into two smaller groups of about 10 participants, which may choose to subdivide into smaller groupings. |

| **Outcome** | The creation of culture collages by participants to reflect their aspirations of what is needed in terms of effective workplace cultures. Creating the culture collages generates understanding about the changes or development focus required to bring about effective cultures. |

| **Time** | 2 hours |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Materials/resources</strong></th>
<th>We use:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• felt-tip pens, crayons and pastels - you can include any other drawing materials you want to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• magazines and newspapers or a supply of images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• clay, scissors and glue sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• newspaper or other floor covering if paint is being used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• everyday small left-over and 'junk' items (e.g. empty wine bottles, plastic containers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• items from nature - leaves, flowers, small twigs, branches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• silver foil, coloured paper, tissue paper, card and felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a large room with chairs around the sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a handout article or book chapter on workplace cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a flipchart easel, paper and marker pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• one or two facilitators (usually two for 20–25 participants).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Key activities** | 1) Introductions. (5mins) |
|                   | 2) Creative work in small groups. (30mins) |
|                   | 3) Gallery viewing and sharing of collages. (30mins) |
|                   | 4) Aspirational culture in small groups and sharing. (30mins) |
|                   | 5) Reflective discussion and close. (20-25mins) |
Before you read further, take a moment to think about whether there are objectives in your workplace that could be successfully met by this type of approach. For example, enabling a group, a team or a department to generate an effective workplace culture.

The example is explained in more detail below, followed by useful points to reflect on. You don’t need to use the method exactly as set out here, but can adapt it in ways to suit your own workplace or the groups you are working with.

**Workshop process**

Let’s look at the five key activities in more detail.

**Key activities 1 and 2**

Workshop introduction of five minutes to explain the purpose of session, invite groups to organise themselves and indicate resources for use, followed by organising participants into small groups. Use facilitation skills to create feelings of safety and playfulness.

Offer participants the opportunity to create a picture (collage or sculpture) of their cultures as they are now. It’s really important to use few words here and give minimal advice – just suggest they have a go and see what emerges! Allow 30 minutes for this.

**Key activity 3**

Groups then move around each culture collage and hear from the presenters about their culture. Aim to get round the presentations in 30 minutes, with one facilitator drawing out concepts of cultures and practice development, which can be noted on flipchart sheets. Capturing metaphors and images can also be helpful. Gallery participants can offer comments on each collage, but these should be focused on ‘What I see here is …’, ‘What I feel from this is …’ rather than telling the creators what they have created, giving advice, or commenting on the quality of the creative work.

**Key activity 4**

Aspirational culture: now invite the same groups to amend or transform their creation to become a culture of effectiveness. Allow 15 minutes for amendments.

Groups then share their revised culture collages. Allow 15 minutes for this.

**Key activity 5**

Finally, the facilitators summarise what groups have said and link back to the purpose of the session. Participants are invited to refer to the handout, references, etc., to develop their understanding of concepts and theories in more detail. The session is then closed.
Comment

As a facilitator it is generally up to you to bring the session to a summary and then a close. As you go through the sharing of the creative collages and sculptures, you can make short notes on the key learning that is emerging so that you can reflect this back to participants at end of the session. If you really feel inspired yourself, you might be able to achieve this through the use of metaphors or by suggesting a series of visual images for participants to take away with them. Finally, it is helpful for participants to consider what actions they take that sustain the current culture and what actions they need to take to help a more effective workplace culture to emerge.

Learning points to support your facilitation practice

Here are further learning points about facilitating creatively. Make sure you have your notebook to hand to note thoughts and ideas that you find useful from these points. Check whether you have any unanswered questions or uncertainties from the exercise on the role and style of the facilitator (p.36), and see if these learning points are helpful.
We will look at the following topics:

- organising small groups
- sharing the presentations
- aspirational culture
- support material.

### Organising small groups

If participants have come from different settings, they can go into small groups of any kind, or may have their own ideas. If you are working with one organisation, the group members themselves will have clear ideas about how best to organise themselves, unless you want to challenge this!

### Sharing the presentations

If any small groups have created something fragile or with human sculptures these groups may need to give their presentation first.

### Aspirational culture

Bear in mind that the members of a group may decide not to change their culture collage when you invite them to amend it.

### Support material

Sometimes a short formal presentation on workplace culture before the creative session is also included, or a handout is given as part of the workshop with attributes of workplace cultures to assist in the creative session.

### Endpoint – overall reflection

Make notes of your thoughts and feelings about what you have found useful from this example and the learning points. You may also want to consider any situations in which you could use the example, and reflect on the following questions:

- Would you need to adapt the method?
- What support would you need?
- What challenges would you face, and how would you manage them?
- What would your aims be and how would you know you had been successful?

### Moving on: Example 3

The next example describes the use of creative processes to explore what it means to be a practice developer within two different approaches to practice development.
### Example 3

**Exploring the meaning of technical and emancipatory practice development**

| **Context and purpose** | On the second day of the week-long International Practice Development Collaborative school (see Example 2, p.48), participants are introduced to a continuum: at one end, technical practice development (e.g., project management) and at the other, emancipatory practice development (e.g., creating a culture of effectiveness). These approaches are described in a half-hour, formal presentation showing where they are located philosophically and theoretically. Many participants find this description pretty hard to think about in terms of what it means to them as practice developers. To help them search for personal meaning, participants are invited to work in small groups and, spontaneously and **without thinking**, to express, through a group painting, what it might feel like to be a facilitator of technical or emancipatory practice development. |
| **Group size** | There are usually between 30 and 50 participants at the schools and all attend the presentation. The small groups are ideally no more than eight people. |
| **Outcome** | Higher energy levels amongst participants; an embodied/internalised sense of what technical and emancipatory practice development is; being able to talk about the implications of taking a technical/emancipatory approach in relation to the key concepts explored during the week. |
| **Time** | 40mins |
| **Materials/resources** | We use: |
| | • a space near the presentation room with plenty of daylight and room for people to use tables or the floor to create their paintings |
| | • poster paint/brushes, sponges, toothbrushes, paper towels/plastic cups and jugs of water |
| | • 4–6 pieces of flipchart paper stuck together with sticky tape for each small group. |
| **Key activities** | 1) Agreeing the ground-rules for producing a group painting. (6mins) |
| | 2) Helping participants to feel more comfortable with what may be a strange or new experience for them. (4mins) |
| | 3) Painting in silence. (10mins) |
| | 4) Sharing the meanings that emerged through the experience of painting. (20mins) |
Before you read further, take a moment to think about whether there are objectives in your workplace that could be successfully met by this type of approach. For example, enabling individuals to explore what it means to be a practice developer.

The example is explained in more detail below, followed by useful points to reflect on. You don’t need to use the method exactly as set out here, but can adapt it in ways to suit your own workplace or the groups you are working with.

**Workshop process**

Let’s look at the four key activities in more detail. Where we refer to the facilitator below, we mean the lead facilitator. The other facilitators are alert and attuned to whether the groups need help, for example, to get going in the painting and to deal with whatever comes up. Their role is therefore to provide background support and to offer more active support if the need arises, e.g., someone becomes upset, or a group is not working effectively together.

**Key activity 1**

The facilitator explains the importance of creating ground-rules for doing a group painting, i.e. the importance of being respectful of, and not violating, each others’ painting space, as some people might feel very upset if someone added something to their creation without permission being given. Groups are encouraged to agree whether people are happy with others painting within their space (which people usually take to be the space on the bit of paper in front of them) and
then, if people are in agreement, how to move into the other person’s space in an acceptable way.

**Key activity 2**

The facilitator stresses that this activity is not about creating *Art*, with a capital ‘a’, rather it is about accessing our imagination and then expressing it creatively. It is explained that this is intended to be a playful process. The facilitator acknowledges that this may be a first for many, and that it may, therefore, be causing anxiety and blank minds. To help those whose minds may be blank, people are invited to choose the colour they are attracted to and move it about on the paper. The facilitator explains that if people trust the process, without any outcome in mind, something almost certainly starts to emerge on the paper, as if all on its own. Something that their imagination can play with.

**Key activity 3**

Painting seems to be best when done in silence, as silence deepens people’s capacity for creative imagining. Talking while painting, on the other hand, seems to shut this capacity off. If people start to talk or laugh (and they often do!), the facilitator gently suggests, for example, that working in silence might help them be more creative and imaginative, or that noise may be distracting for others. Only ten minutes is given for this part of the activity, because a short timespan nearly always opens up the potential for spontaneity because there is no time to stop and think, then freeze or dither!

**Key activity 4**

In a similar way to the previous examples, participants are invited to walk around the paintings, as if in an art gallery. The facilitator invites each group to put into words the meanings that emerged through painting. The facilitator encourages responses to the paintings in the form of ‘I see, I feel, I imagine’, so respondents own their own interpretation and are not re-interpreting the painters’ own.

**Comment**

Participants can be invited to add words or further images to group paintings, after the ‘art gallery’ sharing, to incorporate any new insights emerging from articulating meanings and hearing how others experience the painting. For example, International Practice Development Colloquium members used such an approach in their co-operative inquiry to explore the ultimate purpose of practice development in healthcare as human flourishing for all those who give and receive care. Engaging in the group picture reproduced on the next page helped inquiry participants to move into a cognitive approach to exploring human flourishing, that is, through concept analysis. Then, by combining this mental understanding with further artistic expression, new insights, and in some cases, perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1981) occurred (see p.55).
The members of the International Practice Development Colloquium used the creation of a mandala in their exploration of human flourishing as the ultimate outcome of practice development.

Learning points to support your facilitation practice

Here are further learning points about facilitating creatively. Make sure you have your notebook to hand to note thoughts and ideas that you find useful from these points. Check whether you have any unanswered questions or uncertainties from the exercise on the role and style of the facilitator, and see if these learning points are helpful.

We will look at the following topics:

- perspective transformation
- bringing out personal/team difficulties and inner obstacles
- bringing in new perspectives through creative imaging.

Perspective transformation

We have found that many people who bring their creative imaginations to bear on a topic or an issue through the use of creative arts media sometimes experience a complete turning around of previously held viewpoints, that is, they are now looking at the same thing, but from a completely different perspective. This is what Mezirow calls perspective transformation. Another way of looking at this transformation is that golden moment or ‘aha’ that we experience when the ‘penny drops’. For some International Practice Development Colloquium members, the combined activities described above helped
them to understand for the first time what critical creativity (McCormack and Titchen, 2006) meant. As facilitators, we can help people to embody theoretical understanding, like the difference between technical and emancipatory practice development, through giving people an opportunity to experience it. The experience is then explored in critical dialogue with others and with the theoretical literature.

**Bringing out personal/team difficulties and inner obstacles**

A facilitator must be aware that engaging in creative activities and critical, creative dialogue is likely to bring to the surface personal or interpersonal difficulties that may be getting in the way of bringing about change in the workplace. Therefore, as in other facilitation contexts, the facilitator must be knowledgeable and skilled in facilitation processes and group dynamics and processes. The RCN *Workplace resources for practice development* (RCN, 2006, in preparation) can help you develop your knowledge and skills in these areas.

**Bringing in new perspectives through creative imaging**

In addition to facilitating such creative activities as shown in *Examples 1–3*, there are other ways of bringing in new perspectives. For example, fresh perspectives can be brought to reports, articles, verbal and computer-aided presentations. You may want to scan in photographs or use graphic images to describe or give emphasis to points you want to make, just as we are doing here. You can integrate creative images into presentations to help convey the meaning and qualities of what your presentation is about.

---

**Walking in nature**

- Sheet of A4 folded into quarters & a pencil
- Beginning in silence to empty the mind
- Using nature as a metaphor to frame reflection
For example, these slides were used to show how walking in nature and using paintings, metaphors and so on can be used to help people to reflect on their practice and gain new insights.

Walking in nature

- Linking new insights and understandings to the things experienced, observed, touched, felt, smelt etc
- Making brief notes, drawings on the paper
- Writing up reflective notes asap

Consider also how you use space for meetings. You can transform the atmosphere of a room by including flowers or other materials. Holding away-days or workshops in places where you have access to gardens or other parts of nature can also be useful in supporting the energy and motivation of participants.

**Endpoint – overall reflection**

Make notes of your thoughts and feelings about what you have found useful from this example and the learning points. You may also want to consider any situations in which you could use the example, and reflect on the following questions:

- Would you need to adapt the method?
- What support would you need?
- What challenges would you face, and how would you manage them?
- What would your aims be and how would you know you had been successful?

**Moving on: Example 4**

The next example describes the use of creative methods to support project evaluation.
Example 4
Evaluating creatively: methods to support project evaluation

Context and purpose
A group of senior nurses from different clinical areas who had been through an RCN Clinical Leadership Programme were preparing an evaluation for presentation to their Trust board, and staff and management colleagues. The training manager was interested in innovative evaluation methods, and agreed to take the risk of using visual images and key words as a narrative process for project evaluation and presentation purposes.

Group size
8

Outcome
The training manager advised that the collage presentation to a Trust audience of 30 'went very well' and commented that 'you could really see how this group had progressed throughout the course - a fantastic way to present an evaluation'.

Time
Introductory session and two half-days.

Materials/resources
We used:
- flipchart paper
- felt-tip pens
- scissors
- glue sticks
- colour and black and white images cut from newspapers and magazines
- a meeting room with tables
- a facilitator.

Key activities
1) Introducing the aims and purpose of using visual images in a collage format for evaluation, and discussion of participants' hopes and fears. (30mins)
2) Development of themes for the creative evaluation and Trust presentation. (2 hours)
3) Making collage maps. (3 hours)
4) Finalising presentation material and planning and rehearsing the actual presentation. (3 hours)
Before you read further, take a moment to think about whether there are objectives in your workplace that could be successfully met by this type of approach. For example, enabling groups or teams to evaluate and present creatively.

The example is explained in more detail below, followed by useful points to reflect on. You don’t need to use the method exactly as set out here, but can adapt it in ways to suit your own workplace or the groups you are working with.

**Workshop process**

Let’s look at the four key activities in more detail.

**Key activities 1 and 2**

Following the introductions, the first session was used to review and reflect on the information the group had already gathered, and to theme the information into overarching topics which the collages would illustrate. The group focused on three key areas: the difference the programme had made to their professional development and practice, their team’s development, and improvements in patient care.

**Key activity 3**

The agreed topic areas acted as ‘news items’ about the impact of the leadership programme. In the second session, participants created individual collages on A3 paper to reflect their learning, achievements and challenges, selecting images and key words from the collage material that conveyed the impact of the programme under each topic area.

Before the next session, participants collated quotes from patients’ stories to present alongside the collage work.

**Key activity 4**

In the third session, participants reviewed their individual collages for any further changes or additions.

Participants then joined up into two small groups, and made two further collages. One collage summarised the differences achieved in patient care, and the second focused on recommendations for changes in organisational practice that affect patient care.

Finally participants rehearsed the Trust presentation, by agreeing an introduction and rehearsing how to communicate their presentation including the collage work and quotes from patient stories.

**Comment**

A very large amount of information on the impact of the programme had already been captured on flipchart sheets in group discussions by the participating nurses. The purpose of the collage work was to get to
the essence of this information by synthesising it into overarching themes. The significant elements of the nurses’ experiences, the changes in practice, and the impact on patient care were then communicated through a visual narrative by creating a series of collages to tell the story. The collages were accompanied by quotes from patients’ stories and the nurses’ observations of patient care.

**Learning points to support your facilitation practice**

Here are further learning points about facilitating creatively. Make sure you have your notebook to hand to note thoughts and ideas that you find useful from these points. Check whether you have any other unanswered questions or uncertainties from the exercise on the role and style of the facilitator, and see if these learning points are helpful.

We will look at the following topics:

- taking risks
- creatively managing information
- essence of evaluation.

**Taking risks**

Working creatively is about taking risks. This needs to be negotiated and prepared for when being introduced for the first time. Have an actual example (e.g. of a collage) to share with participants when discussing and introducing a creative way of working, so that participants can see and ask questions about the creative process to which you are referring.

In a different project, nurses in a Trust took the risk of using collage as a presentation format at a ward sisters’ meeting to present the aspirations, challenges and outcomes for improving nutrition for older people. They received feedback that this was a powerful way of presenting the different dimensions and outcomes of a project.

**Creatively managing information**

Development, education and research initiatives can generate very large amounts of data. Creative media offer ways of making sense of information and data, and conveying outcomes in novel ways which generate energy and momentum among participants and audiences.

In a different project, lead research and development nurses used collage methods to make sense of research data in an action research project by drawing out key themes and messages to inform their research reports, clinical supervision and end-of-project Trust presentations.

**Essence of evaluation**

Using creative media can be effective in helping people to get at the nub or essence of their evaluation of, say, a meeting, workshop or activity. By inviting people, spontaneously and without thinking too
Opening doors on creativity – Section B

hard (if at all), to offer a metaphor, an image, a sound, or a gesture, it is possible to get at a synthesis of people’s experience of the particular meeting, workshop, etc. For example, at the end of an action learning set, a facilitator might invite people to evaluate the session by saying, ‘If the set today was a musical, what would it be?’ or ‘If it was a garden, what would it look like?’. Or the facilitator might suggest a gesture that captures their experience that day. So one individual might stay sitting and put their head in their hands to show how difficult and frustrating it had been that day to reflect critically and creatively on their issue, whilst another might stand up and point forward and up with a straight arm to express the new clarity and direction. Or a series of gestures might be suggested by a facilitator to evaluate the set’s working together over time. The use of gesture can also be used by a group to create a tableau (see Moving on: Example 2, pp.46–47) of their shared evaluation of their learning together.

Endpoint – overall reflection

Make notes of your thoughts and feelings about what you have found useful from this example and the learning points. You may also want to consider any situations in which you could use the example, and reflect on the following questions:

- Would you need to adapt the method?
- What support would you need?
- What challenges would you face, and how would you manage them?
- What would your aims be and how would you know you had been successful?

Now that you have read or studied all four examples in Section B, you might like to take 10 minutes to summarise what your next steps are for your creative practice. Perhaps there are ideas from this section that you would like to incorporate in your action plan from the end of Section A. Alternatively, you might like to make a creative response – using any materials and method you wish – to represent the essence of your learning from working with this resource. Your response could act as a reminder and source of inspiration about what you have gained from using this resource!

Next stage of the resource

This is the end of Section B. The final section of the resource is the Palette of resources, which provides information on creative courses, contacts and references. We hope you have found this resource useful and welcome any feedback you want to give. Please use the feedback sheet at the end of the Palette of resources.

If you would like to send us a description of creative methods you have used – in the same format as the examples in this section – we will consider including it in the Palette of resources for others to learn from.
Palette of resources
Purpose and content

The *Palette of resources* is like a signpost which can lead you to different places to be explored. It offers you various paths that act as sources of further information for your continued personal and professional development in the field of creativity. There are three paths for you to browse:

Path 1  In this part of the *Palette* you will find suggestions for further reading and websites about personal creativity, the application of creativity in healthcare and the wider field of arts and health, and practical examples of creative arts facilitation.

Path 2  Here you can discover descriptions of a creative cycle so that you can link your own creative experience to some of the theoretical knowledge about the creative process. This path also includes questions to enable you to reflect on your creative experiences.

Path 3  This part of the *Palette* contains examples of warm-up or relaxation activities that you could use with groups. You are offered the core elements of the activities. You might want to develop the activities as you work with groups and add more to your own palette. You will also find advice on working with guided visualisation.

Of course, it is entirely up to you which path you choose to wander down. You can revisit the *Palette* in the future and choose another path to explore. You might find you are more drawn to a different path as your experience with creativity broadens.

At the end of this *Palette of resources* there is a feedback sheet, and we would very much appreciate your comments on this creative arts resource.
Path 1  Further reading, websites and practical examples

This path is arranged into four subcategories:

1 Ways of developing creative potential – these references include creative approaches to personal, social, and organisational development, and provide exercises and activities for developing creativity in oneself and in organisations.

2 Examples of creative practice in healthcare – these references describe how different forms of creativity have been used in healthcare.

3 The wider field of arts in health – since this field is constantly developing we have provided a small selection of websites to provide a broad picture of the ‘arts in health’ field.

4 Examples of the use of creative arts in a variety of settings and contexts – we hope these illustrative examples will encourage you, and inspire you to investigate the use of the creative arts in your own setting(s).

Ways of developing creative potential

Suggested further reading


Courses and websites

http://www.artspsychotherapy.org/
An institute of further education in London that provides short courses on the imagination and the arts for personal development.

http://www.avivagold.com/corporate.html
A practising artist whose site includes a map of the creative cycle.

http://www.beingwithpatients.nhs.uk/
This group, led by a consultant nurse, works with theatre and video to explore the nature of being with patients.

http://www.cardboardcitizens.org.uk/
A theatre company which hosts annual workshops by Augusto Boal, the founder of Image Theatre and Forum Theatre.

http://www.cmclean.com/
The Canadian Creative Arts in Health, Training and Education (CCAHITE) website.
http://www.creatingspaces.co.uk/
Study days, retreats, natural breaks and creative workshops in East Sussex.

http://www.lapidus.org.uk/
The Lapidus Foundation specialises in creative writing and performance for personal development and wellbeing, and runs courses and conferences.

http://www.nosetonose.info/
Workshops and courses in Britain and Europe on ‘discovering the clown within’, through play, spontaneity and improvisation.

The accredited RCN facilitation standards will enable you to develop your facilitation expertise in any area of facilitation practice, including the creative arts.

http://www.rcn.org.uk/resources/practicedevelopment/about-pd/processes/creative/
The RCN practice development team’s creative arts page.

The RCN practice development team’s news and event page.

http://www.sacred-clown-as-healer.co.uk
Workshops and courses in London and Europe which aim to release creativity and ‘bring forth a poetic imagination of life’.

Another good place to find out about local courses in creativity or workshops in your area is an alternative bookshop or café or the local library.
Examples of creative practice in healthcare education, practice development and research

You may find the following audio CD helpful:


Suggested further reading


Opening doors on creativity – Palette of resources


---

**The wider field of practice of arts in health**

**Websites**

http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/
Enter ‘arts and health’ in the search box on the home page of the Arts Council website to find 15–20 arts and health related links.

www.creativemethods.org.uk
The network aims to provide academics, researchers and practitioners in health and social care with a forum where they can explore, theorise and promote the use of creative methods in educational and research practice.

http://www.creativewritingonline.com/
Allows authors to ‘showcase their talent to the world’.

http://www.dur.ac.uk/cahhm
The Centre for Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine, an independent research and evaluation resource based at Durham University.

http://www.herts.ac.uk/lis/subjects/arttherapy/artther2.htm
This website is part of the University of Hertfordshire’s Learning and Information Services, and provides details of a wide selection of Internet sites relevant to the arts therapies.

http://www.lahf.com/
The London Arts in Health Forum (LAHF) is a networking organisation for health and arts professionals and health-related organisations.

http://www.mapfoundation.org/
Visual art exhibitions, literature, and workshops for patients and health professionals on the emotional aspects of illness. The MAP Foundation is co-founded by Michele Petrone, artist and patient.
http://www.mmu.ac.uk/artsforhealth
Arts for Health at Manchester Metropolitan University is a pioneering force in the development of arts and health in Britain and internationally.

http://www.musictherapy.org/
The website of the American Music Therapy Association.

http://www.nnah.org.uk/
The National Network for the Arts and Health is a membership organisation open to all and provides information, conferences, advocacy and networking on regional and national arts and health projects.

http://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/
Click on Policy areas, click on Humanities, for listings of reports on the humanities in healthcare published by the Nuffield Trust. See particularly Appendix A (a summary of developments on the arts in health field) in the report Creative arts and humanities in healthcare: swallows to other continents (Coats et al., 2004).

http://www.rcn.org.uk/resources/practicedevelopment/about-pd/processes/creative/
The RCN Institute collaborated in the Seizing the fire collaborative inquiry. The inquiry looked at personal creativity and the use of creative arts – such as painting, clay modelling, dramatisation, music, movement and creative writing – in practice development, research, education and practice.

Finally, you may be interested in the Canadian Creative Arts in Health, Training and Education e-Newsletter edited by Cheryl McLean. Send an e-mail to cmvoice@rogers.com requesting to be added to the free newsletter mailing. Mailings will be four times a year – Spring/Summer/Fall/Winter.
Examples of the use of creative arts in a variety of settings

These examples cover settings as diverse as palliative care, community health, nursing education and research, practice development and whole systems working, and demonstrate different uses of the creative arts in healthcare.

The facilitators who provided these examples were involved in the Nuffield Trust funded report *Creative arts and humanities in healthcare: swallows to other continents* (Coats et al., 2004), which was one of the inspirations for *Opening doors on creativity*.

We are grateful for their permission to include the examples in this resource. We hope that you will find them interesting and inspirational.
Practice example 1: From reflective practice to visioning the future: using creative arts in nursing development and in patient and user involvement

As an independent facilitator, I work with a variety of arts-based media with practitioners and managers, educators, students and researchers in nursing. This work enables people to free up their own thinking and engage with novel approaches to learning and development. My aim is to facilitate participants to use their own creativity to support a range of objectives, including:

- innovative approaches to reflective practice
- team development, evaluation and research
- visioning the future for service improvements.

In palliative care I work with image theatre to support reflective practice. Image theatre is a participative drama process that is primarily non-verbal, and requires no previous experience. It is a narrative and experiential approach to learning, and starts with small group work, with participants sharing challenging episodes from clinical practice. I invite participants to share stories (respecting confidentiality) that feel unresolved, and from which they wish to gain insight in order to develop their practice. Participants discuss the common and unique themes embedded in their stories, and then select one story per small group for transformation into image theatre. This consists of turning the selected story into a series of still scenes. The first scene captures the storyteller’s current perception of the issues contained in their story, and the second scene shows what the storyteller would like to have happened. The two different scenes are portrayed by participants who have been put into statues or silent gestures to represent the key issues contained in the story. Those not in the first scene witness it by sharing out loud what the scene illuminates in terms of feelings being expressed, power, relationships, and caring. The first scene is then transformed into a second one – what the storyteller would like to happen instead. We compare the second scene to the first one, and discuss the learning the two scenes have provoked. This may be changes in attitudes or perspective, release of feelings from difficult situations, new understanding about patient-centredness, or greater choice in terms of caring in practice.

Comments from practitioners who have participated in this approach illustrate some of the benefits of this way of working: ‘image theatre provided an excellent opportunity to explore emotions and how they can affect our practice’; ‘image theatre has heightened my awareness of individual perception relating to the whole picture – useful for situations where there is choice over change in reactions and behaviours’; image theatre ‘offers a new way of dealing with problem-solving in what are often very complex situations’.

Another creative approach I use is the visual medium of collage (colour and black and white images cut from newspapers and magazines). Collage is a fun and powerful way of enabling groups and teams to get to the heart of issues in connection to visioning the future, project evaluation, or working on action planning and development. The process of creating collage ‘maps’ (flipchart paper
covered with a variety of colour and black and white visual images that reflect people’s aspirations, challenges, goals, and feelings) acts as an exciting catalyst for change, and is very effective in creating ownership and commitment. This process of visual thinking enables groups to:

• arrive at a sense of common purpose
• improve shared understanding of similarities and differences
• explore obstacles and difficulties
• achieve clarity about the way forward and actions for implementation
• in the case of evaluation, review and communicate with impact achievements and recommendations from programmes or projects.

I have worked with collage for a broad range of purposes. For example:

• with a patient group, using collage to evaluate and present their experience of an expert patient programme
• with staff and managers across grades in a hospital, using collage to articulate the goals and aspirations and to clarify themes and objectives to create the new five-year strategy for nursing and midwifery
• with a group of Practice Development Units in a university healthcare department, using collage as the foundation to develop a common strategy and purpose
• with a team of nurses in an NHS Trust, to clarify the issues, challenges and goals in an action research project for improving care for older people, and to make sense of their research data
• with senior nurses in a hospital, for evaluating and presenting the impact and outcomes of a Royal College of Nursing Clinical Leadership Programme.

Patients who worked with collage for the expert patient programme shared that: ‘it was great, felt more positive’ and ‘everybody should have the opportunity to use it’.

Managers have said that this way of working has been: ‘very valuable’ for visioning the future, and ‘a fantastic way of presenting an evaluation’.

Nurse practitioners have commented that: ‘the collage creating really helped me to think in a different way which I really needed’ and ‘it’s a very powerful tool which may be used in a number of settings’.

Emma Coats
Independent Consultant and Facilitator
Alchemy Consulting, London.
e-mail: emmalcoats@yahoo.com
Practice example 2: Dance in health

There are many exciting and challenging dimensions to be explored in medicine’s journey towards a more holistic approach to healthcare. One of the more unlikely dimensions to take prominence in health programmes in recent years in Northern Ireland has been the creative dimension of caring. Introducing the Arts into health programmes has led to the engagement of 15 professional artists from different disciplines under the umbrella of the charitable organisation, Artscare.

As a Laban-trained community dance teacher, I have been the Artscare dancer-in-residence for the last 10 years at Knockbracken Healthcare Park, South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, Northern Ireland. I deliver weekly programmes of community dance to service users and staff throughout the Trust, as well as fulfilling the role of artistic director for Orbit Dance. Orbit Dance is the resident dance company at South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. The dancers attend day-care services facilities and are adults with learning and physical disability. My dance workshops are now an integral part of the health and art culture that exist side by side at the large psychiatric campus where I work and share my residency with a visual artist and musician. As a dance artist, my creative work is never compromised, nor do I feel that I lose my integrity as a creative professional by working in a health environment. I deliver my work as a dance professional and not a dance therapist. I do, however, respect the role of the dance therapist within healthcare.

A diverse range of health services such as acute mental health, dementia care, day-care services and young people’s services access the weekly creative dance programmes, either on- or off-ward. The off-ward dance workshops take place in the Artscare Dance Studio at Knockbracken Healthcare Park. This fully-equipped dance studio within a healthcare setting provides a much-needed creative space for staff and service users to explore, through the medium of dance, their own sense of identity and creativity, hopefully contributing to a heightened sense of wellbeing. I have observed people through dancing together negotiate creative solutions to complex personal and professional issues within a supportive, caring health environment.

Healthcare, like education, can often be about targets, testing and commercialism, thus narrowing the imaginative space necessary for self-evaluating and self-discovery. Today we celebrate the new partners of health such as dance, which provide an alternative language that can be used as a tool in healthcare to give expression to our deepest emotions, thus nurturing the soul. Healthcare can sometimes be dislocated from the community experience. However, experience of a sustainable arts in health culture, as established here in Northern Ireland, demonstrates that community models of healthcare can be enhanced by engagement with the creative process.

Jenny Elliott, Dancer-in-Residence, Artscare, South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, Belfast, Northern Ireland; Artistic Director – Company Maine and Orbit Dance, resident dance companies, South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust e-mail: jenny@elliottj.fsworld.co.uk
Practice example 3: Using creativity in learning and development

Western society struggles to embrace ageing as a positive aspect of life and something that happens throughout the lifespan. As we age, many aspects of our lives change, grow, develop and diminish – all part of normal life change. For this reason, the idea of ‘transitions’ in ageing has become important, as has the need for all of us to understand that how we deal with transition can help us adapt to our ageing processes and responses. With this agenda in mind, The Royal Bank of Scotland Centre for the Older Person’s Agenda http://www.qmuc.ac.uk/opა/ held a workshop for older people, professional and lay carers and volunteers to explore ‘transitions in ageing’. The workshop was funded by NHS Scotland as part of its Mental health and wellbeing in later life programme. The workshop explored the idea of ‘transitions' in life and how we deal with them. It was intended that at the end of the workshop we would have a better understanding of:

- what transitions are
- what transitions mean to us personally
- how we can manage transitions and grow through them
- how to enjoy transitions in life and celebrate them as a normal part of life.

I facilitated the workshop (four hours repeated twice) during this day. The purpose of the workshop was to explore the meaning of transitions for all of us in our lives, become aware of our emotional and behavioural responses to transition and explore strategies for managing transitions. In facilitating the workshop, I used creative approaches to exploration in order to integrate individuals’ personal knowledge with established conceptual models. We worked with metaphor, visualisation, images, paint and clay in order to generate individual and collective understandings of transitions and their meanings. Each participant produced individual creations in the form of collage, sculpture or creative narrative to illustrate their understandings and experiences. These creative responses were analysed individually and as a group and linked to a conceptual model of transition. Key issues for dealing with transitions were developed and shared.

For most participants in the group, this was their first experience with the use of creative approaches to learning. However, some comments from participants indicated that the creative approach was a refreshing and rewarding experience: ‘learning does not have to be academic’; ‘art is therapeutic’; ‘interactive methods can work’.

Professor Brendan McCormack, Director of Nursing Research and PD Royal Hospitals Trust/University of Ulster, Nursing Development Centre, 3rd Floor
Royal Victoria Hospital, Grosvenor Road, Belfast BT12 6PA
e-mail: brendan.mccormack@royalhospitals.n-i.nhs.uk
Practice example 4: Breaking down the walls of silence: transforming services for people with dementia

This redesign project took a ‘whole systems’ approach to the improvement of services for people with dementia in Swindon, Wiltshire. The redesign team was made up of people from all areas of the delivery and use of the services:

- healthcare professionals, managers and administrators, from primary, community and secondary care
- social services professionals
- service users and carers – who played an integral part throughout the process, from appraising the evidence to implementing new ways of working.

A wide range of creative processes, including creative workshops and collective storytelling, was used as a central part of the redesign process, all within an underpinning framework of complexity theory. The purpose of a creative approach was primarily to enable the redesign team to develop a dynamic where they would be able to participate on a more equal footing. This was achieved by a series of creative workshops that helped to facilitate the emergence of novel ways of acting, thinking and (self)-organising. Participants engaged in collective storytelling, which enabled them to experience – and better understand – the service user’s journey and the different roles that are played in that journey.

Theatre and creative methods were also used to disseminate research outcomes and to engage other teams in active participatory learning. Many other services have been able to use this as a starting point for their own redesign process, including a pilot in Brisbane, Australia, which is now being implemented across Queensland.

Marian and Shaun Naidoo

For more details please contact:

Marian Naidoo
NIMHE Service Development Team and Naidoo and Associates
e-mail: naidoo@waitrose.com
Practice example 5: The power of narrative for demonstrating quality of care

Evaluation is the declaration of the worth and value of something. In healthcare settings this is the quality of care the patient receives and the competence and professionalism of all staff involved. Quality care cannot be evaluated solely by successful treatment – by statistical or even descriptive outcome data. The quality of the caring process – the relationships established, attention to patient choice and family wishes, and interprofessional agreement and action – is integral to any judgement of the quality of care. It is here that the creative arts can provide data and understanding that is not accessible by other means.

Take, for example, the case of palliative care and the following edited scenario of a detailed narrative, one of a number of methods that could be used to provide evidence of quality of care. The full narrative outlines every decision and action taken in this case to provide quality care to the patient and the family, while at the same time supporting the nursing staff who cared for the patient.

In this example, a nurse consultant faces the difficult case of an elderly patient with end-stage liver disease who has become paranoid as a result of toxins from her liver. She stands in the middle of the ward with her case packed, accusing the nursing staff of trying to poison her. At the same time she is frightened and anxious, as indeed is her daughter who arrives on the ward shaking with tears.

The senior nurse tries to placate the patient but soon realises that the only way forward is to sedate her. She is reluctant to do this – to sedate a patient who is still well enough in her body to stand and walk – but feels, after trying to seek advice from the consultant and talking with the patient’s daughter, that this is a dignified option in her current state. Given the patient’s paranoia and her wish to stay in control, giving the injection proves to be a most difficult and traumatic task for all concerned.

The senior nurse who gave the injection subsequently wrote a six-page narrative describing every decision taken and the reasons for those decisions in situ and every interaction and emotional reaction of the nursing staff, the patient, the daughter, and other colleagues on the ward.

It is a most sensitive portrayal of the complexity of decision-making in a highly-charged emotional situation, where thinking and acting quickly is imperative but also needs to be sensitive to patient and family wishes. It demonstrates without a shadow of a doubt the quality of care the nursing staff, in this instance, gave to the patient, to the daughter and, in the process and aftermath, to each other.

Narrative portrayal captured the value of this caring in a way no other method could. Video (even if access were granted) may have enabled others to judge the quality of aspects of the caring and outcome. However, it would not have demonstrated the subtlety and complexity of the caring, which the detailed reasoning built into the narrative did, and it would have been insensitive in this context to seek video access.
Opening doors on creativity – Palette of resources

The narrative provides the reasoned evidence that persuades and demonstrates the quality of care.

Helen Simons
Professor of Education and Evaluation
University of Southampton
Highfield, Southampton
S017 1BJ
e-mail: h.simons@soton.ac.uk
h.simons@talktalk.net

Sue Duke
Researcher, School of Health and Social Care
Oxford Brookes University
Jack Straws Lane, Marston, Oxford
OX3 0FL
e-mail: sd11@soton.ac.uk

© 2006 RCNI
## Practice example 6: The use of creative arts in research writing

Those concerned with research and practice development processes that often remain unexamined and implicit in the shadows are beginning to use creative arts to light them up for critical review. For example, Angie Titchen and Hilary Byrne Armstrong have written a chapter for a forthcoming book, *Being critical and creative in qualitative research*. Their chapter, *Dancing with light and shadows*, is an exploration of the hidden facilitation processes that enable the critical, creative and soul-full ‘becoming’ that can occur through qualitative research. These facilitation processes are explored through the metaphor of a dance in five movements and by using a poetic writing style. The dance is situated at the edges of the light and the shadows, through which artistry, creativity, personal ethics, spirituality and soul emerge as key performers.

The chapter is about re-directing and facilitating one’s own journey and those of others towards research that is transformational for those involved. This means enabling the critical, creative and spiritual becoming of self and others. The dance symbolises the courage needed, and the transformational and visionary qualities and strategies needed, to work at the boundary of order and chaos and to live transformational qualitative research.

The dance improvises and harmonises different aspects of self, and accesses spirituality and soulfulness in research. It was inspired through Angie’s critical companionship (a holistic facilitation relationship) with Brendan McCormack, who witnessed and pointed out the unseen shadows in one of her own literal dances. This witnessing and feedback encouraged (emphasis on the courage!) Angie to depart from traditional forms of research writing.

The result is a piece of work with the potential to deepen the articulation of facilitation and research artistry, in the context of creating healthy, respectful people spaces and enabling human flourishing through research.

‘Nested in the dance and cradled in Communities of Human Flourishing, Others hear the Secrets of Life and improvise the steps to make them their own. It is time to dance the Soul back home, to relationships, to research and its politics and to life …’

(Titchen and Byrne Armstrong, in preparation)


Angie Titchen, Senior Research and Practice Development Fellow, Royal College of Nursing, London, and Clinical Chair Evidence Based Practice, Fontys University for Applied Sciences, The Netherlands e-mail: angie.titchen@rcn.org.uk

© 2006 RCNI
Opening doors on creativity – Palette of resources

Practice example 7: Using creative arts in practice development

I first used creative arts at the practice development school in Eindhoven in 2003. My first impression was that I found it a little bit awkward. It was new and strange to me. I couldn’t place it, as I wasn’t clear what the purpose of it was, where we were going with it and how we were going to use it. It was awkward because I was not used to expressing myself in this way.

I used creative media to explore what I think practice development is. I didn’t know what to do – at first I tried to find words for what practice development is, and then translate those words into creative things. I found it difficult, but continued with it. When I saw others doing it, and afterwards, when I explained what my creation was, and why it was this way, it became more clear to me – expressing what you feel and what you see, and then trying to find the words for it. I had to see it first, because I didn’t know what the purpose was at first. When I saw what the purpose was, and how it could work, it became meaningful for me and then I could use it. That’s how it was the first time I used creative arts.

I went on to use creative arts as a facilitator in the practice development schools – not using it as often as we did in the first two or three schools, but adjusting it to the group I was working with. I was looking for the balance of cognitive and creative. I used it in the same way as a participant the first time – I didn’t change that. What I did change, based on my experience, was to explain first why we are doing this exercise, so not jumping into it, but giving an explanation first. The preparation is different, but the way you do it and use it is the same.

What was helpful for me in making the transfer from being a participant to being a facilitator of creative arts was seeing others doing it. And not only doing it, but also explaining it afterwards. The main strategy for me was to be a participant, and observe what was going on in myself, but also what others were doing, and what they said. Also asking others ‘Can I use this?’, or asking whether I could go into others’ workspace during the creating of the artwork. Also if you don’t articulate creative arts afterwards and don’t link it to an existing framework, then it is not effective, and it cannot be taken seriously in other situations. Then it is only playing around. It can differ from theory, but you must articulate it and link it to what is out there.

As I use creative arts as a facilitator more often, I have become comfortable in their use, and in explaining their use to others. What helped me to move from feeling uncomfortable to feeling comfortable is seeing that it works, that you come to other results, other conceptualisations of, for example, what transformational practice development is. So it gives you other perspectives on certain concepts. This helps practice development, because you develop it further, and it is not stuck to a particular definition or concept.

What I see happening with participants at practice development school is that they find they know more about practice development than they
thought. If you ask them to explain what practice development is, they
don’t go that far in explaining it. But if they explain it in a creative way,
they realise that they know a lot more. And that is good to see. The
participants are then also valuing creative work as a way of developing
their knowledge. At first maybe they have the same uncomfortable
feeling as I had, but when they do it, and afterwards when they explain
it or present it to others, they see how it works. The benefit of
uncovering what they know makes it easier for them to use it in their
own practice, and to explain it and show it to others in their working
environments. It is more than reading what is out there in the literature
of practice development, and remembering it. It is easier to do it this
way, and it is easier to transfer to others too.

If you notice that the members of a group are not feeling comfortable
with creative arts, or seem unwilling to use creative arts, and you still
use the approach, I think you will lose them on a course. So it is
important to try to find the right way to use it with each group, and
give them the freedom to use it or not.

I have used creative arts with the practice development schools, with
the management team and for a study day with nursing staff. We used
it as a way of expressing the current culture in the nursing department,
and how they would see an effective or future culture.

I experience that I use the principles of using creative arts in other
situations too. Not just in creative activities, but also in meetings. It is
more or less in the ground-rules of using creative arts that you use
them in meetings. It is about being conscious or aware of what I am
doing, and what others are doing. In some meetings I feel I could
comfortably use creative arts – where I think people are open for
doing this, they will take it seriously. But I can’t do it when I feel that
they will only laugh at it, and not take it seriously.

I have used angel cards in a meeting, and I have used visual imagery in
presentations. I took pictures of participants doing their image theatre
at the last practice development school as an example of how you can
use it. I presented pictures that show that there has been a
transformation of nursing culture in the last 10 years, with regards to
what they would see as an effective working place for nurses and
students. If you look carefully at those pictures, they tell the whole
story.

For someone starting to work with creative arts, I would explain why
we do such creative work, then do it together, and, having done it,
articulate why we did those things. And I would say it is fun – I can say
that now! I can see why it works – the evidence is there. It’s fun to do.
I can let go of the uncomfortable feeling. And if you see what you are
going to get out of it, it is really fun to do.

Karen Cox, Clinical Chair
Knowledge Centre for Evidence Based Practice, Fontys University for
Applied Sciences, Eindhoven, The Netherlands
e-mail: k.cox@fontys.nl
Path 2  Information on the creative cycle

As in any field, there are different theories and conceptual frameworks about the creative process. A couple of theoretical frameworks that may be useful for you are summarised below. You can use these theories to further develop your understanding of creativity. You may like to simply read the descriptions or you may want to do some more detailed work with them, such as reflection on your own practice with the theory. There is some guidance and preparation you might like to explore first if you are going to work in this more detailed way. If not, just skip this next section and go straight on to reading about the frameworks.

Guidance

Take a few moments to read the Preparation notes below and then study the two theoretical descriptions of creativity by Kiebert and Robbins. You may need 15–20 minutes for each of the two descriptions as there are questions to help link your experience to the various concepts. This activity will provide an opportunity to enhance your understanding of the successes, challenges and needs of your creative practice when being creative yourself or when you are working in a facilitative way with others.

Preparation

Have a notebook and pen with you and make sure you have a quiet or relaxing space around you.

Let your mind start to recall creative experiences you have been involved with and then focus on a few of them. For example, you could make use of the experiences you have had with this creative resource, perhaps in one of the activities in Section A. Any creative experience of your choice is fine. Now when you are ready, hold two experiences loosely at the back of your mind. You might just want to make a few notes about the key points in each experience. As you read through the two theoretical frameworks below, use one of your experiences with each to learn more about how the stages presented by the authors relate to your own experience. There are short questions after each stage to help focus your reflections. If you think of any more questions make a note of them.

Kiebert's creative cycle

The artist Coeleen Kiebert (see Kiebert, 2001) presents the creative process as five stages in a continuous cycle.
Stage 1: Statement of intention

The first stage is choosing a focus and making a commitment to a creative intent. You could compare this to choosing to do an activity in Section A of this resource or any other creative activity.

Reflection cues: Take a few moments to jot down your thoughts in response to the following questions:

• Did you pay attention to this stage?
• How well did you make your intent clear when deciding to be creative?
• What helped you to commit to your own creative process and to follow it through?

Stage 2: Gathering

This stage has both a practical and attitudinal aspect. It is about preparing your environment, collecting your materials, and deciding to engage with a creative activity. There is a feeling of momentum building, though there may be doubts, struggle and uncertainty. Kiebert says she found, ‘it was necessary to actually not know where I was headed in order for a new understanding about creativity to come forth’ (Kiebert, 2001: 33).

The gathering stage can be compared to getting ready to do one of the creative activities in Section A and starting it, even though you may be unsure about what you are embarking on, and nothing is clear. This can be a challenging stage, and requires trust in following an activity through. It can be compared to Keats’ dictum about negative capability discussed in Section A of this resource.

Reflection cues: Take a few moments to reflect on how you experienced the gathering stage.

• What helped you to stay in this stage even if you found it difficult?
• What did you think your (or others’) needs were in this stage, and how did you support them?

Stage 3: Explosion

This stage is about becoming absorbed in the creative process. It may consist of actual art making – in any medium – or receiving insights or images in your mind. It is characterised by finding yourself completely caught up in a creative activity, with all your attention absorbed in what you are doing or experiencing. You are engaged and fully committed to whatever is happening and all doubt and uncertainty has dissolved.

Reflection cues: Jot down some notes in response to the following questions:

• Did you have this feeling when you were being creative?
• What helped you (or others if you were facilitating) to have this kind of experience?
Opening doors on creativity – Palette of resources

• What would have helped to make this stage of the creative cycle feel more absorbing for you?

Stage 4: Assimilation

This stage is about reflecting on your creative experience. It is about acknowledging what has happened, appreciating what you have made or discovered, and making connections to other concepts or experiences, if appropriate. It requires the ability to sit with and absorb the fullness of the experience you have had, with both its difficulties and its successes. Kiebert characterises it as an internal learning experience which leads on to the fifth stage.

Reflection cues: Take some moments to respond to the following:
• Did I give time to this stage, and acknowledge both my achievements and challenges?
• Did I ensure others have enough time for this stage?

Stage 5: Cognition

This is the stage of sharing with others. Kiebert describes this stage as shifting from ‘being immersed emotionally inside a purely personal experience [assimilation] to one of being more objective, discerning and critical, along with others.’ (Kiebert, 2001: 34).

Reflection cues: Jot down a few notes in response to the following:
• How did you experience this stage (your feelings and thoughts) when you shared with others?
• What helped you (or others) to make this stage constructive?

You may want to reflect on the following cue if you did not share with others:
• What prevented me from sharing my experience with others?

Making sure you have enough time for Stages 4 and 5 is an important part of creativity. Being able to support yourself and others to reflect and learn is vital. You can achieve much from sharing with others and critiquing creative experiences. As you develop your own creative potential, you will discover the timings needed for each aspect of the cycle. The nature of any creative endeavour requires different periods of time and there is no hard and fast rule.

Finally, having studied this cycle, make some notes about:
• the stages you find easy or less easy to be with
• any stages you would like to pay more attention to when being creative yourself or when facilitating others
• any other stages that you think should be added to the cycle
• any overall learning or changes you may want to make to your own creative practice as a participant or facilitator, having studied this cycle.

Keep your notebook with you, if you want to work with Robbins’ description.
There are commonalities and differences between Kiebert’s concept of the creative cycle and that of the writer and creative practitioner Lois B. Robbins. Robbins describes six stages in her framework (see Robbins, 1985).

**Preparation**

Recap on the thoughts and notes you made about your second creative experience and hold it loosely at the back of your mind as you study the framework below.

This summary of Robbins’ cycle, from her book *Waking up: in the age of creativity*, was presented by D.Z. Whelan at a seminar presentation (Alternatives, St James’s Piccadilly, 4/9/89), and has been adapted by the authors of this resource.

**Stage 1: Preparation**

‘At this stage a problem is identified, a challenge set.’

This has parallels with Kiebert’s statement of intent.

Reflection cues: Take a moment to think about:
• whether you gave the right amount of time to this stage, from the experience you have chosen
• what would have helped you to give an adequate amount of time to this stage, so that the complexity or simplicity of the creative activity you were working on was given enough attention.

Stage 2: Frustration

‘There is no way of getting around this phase. Confusion, chaos, ambiguity and some distress are necessary parts of the creative process and often because people see this frustration phase as failure or because they are not expecting it they are discouraged and give up. People have difficulties with feelings of ambiguity and they don’t stay with this process. They settle for a less than elegant solution but one that will allow them to get on with it. This type of response is encouraged in our society.’

This links in with Kiebert’s gathering stage.

Reflection cues: Take a moment to jot down some thoughts about the following:
• Did you feel frustrated during the creative activity you were engaged in?
• How did you support or challenge yourself so that you could continue?
• What are your thoughts and feelings now about how to support others if they get frustrated when being creative?

Stage 3: Incubation

‘The task is held by your awareness – conscious energy is not at this point being expended in trying this or that solution – it is on the back burner. By developing a tolerance for ambiguity one is able to allow a problem to cook or incubate. One can allow the questions to sink down into the deeper layers of the unconscious where the source of the creativity can work on it.’

This stage is like a deepening of Kiebert’s gathering stage before getting to explosion.

Reflection cues: Take a moment to reflect on these questions:
• Did you recognise this stage and give it time?
• How could paying attention to this stage be helpful for you in the future?

Stage 4: Illumination

‘This stage is about living in the mystery, letting go of the rational mind to allow the AHA experience to happen.’

The AHA moment includes different dimensions of experience. It can be:
• the moment when creative work comes together and something feels just right
• having an experience of a breakthrough so that you instinctively know what to do next
• when an insight emerges in your mind that produces new understanding.

This is similar to the stage Kiebert calls explosion, and could be seen as another dimension of it.

Reflection cue: Take a moment to recall this stage from the creative experience you are holding at the back of your mind.

Jot down your thoughts about what the conditions or attitudes were that helped contribute to the stage of illumination.

Stage 5: Elaboration

‘The left brain thinking is brought into play – the hard work required to make a good idea concrete.’

Reflection cues:

• What aspect(s) of the experience did you find hard work?
• Had you considered all the possibilities that you needed to in order to release your creativity?

Stage 6: Communication

‘This stage, while not dominant in the actual creative process is nevertheless essential to completion of the creative process.’

Both elaboration and communication have parallels with Kiebert’s assimilation and cognition stages.

Reflection cues: Having studied Robbins’ stages, take a few moments to think about and make notes on:

• how Robbins’ stages related overall to your own creative experience
• which of the stages you enjoyed and which you found difficult or paid less attention to
• any stages you would add or change in the future
• how you could support your own or others’ needs more effectively during any of the stages that you find challenging.

Summary

You can use the two frameworks offered here in a variety of ways. They can enable you to be more focused in attending to all the aspects of creativity and they can enable you to see where your strengths and areas for development lie. You can use one or both of them as tools for reflection on your own practice and as a teaching tool to enable others to better understand creative processes.
Path 3  **Warm-up and relaxation activities, and working with guided visualisation**

Here are some ideas you can use as a facilitator to help a group to form, establish a creative climate and bring out creative energy and connections between people. Make notes or print out any ideas you want to use. Skilled facilitators will have a wide range of creative activities that they draw on for opening and closing groups and for use as part of key learning activities. You can always be on the lookout for new ideas. Most facilitators do not mind you taking away and using or adapting their ideas – but it’s always nice if you ask the facilitator first.

If you have not used creative warm-up or relaxation activities before, test the ideas you are drawn to before working with a group. You can do this on your own by imagining how you would introduce the activity and its purpose and get the group started. You might like to consider how you would respond to reticence or anxiety in the group, which can be an obstacle. Maybe you can practise with friends or close colleagues so that you get a feel for your own confidence and self-presentation as a facilitator and other people’s reactions and responses. This will help inform your facilitation practice.

You may wish to use these ideas to:

- support people to introduce themselves and get to know something of each other beyond their role relationships, as this will serve the energy and purpose of the group
- begin a meeting or workshop in a creative way, as this will act as a catalyst for encouraging people to think ‘out of the box’ from the start of the session.

When facilitating you will need to think about how to introduce any of the ideas listed here and what comes after such an activity, so that your activity flows well within the overall structure of a session.

**Using postcards or objects**

This activity can be done with small or large groups. The larger the group the more time is needed. Ask participants to bring a postcard or object of their choice from their home, work, or the natural environment that is significant to them in relation to the issue on which the group is working. At an appropriate point in the early stages of the session ask people to take it in turns to talk briefly about their object or postcard. (As the facilitator, you will need to decide whether or not it is appropriate to bring an object or postcard yourself.) You will find that working in this way opens up understanding and new perspectives about the issue or people’s relationships to it.

For larger groups you can adapt the activity depending on the number of people present and the time you have available.
• Ask people to work in twos, threes or fours, describing their objects or postcards to one another. After people have shared, ask one person from each small group to summarise what has been learnt about the issue from sharing in this way.

• If there is more than one facilitator, you can divide into small groups of five or six, each with a facilitator, and ask people to share their object or postcard either individually or in pairs in their small groups. The facilitators will then need to summarise people’s sharing verbally or on flipchart sheets, so that when the whole group comes together everyone can learn what was shared in each group.

### Working with collage or cards

Use collage images (colour and black and white pictures cut from newspapers and magazines, which the facilitator may supply) and ask people to pick an image from the collage selection that conveys something of importance to them about the purpose of the session or how they are feeling, and then share using any of the options above.

Alternatively, you may wish to use cards, such as Angel cards or Medicine cards. Invite participants to pick a card at the beginning of the session as a source of inspiration for the purpose of the session. Angel cards provide inspiration using a simple image and a single word; Medicine cards are more detailed and give descriptions of qualities associated with different animals that are provocative and inspiring. There are a wide range of inspirational cards, which can be bought in large bookshop chains, that you can explore and make use of in your group-work or with yourself.
Living map

For larger groups of more than 20, you can create connections between people and create a buzz of energy by using a living map. After the introductions, and at an early point in the meeting, divide the room into areas which relate to a theme, for example, how far people live from the venue you are meeting in (assuming you have a big enough space for people to stand in). For example, one area of the room could represent up to 5 miles away, another area 5–20 miles away, another over 20 miles. Once people are standing in the relevant area, ask them to introduce themselves to one other person, and chat broadly about why they are attending the session or what’s important for them, and their expectations. Then you can ask each pair to join up with another pair, and find out the commonalities and differences in why have they have come and their expectations.

You can adapt this process, and use the seasons (asking people to stand in the area of their favourite season), or stand in the area that is their sign of the Zodiac, or any other sorting device that is useful and appropriate for the people with whom you are working.

How to work with guided visualisation

This section describes guided visualisation and explains how it can be used, and offers help with using guided visualisation with others.

What guided visualisation is and how it can be used

Guided visualisation is about:

• balancing left-brain thinking (rational, analytical thinking) with right-brain activity (creative imagination)
• exploring how we can use our creative imagination
• tapping into the imaginative and story-making aspect of the self.

Generally in guided visualisation, participants are invited to use their imagination to experience a story which acts as a metaphor for an issue that is important to them.

For example, in relation to exploring what practice development entails, participants may be invited to imagine themselves going across three fields in order to get to a meadow. The first field is muddy, the second is full of brambles, the third is stony. Having crossed these fields, they arrive at a beautiful meadow, with a stream, and sunshine, and the sounds of birds singing. Participants are invited to enjoy the meadow, and to find a pot of gold there. After spending time in the meadow, participants are invited to bring the imaginative pot of gold back to everyday reality, using it as a container for their ideas about practice development.

Participants are asked to share with each other their reflections on what crossing the three fields means to them in relation to practice development, and what ideas their pot of gold holds that they wish to act on.
This ‘pot of gold’ visualisation is just one example – each facilitator is likely to build up a repertoire of guided visualisations to choose from. Guided visualisation can also be used with other tools – for example, International Practice Development Collaborative school facilitators have combined guided visualisation with a values clarification exercise to help participants create a shared vision and common purpose about a practice development initiative.

Guided visualisation can be an effective way of inspiring people to move beyond habitual conscious thought and to connect to a different wisdom within themselves that generates insight and new ideas about significant issues.

Dina Glouberman, who specialises in the use of imagery for personal, professional and organisational development, has coined the term *imagework* to describe the importance of imagery and imagination as a source of knowledge and wisdom. She describes imagination as:

> ‘the ground of our being. Whatever we create in our lives, whether it is an omelette, a multinational corporation or a love affair, begins as an image in our minds.’

(Glouberman, 1989: 2)

Her book *Life choices and life changes through imagework: the art of developing personal vision* has lots of exercises for guided visualisations (or imagework as she prefers to call it). See also Gawain (1998) on the purpose of and working with guided visualisation.

**Practising guided visualisation**

You can learn what helps guided visualisation work effectively for you and colleagues by making up a short visualisation. Perhaps, for example, going on a journey up a mountain to meet a wise person, receiving a gift and then coming back down the mountain and integrating the gift into your life. Notice what kind of voice tone, style and words help you, and what gets in the way, as you take it in turns to guide each other through the story.

If you have any anxieties about experiencing or telling a guided visualisation, share these with colleagues or friends, and find out by practising in a safe situation what helps to settle any anxieties you may have. This will, in turn, help you to respond to anxieties others may have if you lead them in a guided visualisation.

You can also get CDs or tapes on guided visualisation or guided meditations from alternative bookshops, mainstream bookshops and libraries. Listen to how these are done, and to the qualities and style of the speaker. Find out by listening to a speaker what it is about their style that does it for you!
### How to facilitate a guided visualisation

#### Before starting
- Explain the purpose of the visualisation to the participants, and how it links to the overall context of what you are doing.
- Respond to any questions or anxieties that people have. Make sure participants have permission not to engage with it if they don’t wish to, mobiles are turned off, and that the environment you are working in is calm and won’t be interrupted.
- Centre yourself internally: take a few deep breaths, feel your feet on the ground, or settle into the chair you are sitting on, so that you feel grounded and relaxed, and imagine that you are becoming a story teller within the oral tradition.
- Invite your group to relax by taking some deep breaths and to settle into the chair or relax onto the ground they are sitting/standing on. Ask people to shut their eyes if they wish to.

#### Voice tone
- Use a calm and meditative style rather than an abrupt style - perhaps like reading a story to a child. However, when you bring people back to the here and now, alter your voice tone to fit more with everyday reality, but don’t alter your voice too abruptly.

#### Style
- It is important that you tell the visualisation from an attitude of experiencing the visualisation within yourself, so the visualisation is embodied in you and you see and experience the images as you tell the visualisation to others. You may at moments wish to close your eyes as you tell the visualisation, and balance this with keeping your eyes open to stay attuned to the group.
- Don’t rush! Make sure you have enough time to tell the visualisation and for participants to reflect on it afterwards without time pressures.

#### Ending
- When you have brought people back to the reality of the present, ask them to stretch their hands and toes, feel whatever they are sitting or standing on and to slowly take in their surroundings.

#### Next steps
- There are choices about what to do after the visualisation has ended. You may want to invite participants to share in pairs or small groups what they learned or experienced during the visualisation. Or it may be appropriate to invite people to draw or paint aspects of their visualisation, or to write a poem, or to note down in prose style what was important for them.
- When participants have finished their reflections, ask them to feed back what they gained from the guided visualisation, and to clarify any obstacles and what would help to improve the experience.
The process of guided visualisation has parallels with *imaginization*:

‘*Imaginization* [is] an approach to change ... underpinned by the idea that human awareness and knowledge have an unfolding transformative potential and that the images and ideas people hold of themselves and their world have a fundamental impact on how their realities unfold.’

(Morgan, 1993: 275)
List of references


Feedback sheet

We hope that you have enjoyed using this resource, and we would be grateful if you would share with us any feedback on your experiences and how this resource could be further developed. We welcome comments in all conventional or creative forms you have about:

- your experience of using this resource and how you have used your enhanced creativity in your work
- any outcomes for you and your service users/patients
- your ideas for improvements or changes, and references or websites that you have found useful.

You will find the feedback sheet on the next page, which you may find helpful when commenting on this resource.
## Opening doors on creativity – Feedback sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did you hear about this resource?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective do you feel this resource is for enabling practitioners to learn how to develop practical skills and confidence in their own creativity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of using this resource, how confident do you feel in adapting or using the methods set out in this resource?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective is this resource in preparing you to feel confident to facilitate others using creative methods?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2006 RCNI
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What three things did you like most about the resource and why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else you would have liked to see in this resource?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has your work with colleagues changed as a result of using this resource?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has your work with patients changed as a result of using this resource?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return via e-mail or post to:

Administrator  
Practice Development  
Royal College of Nursing  
20 Cavendish Square  
London  
W1G 0RN.

e-mail: pd@rcn.org.uk