



Education science

# Pocket Tutor

*- Skyrocket your thinking!*

Kaisu Mälkki & Anette Mansikka-aho



# Education Science Pocket Tutor - Skyrocket your thinking!

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*- Skyrocket  
your  
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# Index

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Foreword  | 2          |
| Introduction  | 4          |
| <b>1 Thinking skills</b>                                    | <b>12</b>  |
| Students' observations                                      | 26         |
| Try it yourself!  | 28         |
| <b>2 Theories as an educator's conceptual tools</b>         | <b>34</b>  |
| Students' observations                                      | 46         |
| Try it yourself!  | 49         |
| <b>3 Reflection skills</b>                                  | <b>54</b>  |
| Students' observations                                      | 73         |
| Try it yourself!  | 75         |
| <b>4 Co-operation skills</b>                                | <b>82</b>  |
| Students' observations                                      | 105        |
| Try it yourself!  | 107        |
| <b>5 Writing skills</b>                                     | <b>110</b> |
| Students' observations                                      | 118        |
| Try it yourself!  | 127        |
| Attachment : Writing tips                                   | 131        |
| <b>6 Development of professional identity and expertise</b> | <b>137</b> |
| Students' observations                                      | 158        |
| Try it yourself!  | 162        |
| <b>7 Emotional skills</b>                                   | <b>167</b> |
| Students' observations                                      | 179        |
| Try it yourself!  | 181        |
| Needs   | 184        |
| <b>8 Creativity</b>   | <b>188</b> |
| Photopoetry by Marco Briano                                 | 200        |
| References  | 212        |
| Credits   | 219        |
| Team  | 220        |

# Foreword

What you have in your hands is a travel guide to the path of expertise, created by an expert group of education at Tampere university. The expert group includes both staff and students from the faculty of education and culture. The process of creating the Pocket Tutor shows that there is space and need within the structures of the university – both physical and mental – for student agency. The students can contribute in new ways to the development of study culture, working culture, and the communality of the faculty. Together, over and across the division of roles within the university, we can strengthen that which works well, and develop new ways of action where needed.

The applicability of expertise in education is vast in all sectors of society. In the future, there is increasing demand for this expertise to promote the learning, growth and wellbeing of both individuals and communities. What matters are courage, curiosity, the joy of creating, and enjoying making meaningful things. I hope that The Pocket Tutor opens new perspectives in your own studies and work, and helps you find new dimensions in your skills. I also hope that, with The Pocket Tutor, the understanding of the value of heterogeneity is strengthened, and the space for different ways of being broadened, so that collaboration and the combining of various skills of differing people can be strengthened.

Pocket Tutor is an excellent example of collaboration between staff and students in our university community, where an inspired and engaged multidisciplinary group started to search together for new kinds of solutions to the challenges they identified with their scientific and artistic expertise – and found them. We can now enjoy the fruit of that work.

I wish you good moments with the Pocket Tutor!

Tampere 20.1.2022,

Päivi Pahta

Dean, Faculty of Education and Culture, Tampere University



# Introduction

The study-skill guide Pocket Tutor helps to build a launch pad of study skills that will catapult you into the universe of academic thinking. The universe of thinking is born of the ability to give up prevalent thought patterns and self-evidences. To let go of these, one needs criticality and creativity, which are strengthened by wise utilisation of research-based information. The Pocket Tutor leads the way to these matters. In the universe of thinking, it is possible to break free from gravity – the thought patterns prevalent in society. Taking a clear break from traditional views from time to time helps in identifying issues that require development, as well as those that need to be strengthened.

The Pocket Tutor encourages you in learning and supports you in examining your own thinking. It helps in entering and coping with the academic world, and aims to foster human tendencies in academic culture. The guide deals with the study skills and building blocks of expertise that are continuously needed over the course of university studies, but whose development is only rarely supported. The themes include thinking skills, theory and practice, reflection skills, co-operation skills, writing skills, development of professional identity and expertise, emotional skills, and creativity. The themes are considered both scientifically and from a student's point-of-view. Supported by illustrations, the Pocket Tutor is simultaneously gently approachable, strictly scientific, and concretising in a practical way. This Pocket Tutor has been aimed at students of educational sciences. A large portion of the content, however, concerns general study skills, and is therefore suitable for students of other fields, too.

Some fantasy characters make an appearance in the guide and verbalise their thoughts and reactions in learning situations. Thus the reader can mirror their own thoughts and attitudes to the themes at hand. Through the characters, we want to assist the reader to find the courage to examine various phenomena and themselves as part of them, with an open mind and trusting that one is not alone in one's uncertainties, but that they are likely shared by many others. Thus they can be viewed with gentleness, as part of being a human.



**Essé** is embarking on their first voyage into the universe of thinking. On the way, they learn to think more critically and creatively.



Along the way, a more experienced space traveller, **Guidi**, guides Essé.



There's also the space critter **Yeabut**, who is the personification of edge emotions, openly voicing their doubts and uncertainties.



**Lite**, a space elf, brings their critically analysed, broader points of view and bright, idealistic views into the discussions.

# How to read the Pocket Tutor

The Pocket Tutor tells a story that leads the reader into the universe of thought, and the chapters build the means necessary for academic thinking and collaboration piece by piece. It is also possible to read the Pocket Tutor in a different order, depending on one's curiosity and phases of studies. The choice can be made based on which study skill one wants to develop at a given moment, or the most interesting parts of each chapter at a given time can be chosen. Chapters 2, 3, and 7 may, however, be the most challenging to take in. It is worthwhile just to take it easy, if reading them for the first time feels heavy. They will, however, lift your thinking to a higher level, and thus the content of the other chapters will be easier to apply. Also, the next sections of this Introduction chapter may be easier to read only after dipping into the actual substance chapters.



# From self-help to us-help, or mutual collaboration and support

The aim of the Pocket Tutor is to provide support for developing academic study culture. As a freshman student gets acquainted with study culture, it may appear like the practices and attitudes of the culture are ready-made, and the newcomer is expected just to adapt to them in a one-sided way. The surrounding societal and university-level structures do make their mark on study culture, but also those taking part in the culture continuously shape it, and thus everyone can have an effect on it.

Study culture should be such that students can develop their expertise and learnedness. This is possible in a culture that appreciates oneself, others, and the field, and in which excitement and delving deep into the topics are allowed and desirable. To enable these things, also coping and well-being need to be taken seriously in the study culture. Alongside involved work, it is important also to value the ability to set one's limits, rest, and leisure.

Guides are often read in order to support one's personal learning process, and as such they offer the individual means for development, but they also increase the individual's experienced pressure for their development – as if development was only the responsibility of the individual and possible as something separate from the surrounding society. In this vein, we acknowledge the contradictory nature of the Pocket tutor: the "guide" format gives off a spirit of self-help, which forces the individual to take responsibility of themselves separate from others. However, the Pocket tutor also makes visible the structures behind the experiences understood as individual, and their collective nature. We attempt to minimise the pressure on the individual caused by this guide format by verbalising the problem. Our intention is to offer us-help, instead of self-help – in other words, something that supports the entire community in collaborating, recognising the structures, and doing things differently. We want to support individuals to change the community together. Thus, also individuals

support the community together. Thus, also individuals can grow.

Pressures on the individual abound in academic culture and the Western society, and these are not necessarily talked about. Silence about, for instance, one's experiences of inadequacy, weakness, and impostor syndrome increase an individual's perception of themselves as the only one who is not ready, who does not cope and is not capable of everything (see, Mäkinen & Annala, 2011). In the early part of one's university studies, strain is caused by acclimatising into the new learning culture and operational culture of academia, and, for many, also leaving the childhood home and living alone for the first time (see, Käyhkö, 2014). In addition, academic culture often assumes that study skills are learned as if without effort and independently, instead of seeing university studies as requiring practice in order to master new kinds of learning skills (Mäkinen & Annala, 2011). For example, co-operation skills are continuously needed both in studies and in the working life, but means of support for developing them are rarely offered. The Pocket Tutor makes these skills visible and thus easier to learn.

For an individual student, the Pocket Tutor offers a pillar of support, which makes it easier to talk about issues in one's community. We believe that even just making visible a collective ill-being eases the weight on an individual's shoulders and makes way for new practices in communities. Even just naming these pressures weakens their debilitating powers. We encourage using the freed capacity on changing communal structures and practices into something more ethical and healthy, with the support of the guide. The Pocket Tutor includes many small tasks that, little by little, will aid developing the practices and habits of communities.

The culture of competition is one factor keeping people apart, and when associated with study culture, it can even weaken the social cohesion, mutual co-operation, and support between students (Pulkki, 2017). In Finnish universities, there is no need for mutual competition after entrance exams, as students are not removed from the university based on level of achievement, and seeking and finding employment is usually not based on grades achieved. In our system, the necessary conditions for co-operation and communality are present in a different way from many other countries' university practices. With the Pocket Tutor, we want to support building a more communal culture, and thus also improve the ground for developing expertise.

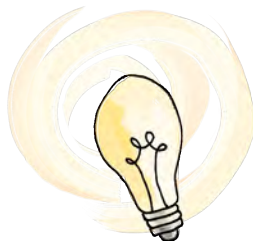


## Developing study culture towards learnedness

Learnedness and civilisation form the value base of the Pocket Tutor. We want to raise learnedness into something that is valued and desired in study culture. Learnedness as a word may have a stale, aged clang, but it is worth examining more closely, because through it, today's societal developments can be understood and new solutions sought. With learnedness, we do not merely refer to adopting the existing worldview, but also questioning and rebuilding it. This requires an interested attitude towards the world, and a desire to influence it in accordance with ethical values. Also needed are the skill to handle conflicts ethically and the courage to defend the good. Ethical skills bring about a responsible and respectful attitude towards one's self, other people and other living things, as well as towards nature, the environment, and knowledge. (Tomperi & Belt 2019.)

Our other important value is well-being, with its dimensions of meaningfulness and happiness. Where happiness is situational and self-focused, meaningfulness attaches the self to others. The Pocket Tutor gives students means of creating a study culture, in which it is possible to feel togetherness and belonging with other others. The experience of meaningfulness is also related to working for some greater cause (Salonen & Joutsenvirta, 2018). We encourage educators to find meaning for their own activities from learnedness. Then, educators will be taking part in the creation of a better, more ethical future. Acting neutrally, without ideologies is impossible, so it is necessary to examine the value base of one's activities. If we assume we are acting without ideology we will only unconsciously be furthering such values and practices that may in fact even weaken our own well-being and that of others.

According to research, even general upper-secondary students suffer from exhaustion, and a third of university-level students have mental health issues. Problems with coping are born from structural pressures. That is why problems are not simply individual, although they are often experienced as such. With the Pocket Tutor, we want to support changing study culture in such a way that well-being and communality, as well as learnedness and learning, are at the centre. We also encourage expressing new points of view and handling difficult themes ethically and openly. We hope that we manage to awaken thoughts on these themes also in the instances that direct university-level teaching and research.







# 1 Thinking skills

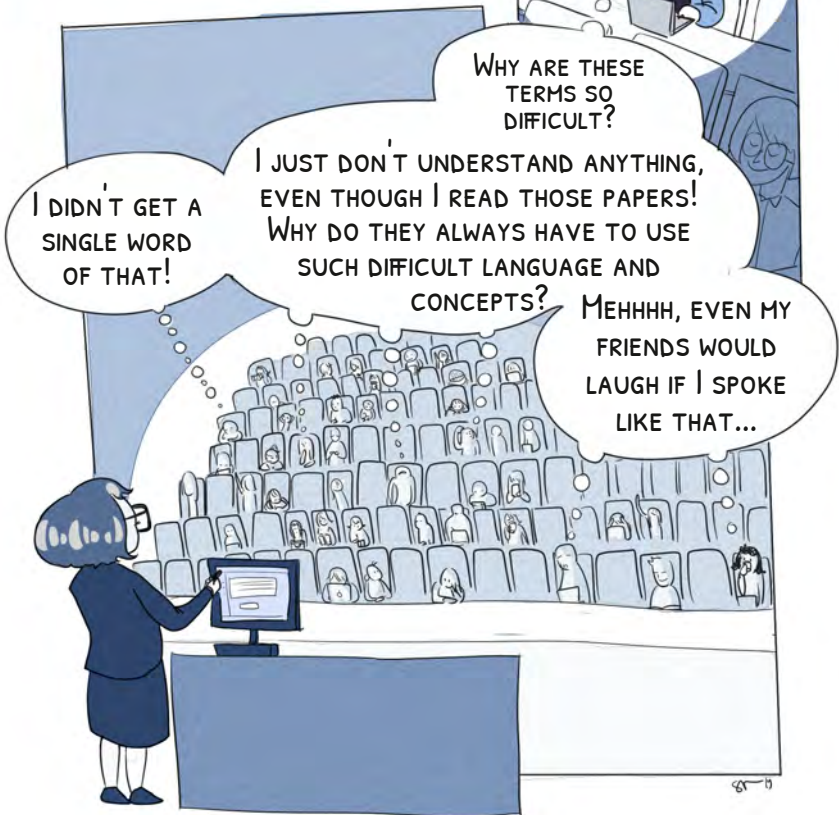
Feels like all my thoughts are unfinished; do the others now think that my thinking skills are weaker? Am I capable of academic study?



Don't worry,  
Essé!

Sometimes it can feel like everyone else is all ready and complete, although all of us, also professionals, are still practicing these skills as part of life. With this guide, you can take your time to develop your academic learning skills, during your studies and even after them. With the guide, you can practice the study skills when you are ready to challenge yourself. Remember also gentleness towards yourself!





# Fast and slow thinking

We think continuously. Thoughts flow through us endlessly, as if we were floating in a river of thoughts, or we are attentively focusing on some issue or on solving problems. Thinking can, in fact, be seen as a tool with which we may structure reality, and understand the world and ourselves. Whether our thinking is conscious and content-focused, or the free association of relaxed mind, our attention is usually on the subject matter of our thoughts. On the process of thinking itself, however, we pay much less attention. Why should we pay attention to the process of thinking? If we were using some machine to extract some product from it without paying attention to the workings of the machine, the machine would, in the end, break. Also the process of thinking requires attention, so it does not become skewed.\*.

One way of examining thinking as a process is to divide it into two parts, fast and slow thinking.<sup>1</sup> Fast thinking happens automatically. It has developed so that substantial amounts of energy need not be continuously spent on thinking, as slow, conscious thinking is very energy consuming. Fast thinking assists in smoothing everyday activity, and uses only little energy, and this is why it is necessary. Fast thinking has, in a way, learned through repetition to hit the target often, but it is also very prone to logical fallacies when forming assumptions. This is why it would be good to practice slow thinking, with which to recognise the mistakes made by fast thinking. Slow thinking feels heavy, and therefore in order to support it, it is worth it to pay attention to the conditions in which one thinks. A well-fed, well-rested body that feels itself to be safe is better equipped for slowing down thinking, as well.

Thinking skills, or slowing down thinking, can be developed through practice. This is achieved by paying attention to one's thinking and making a conscious effort at improving it.<sup>2</sup> Tools for supporting this process can be found in this chapter and in Chapter 3, which focuses on reflection skills. The process can also be

<sup>1</sup> Kahneman 2011, <sup>1\*</sup> Bohm & Nichol 1996

<sup>2</sup> Mälkki & Raami 2020; Kallio 2016

aided by an understanding of how thinking in general develops.

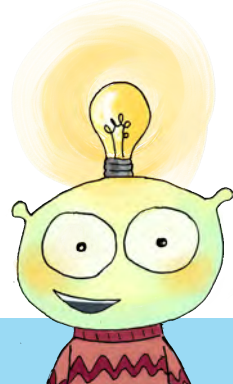
Vygotsky<sup>3</sup> has described thinking as internal speech. He emphasises how we first learn language in social interaction, from which speech is internalised as thought. From this point of view, everything inside the mind has a history between minds. Developing one's thinking may, therefore, be easier in interaction with others than independently<sup>4</sup> (see Chapter 4 for more specific discussion on co-operations).



## Critical thinking

Critical thinking is often understood as fault-finding. However, critical thinking is actually about consciously examining an issue from various directions, enduring one's own uncertainty. Critical thinking demands withholding our prejudices and an open attitude towards the matter at hand. Only after this, an opinion is formed on the topic. Critical thinking, thus, does not mean having a negative attitude towards something. Instead, it will at its best form new ways of examining things.<sup>5</sup>

If thinking gets tangled, the tangles can often be straightened and room for new ideas created by going out for a walk!



<sup>3</sup> Vygotsky 1978

<sup>4</sup> Vygotsky 1978; Børresen, Malmhøster & Tomperi 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Tomperi 2017

When we start developing thoughts together through discussion, exercises are more successful when the atmosphere is safe and encouraging, and there are clear rules for the situation.

Then, it is easier to expose one's incompleteness and be brave by expressing an unrefined thought out loud.

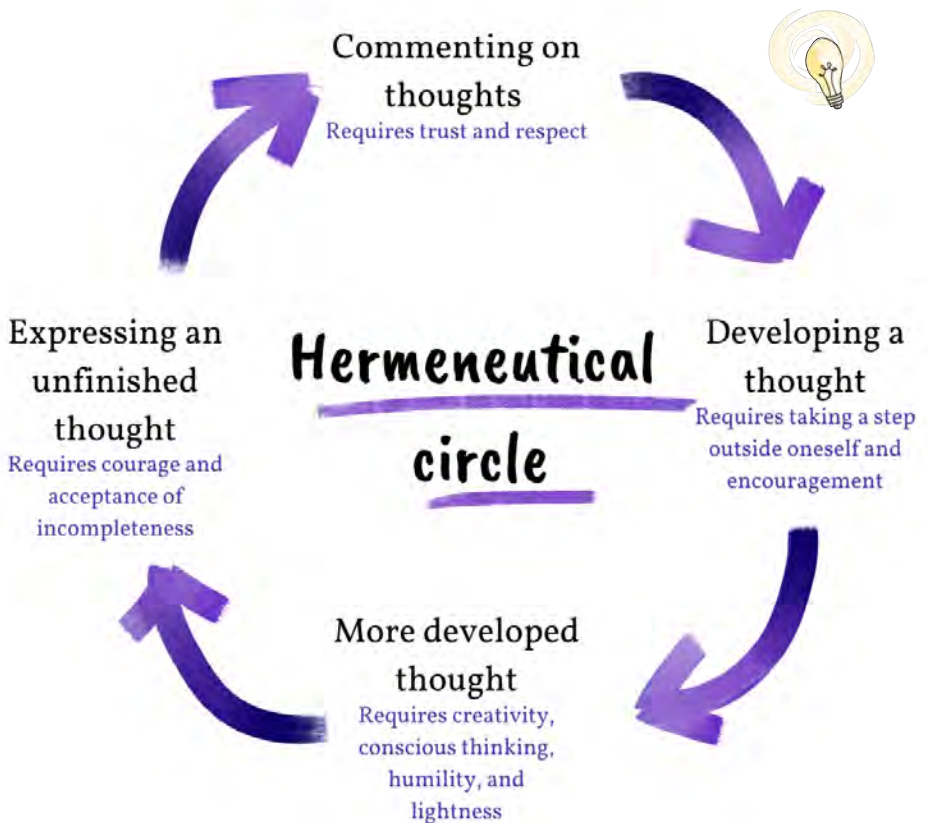


Thinking is group work: thoughts are refined more easily, when everyone comments on the thoughts from their own points of view, based on their previous experience and understanding. It is important to respect each commenter, so that they will want to expose their world again in the future.

After that, it is time for stepping outside ourselves, when we start to develop thoughts together



It is important that nobody feels put down, even if some work remains to be done with their current way of thinking. This demands an accepting and respectful attitude from everyone, as well as a creative, light, unprejudiced atmosphere, so the old tracks of thought can be overcome. The final result will be a more refined thought, created by shared critical thinking. But it won't be ready yet! Humility is required for subjecting the completed thought to be assessed again. Below, you can see how the circle for developing thought functions.



## Posing questions

Posing questions is a tool for broadening thought. With the help of questions, we can find things we have not thought before. Questions support learning. Not to ask a question may, in fact, mean one never gets to know or learn to understand something. Posing questions is therefore just as important as searching for a suggestion for an answer<sup>6</sup>.

Regarding thinking, it is fruitful to perceive a distinction between questions that can be extinguished and those that continue to burn. Questions that can be extinguished can be answered by finding more information, in which case the discussion usually is closed when the answer is discovered and the matter is completed. A question that can be extinguished does not have the time to awaken the participants' points of view on different aspects of the question. Questions that continue to burn, conversely, spark discussion and considering the phenomenon from various angles.

Thus the participants' understanding of the phenomena is deepened in a more multifaceted way than when one individual piece of factual information can extinguish the whole discussion.



I daren't show what a newbie beginner I am!



That's right, everyone will think I'm an embarrassing idiot, if I open my mouth!



And besides, often when you open your mouth about some real issues, the atmosphere goes unpleasant. The discussion easily turns into a debate, and everyone starts shouting.

<sup>6</sup>Børresen, Malmhøster & Tomperi 2011.



The atmosphere is what it's all based on! And that's something you can all influence with your own example and supportive comments. The atmosphere has to be such that failing feels safe, and everyone can show their incompleteness..



Feelings and social relations must be taken into account in thinking, too.  
The text box below gives you tools for that.

### Co-operative and emotional skills that support thinking:

- following others' thought processes and responding to them in a fair and friendly way also when disagreeing with them
- noting the merits of others' thinking and giving feedback on it
- accepting criticism on one's own thinking
- admitting one's own fallibility
- coping with uncertainty
- developing one's worldview co-operatively with others<sup>7</sup>.

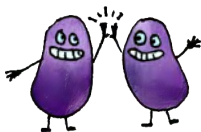




# Co-operative thinking

An individual's thinking does not take place in a vacuum. The prevalent interactive and power relationships as well as the emotions that arise as a consequence of them influence our thinking. Thinking, therefore, is described as socio-emotionally affected: "socio" refers to the interactive relationships and power aspects prevalent in a situation, and "emotional" to the emotions that arise as a consequence. Therefore emotions, habits related to co-operation, and one's own customary ways of thinking should be taken into account when developing thinking. They should be reflectively evaluated, in other words, consciously examined (more on reflection in Chapter 3).

Fluency of thinking can be promoted by those participating in a conversation supporting each other in their attempts at thinking. Thinking should, in fact, be seen as co-operation rather than competition<sup>8</sup>. In co-operative thinking, new thoughts can come about that one could not have produced while thinking alone. Viewing thinking as co-operation may assist in more brave expression of unfinished thoughts, and in remembering to concentrate also on supporting the thoughts of others and building upon them together. If, conversely, thinking together is perceived as competition, it may arouse fear of shame and an expectation of a perfect performance, which may hinder relaxed thinking. In the best case scenario, conversation participants create a safe atmosphere where everyone can trust that no-one will pass judgment on each others' thoughts, but rather, that they can be examined and developed together. Then, thinking together can be so successful, that it is possible to get quite hooked on the good feeling it brings about.



<sup>8</sup>Tomperi, 2017

# Dialogue

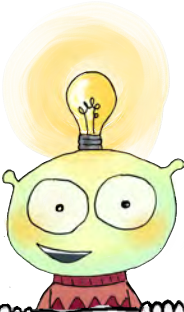
Dialogue is a discussion of listening and thinking together. Central to dialogue is viewing each other as equals and the readiness to welcome different points of view. The word “dialogue” comes from the Greek, and means a flow of meanings and understanding through the conversation participants. Everyone’s point of view – including one’s own – is tested together, through an examination of its foundations and justifications.

The opposite of a dialogue is the parallel monologue of two or more people, in which the aim of each person is to influence the others, while keeping their own views unchanged. Although this kind of competitive monologue may sound exaggerated, in everyday circumstances, the participants in a conversation often understand some issue from such different starting points that they fail to notice they are speaking as if about completely different things. Like one’s own thinking, also co-operative thinking can be approached as a process, where paying attention to the process itself can reduce distortions, and make collaboration more meaningful.

In dialogue, it is important to try and understand what the speaker has actually meant, without getting stuck on the way it was expressed. This enables utilising different points of view in co-operative thinking. People who began a dialogue are not the same people after it: they have moved toward unity, so that everyone who participated in the dialogue has learned something new. The end result is not necessarily one opinion, but rather, an expanded area of shared understanding.<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup>Bohm & Nichol 1996; Børresen, Malmhøster & Tomperi 2011.



*Dialogue is really aimed at going into the whole thought process and changing the way the thought process occurs collectively.*

*We haven't really paid much attention to thought as a process. We have engaged in thoughts, but we have only paid attention to the content, not to the process.*

*Why does thought require attention?  
Everything requires attention, really.*

*If we ran machines without paying attention to them, they would break down.*

*Our thought, too, is a process, and it requires attention, otherwise it's going to go wrong.*

BOHM, D.; NICHOL, L. On Dialogue. London: Routledge, 1996.



# Argumentation and Defining Concepts

The technical starting points of thinking include argumentation and defining concepts. With these, thinking can develop to be clearer. The aim of argumentation is the formal validity of thought expressed as justified arguments. It is important to pay attention to the concepts used, because many concepts have developed multiple and vague meanings, and therefore argumentation may remain vague, even when precision was the aim. Illogical argumentation may result in logical fallacies, where the conclusion may appear formally correct, but if its message is examined more closely, the logical fallacy is noted. To illustrate, in illogical argumentation, a conclusion can be made to appear valid by appealing to something other than the issue at hand, by using irrelevant or misrepresented reasoning, or by directing attention to the person expressing the thought rather than to the issue itself.

Logical fallacies and conceptual vagueness is often found in media as well as in the words or writings of individuals. It is in fact quite delicious for one's thinking skills occasionally to concentrate on following the logic of argumentation, logical fallacies in it, and use of concepts, either alone or together with others<sup>10</sup>. The virtues of argumentation and conditions for its effectiveness are precision and clarity, the objectivity, appropriateness, factuality or believability, and variedness of factual statements, acceptability and weight of norms, and sufficiency of justifications<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Kurki & Tomperi 2011

<sup>11</sup> Kurki & Tomperi 2011



In the sheet on the next page, there is a list of tools for clarifying argumentation, with which you can clarify, develop, justify, and defend your views and arguments, in conversation or when planning a written text.

To me, that table doesn't look like a tool, but rather like a list of demands of all the things you should know so you can express yourself!



Oh no, it's not a table of demands, but an orienteering table into how you can develop your own text, from the starting point of the text, with small steps.



# Tool

# Usage

# Checking

## Defining

Name and describe the core of the argument and its context. Define both unclear and self-evident concepts.

Has the matter been defined clearly and accurately? Is the use of concepts understandable, clear, and consistent?

Categorizing, or grouping and arranging

Recognise the viewpoint (frame of reference) from which you approach the matter, as well as the context to which you connect the matter

Has the issue, phenomenon, or action been placed in an acceptable or appropriate frame of reference?

## Description and explanation

Describe and combine parts to the whole. Clarify the essential characteristics of the matter. Give reasons, explanations, effective relationships, and chains of events.

Is the explanation or description clear, understandable, comprehensive, believable, likely, and acceptable??

## Juxtaposing and comparing

Clarify the matter by juxtaposing and comparing it to another case, usually more familiar or more poignant in meaning.

Is the juxtaposition relevant, in other words, essential or meaningful regarding the matter at hand? Is the comparison believable? Do the juxtapositions and comparisons increase information and clarity?

Illustrating, concretising, creating an example or model, metaphors

These can be used in many forms:  
1) hypothetical (imaginary),  
2) factual (real),  
3) case example (referring to a known case),  
4) anecdote (a narrative example that is usually not previously known to the audience).

Are the examples relevant to the matter? Are they representative in view of the whole? Do they carry weight when the matter is being evaluated?

## Quantification

Quantifiable attributions are usually added to the cases being examined, for example, small, big, huge, rarely, often, always, repeatedly, a little, very much, a few, both, all...

Are the quantifications suited to the nature of the phenomenon? Have exaggerations and oversimplifications been avoided?

Use of authority, source, quote, or citation

The justifications are often strengthened by reference to, for example, an authority

Is the authority or the source reliable and unbiased? Is the matter presented in the source understood correctly? Is the reference or quote relevant to the matter?



## Students' observations

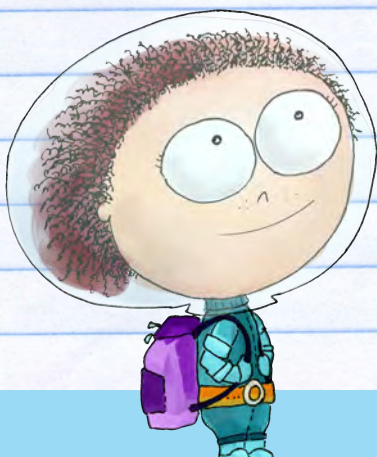
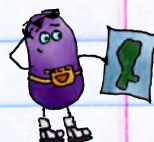
*“During the first autumn, I spent an awful lot of time feeling inadequate and incapable in group work and during lectures. Now, through discussions, I have learned that the beginning of the studies has been like that for everyone else, too. If I would have my freshman autumn again, I would perceive that we are all flailing about in the same early-stages stew, and I would understand that you don't need to take it as such a personal problem and feel so inadequate. Understanding this might have made things easier then, and could maybe have been able to concentrate a bit better on what was going on. And so studying might have gone a bit more smoothly.”*

*“Accepting my incompleteness is made easier by thinking about my opinions as not being the same thing as my self. Criticism aimed at my opinions is not the same as criticism towards me. A bit like you shouldn't call children bad, just whatever their misdeed was. Their actions might be bad, not they themselves. Your thoughts can be immature, not you yourself. Encourage each other!”*

*“Accepting your incompleteness requires courage. You might have to show others that you're not ready yet. But what a distorted image of a human it would be to be ready! Thinking can be thinking out loud. It can be verbalised, that you haven't yet thought about the thing more closely, or ask for help in developing a thought, or you can ask, if others know more closely about the weaknesses and strengths of this thought.”*

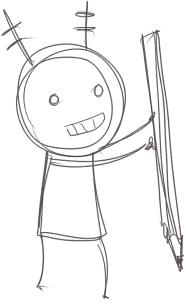
“Disagreement is fruitful ground for thought! In those situations, seeking understanding is important. In studies, you easily become socialised to having to think like others and that disagreement is unpleasant and you should avoid it. But your thinking can’t develop this way. It is also respecting diversity, when you actually encounter others’ different opinions and don’t cover them up with sanctimony or rolling your eyes.”

“Sometimes it feels like I don’t know what I think about something. But then if I start to discuss it with my friends, I find that I do have opinions about the issue, and that by examining those opinions I can in the end make visible the justifications I had somewhere at the back of my mind, without being aware of them. Sometimes the justifications turn out to be quite weird or limping, and sometimes I surprise myself by being actually pretty well informed.”



“Sometimes you can just stop. Let others take care of talking and feel surprised at how much you can learn about thinking, when you’re not the one who is doing all the talking all the time.”





# Try it yourself!

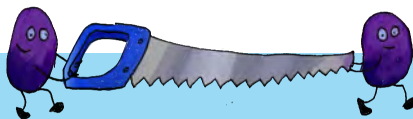
## Task 1

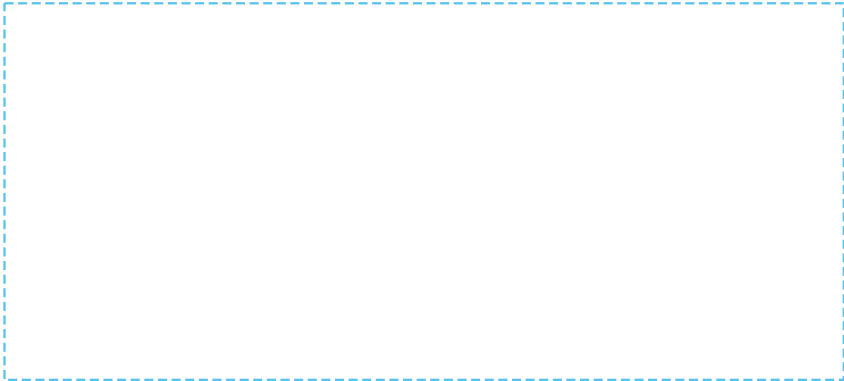
First imagine a situation where you are attending a lecture:

*The lecturer asks the students for comments and questions without first doing a warm-up, for example, pair discussions. Only the bravest students take part in the discussion. An assumption of what kinds of points of view are acceptable and what comments valuable is formed, based on the points of view they express. You get an idea that would question the discussion or would bring something completely new to it. Your nerves, however, stop you from putting up your hand, and you fail to say anything. Your heart is thumping, palms sweating, and voice is stuck in your throat. After the lecture you are annoyed that you didn't express your idea, and you wonder how you could act differently next time.*

A situation in which one individual person has to be in the limelight in front of a large group is usually demanding for people. That is why expressing any idea may, in itself, make people feel nervous. Most people who perform professionally have symptoms of nervousness every time before they perform. It is something you need not get worried about and try to forcefully stop yourself from feeling. When one overcomes the nervous feeling again and again, one learns that the feeling is not all that serious and that one gets over it quite quickly.

Often, however, we have already learned to be judgmental about our own insecurity and assume the same situations to be easier for others. How do you respond to your own reactions in situations that make you nervous?





### **Task 2**

Nervousness as an emotion may direct the attention to our own inadequacy, which feels like a formless, heavy cloak on us, and we don't know how to shake it off. In coping with the feeling of nervousness, it may be helpful to take the nervousness-inducing situation apart into its constituent parts, in order to clarify what is actual the cause of the worry, which makes us feel inadequate in the situation. This way, you can begin to define your own tools for handling nervousness.

For example, think about the following examples and why the suggested course of action might relieve nervousness. What kind of worry could you imagine to be behind the nervousness?

- You can tell yourself, for example: “Now, as a beginner, I am just practising making a comment in a demanding situation. In this case, the main issue is not whether the thought comes our perfectly formed, or whether everyone will understand it exactly like I would want them to, but the joy of daring to take the first step in becoming competent.” In the same way, when you write, you have start with a rough draft, and the ready text comes about only after many rounds of writing.

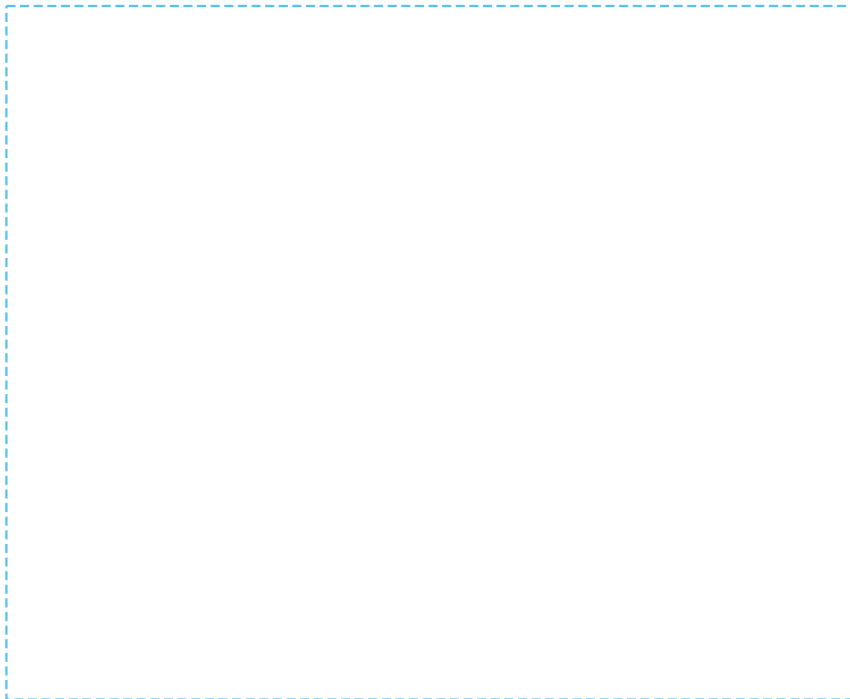
- When putting forward an unfinished thought, you can, for example, explicitly say *"I haven't yet thought about this very much, but just toying with this idea that..."*

- If you feel like you would want some support from others, you can express the thought in such a way that it will get others to nod in agreement: *"I just thought of something, I wonder if others have had this experience that..."*

- If your thought challenges the prior discussion, you can soften its expression:

*"My thought doesn't necessarily sit well with the previous points of view, but I just thought that..."*

Or you can simultaneously show appreciation on others' different points of view: *"Interesting points of view have been expressed. I thought of another angle of approaching the issue, namely, that..."*

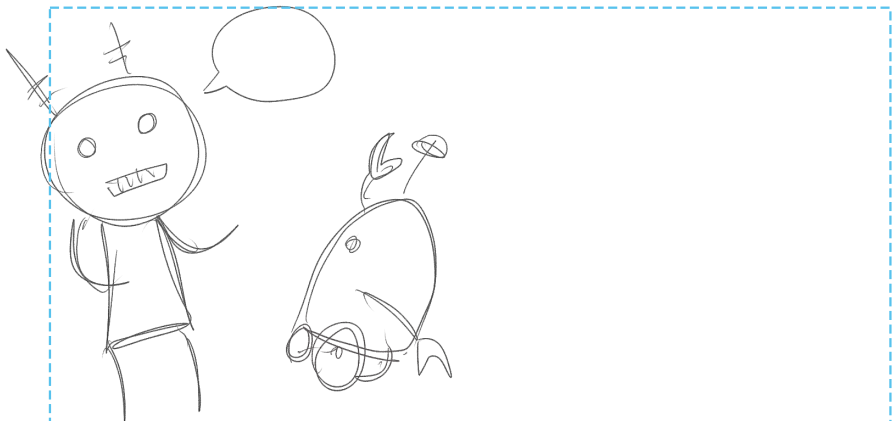


Next, there are some descriptions of situations you may face when thinking together with others. Develop example solutions to the situations that would feel natural for you to use.

- Sometimes, it is necessary to express that something is important to you. Think of different means of framing an issue, where you specifically want to express your opinion, but without making others feel expected or pressurised to agree.

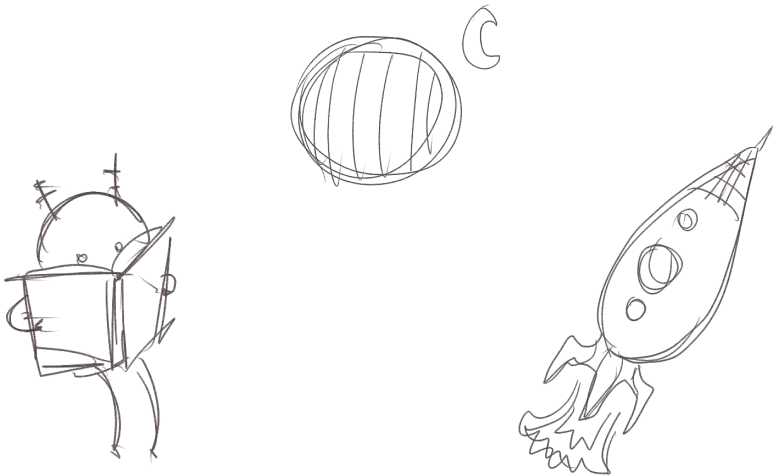
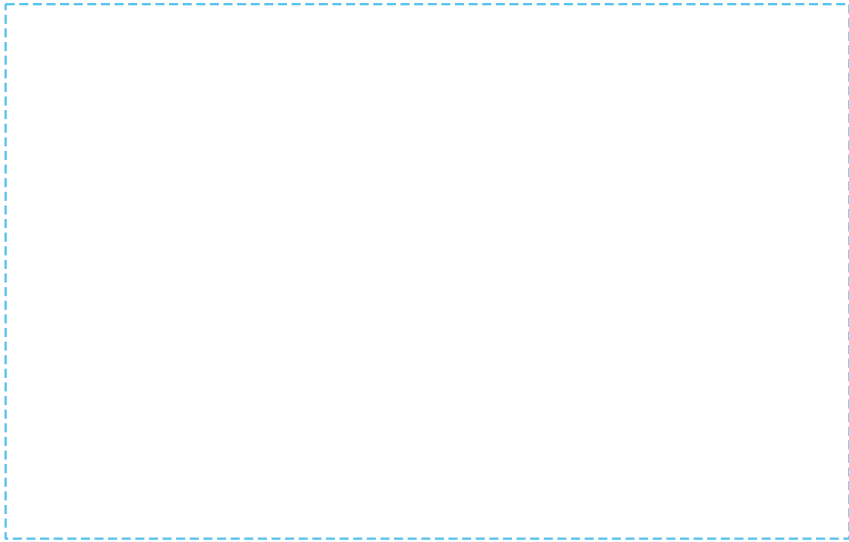
- Sometimes in discussion expressing disagreement can create an awkward atmosphere. Think about different ways of showing that you understand someone else's thinking, even though you disagree.

- Sometimes, your peers may have difficulties expressing their thoughts in the group. Think of ways to support them in expressing their views.



### Task 3.

Choose a research-based newspaper article that has received much attention in public discourse. Familiarise yourself with the article and the public commentary on it, and examine what the argumentation is like in the discussion.



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## 2 Theories as an Educator's Conceptual Tools

I am busy enough in my everyday life with studying and working. I don't need the extra hassle of any abstract theories!

What does theory mean anyway?!

Why does studying at the university have to be research-based, if most students don't end up becoming researchers?

I can't choose which theory I should support, or which theory is the best!





This whole theory thing just feels a bit much. Why should I even bother to read a chapter that sounds so difficult?



Do you mean that theory sounds like it's removed from real life, dry, and abstract?



I would understand if we were dealing with a theory that had something to do with chemistry or engineering. It sort of feels clearer in that context.



Maybe the thought of theory in educational sciences feels different because what is to be learned theoretically deals with everything around us, such as our own everyday lives, relationships, and activities as a student and a professional.



Because learning and interaction are part of our lives all the time, the theoretical understanding related to them is, in a way, more demanding: not because it would be more difficult, but because it brings us the lenses to see our everyday lives, relationships, our own behaviour and that of others through slow thinking, more consciously. Knowledge, in educational sciences, has to do with our own identity, and as we learn it, we inevitably have to reflect our own identities and go through change. We cannot remove ourselves from the topics under study in the same way as, for example, when studying technical or chemical processes.





Yeah, well, that does make sense. In a way it would be easier to study phenomena that you can just think about and develop without connections with your own life.



But, on the other hand, it's the connections with our lives that give us tools to understand our own world view [as well as the world view of others], and that is really useful for all of us.



What does  
theory  
mean?

**Theory** could be summarised in the thought that it is conceptualised understanding about some phenomenon.

Often we have a kind of an unspoken understanding on what something is about or how it works. Within theory, such mechanisms are explicitly expressed in words. A theory, hence, is a structural group of information that belongs together – like a network of information, which as a whole forms the understanding of some limited phenomenon.<sup>12</sup>

Often we have a kind of an unspoken understanding on what something is about or how it works. Within theory, such mechanisms are explicitly expressed in words. A theory, hence, is a structural group of information that belongs together – like a network of information, which as a whole forms the understanding of some limited phenomenon.<sup>13</sup>

Theory can grasp and inspect a certain, limited entity or phenomenon. In reality, phenomena do not have such limits, but rather, interact with each other in many ways. Thus theories are always simplifications of a complex reality, but at the same time,

<sup>12</sup> Pikkarainen 2011

<sup>13</sup> Pikkarainen 2011; Holma & Mälkki 2011

they are necessary tools for understanding this complexity<sup>14</sup>. Theories are also important tools for supporting and developing action. Our behaviour in practice is often guided by some goal, which we aim to reach through our behaviour. For example, as teachers, we want to make the atmosphere in the learning environment supportive of learning, or make processes at work smooth so our work would be meaningful and productive. Although our aims might be clear in our mind, it is not necessary evident that our actions will, in the end, assist us in reaching our goals in the best possible way, or whether in fact we might, through something we do, be unwittingly creating new problems that slow us down in reaching our goals.

Theory shines a light on everyday activity and increases understanding on what the activity consists of, how it functions, why it works when it does work, or, if there are problems, what these are all about and how they could be solved. With theory, we can make our behaviour more conscious and considered, and this opens up possibilities for developing our activity and finding new solutions. This does not always mean that the activity will become easier, but rather, it may require us to practice new ways of behaving and develop a deep-rooted understanding of the phenomena at hand<sup>15</sup>. Theory can, in fact, be thought of as a mirror to our practical behaviour: it helps us examine, whether we are acting in a way that best supports reaching our goals, and awakens new kind of thinking, so we can develop new solutions and better, more functioning practices.

<sup>14</sup> Trigg 2001; Illeris 2007

<sup>15</sup> Pikkarainen 2011

## Level 3

# Scientific theory

- Makes practices more conscious and systematic, conveys rationality and clear insight, and decreases randomness of practice
- Aims to rectify one-sidedness, superficiality, narrowness and randomness of level 1 and Level 2 theories, through bringing them into the sphere of conscious, systematic examination

## Level 2

# Practitioner's theory: Verbalised justifications

- Verbalised, formulated responses that a practitioner can give when asked about their actions and their reasons. May be very one-sided and even contradictory to what the person actually does.
- Verbalised descriptions, instructions, programmes, principles, sayings, and mottos, which practitioners share with each other.
- Many pedagogical models and applications.

## Level 1

# Practitioner's theory: Unreflected foundation

- An unreflected foundation that behaviour always already has, and which to some extent changes according to action and the formation of its conditions
- Guides action based on unconscious or at least unspoken expectations and principles
- Based on skills and habits learned through action

Weniger model of pedagogical theories from year 1953 (Pikkarainen 2011, 37–39)



Isn't behaviourism a completely dated theory and totally dead and buried already?



Pavlov's dogs are of course a bit of a clumsy example for many kinds of learning, but this doesn't mean that many other things wouldn't be learned simply by repetition or conditioning. Think about any kind of skill, be it thinking, sports, music, or fine arts, the basic techniques have to be learned a little bit at a time and through repetition, so that in the end you can create and produce something new and original.



Also the entire society often works pretty much based on rewards and punishments, there's prisons, norms, wages... Even though behaviourism's view of humanity is too narrow to guide education, it doesn't mean that it cannot cast an important, although limited beam of light on certain dynamics in the learning process.

Other theories are needed to bring out those issues that cannot be viewed through behaviouristic methods. When it comes to its view of humanity and its values, behaviourism does not look good in the light of day, although a behaviouristic view of the human being as a passive, object-like being governable from the outside still dominates in many places. However, for example conditioning and repetition are important points of view into understanding learning.



It is, therefore, important to recognise within theories their different elements and their different levels: what is scientific understanding of a phenomenon, what are value principles, and what are suggestions for practical applications based on these.



Anyway, to me it still feels easiest just to learn the basic outlines of theories, for the exam.



To me, too. To learn by heart and not think about them in-depth like that.



Often theories can feel distant, even frightening, because they are abstract by their nature. In order to make theories feel more down-to-earth, it might help to think of them from the perspective that they have been formulated by somebody.

The theorist has felt a need to bring some new thing or aspect into discussion that has been lacking from previous discourse. Many other aspects are missing from the discourse, too, but a particular person has wanted to put effort into conceptualising a particular thing. In their text, they then justify to others why they should take that point of view into account, too.



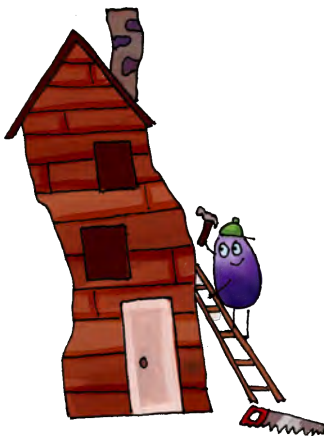
That's what I said: in practice, those theories are useless, because they are unfinished and abstract, and there are always things missing from discussion! I, for one, like practice a lot more than theories!



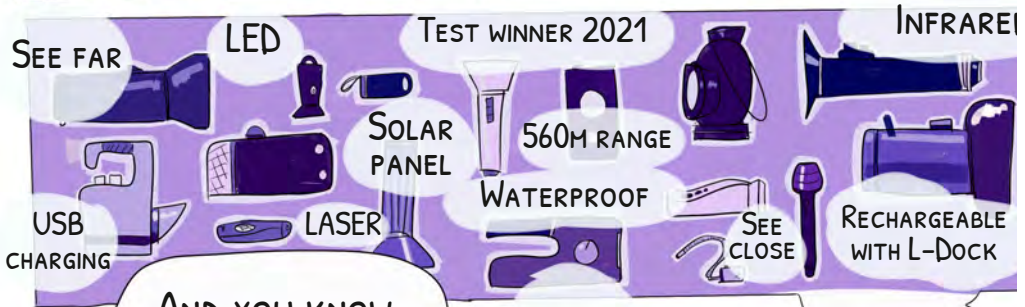
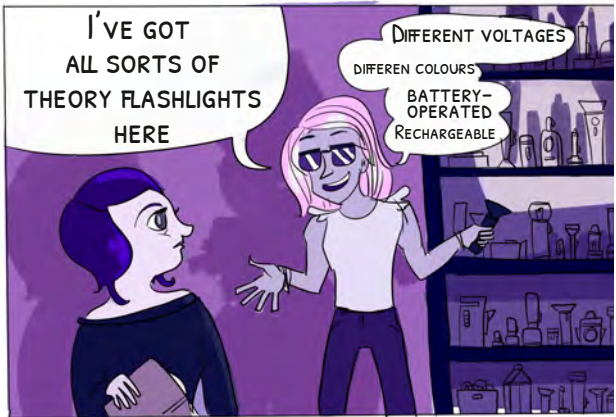
Yeabut, they work together! Kurt Lewin, social psychologist and developer of action research, puts it well: “*Nothing is as practical as a good theory*”\*. You have to learn to use theories as tools, and to understand how to benefit from them. You don’t abandon a hammer just because it cannot saw.

You need various tools to build a house.  
And a microscope is not blamed for being  
useless for examining space.  
Different colours are usually needed for  
works of art, too.

Many theoretical flashlights are needed to get a more complete view of the phenomenon. Like people as thinkers, also theories are always incomplete and limited. You have to be able to relate to them critically, but at the same time, to utilise the understanding they can offer.



\*Lewin 1943



AND YOU KNOW HOW TO USE THEM, TOO?

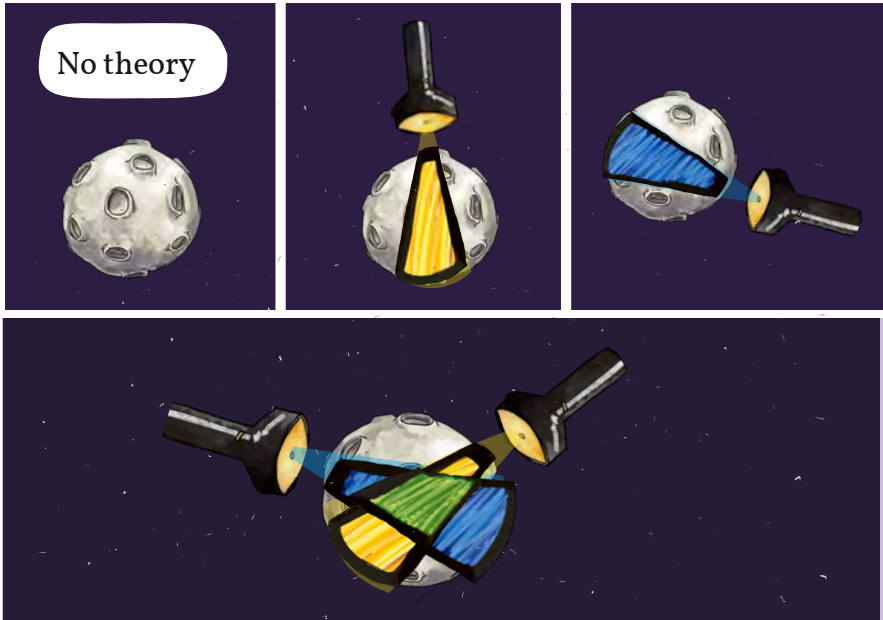
No, BUT AREN'T THEY GREAT?



# Theories as Flashlights

Different theories, concepts, and models can (and must) be applied to a given situation.

Different theories, concepts, and models can (and must) be applied to a given situation.



Theories structure phenomena and points of view.

- Theory offers an analytical handle on practical situations – for example, a car mechanic: knows how the car works, listens to the car, recognises reasons for problems, knows how to fix them
- Theories as equipment → “Me as a user of theory: I use the flashlight and interpret what I see while using it”.
- In using theories, the dialogue of personal experience/understanding and theory is important. Theory helps comprehend practice/experience, and practice/experience helps comprehend theory:
  - With theory, you can challenge your own understanding, and thus reach a deeper comprehension on your own thinking and the reasons for thinking the way you do
  - With your own understanding, you can challenge theory, and thus reach a deeper comprehension on what the theory is actually about.




Well what about these research skills, then? We are taught them, but what use are they, if you don't want to be a researcher?

Research skills are useful in whatever you do!



Learning research skills is not just training for becoming a researcher, but also about increasing your competence in expert thinking, meaning that you can consciously let go of self-evident and mundane thinking based on feeling rather than evidence.






Research skills train your thinking to be more valid, justified, and systematic.

In all tasks in the field of education, you need the skills of looking at things from various points of view, structuring complex phenomena, and examining matters critically.

You also need the skills to search for information, problem solving skills, and creativity, as well as justified decision-making or planning and executing projects. These skills develop, as you learn research skills.<sup>16</sup>



Okay, you should have said straight up that it was just a question of thinking and doing and all this normal stuff. The term “researcher” felt frightening to me, but now it seems like that, too, is just an ordinary thing.

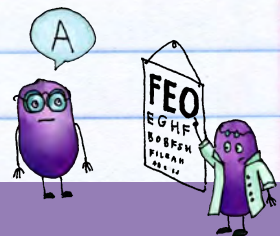
## Students' Observations

*“When I started to study to be a teacher, I thought I’d be given a set of ready, researched, tried and tested, good ways for a teacher to teach students. The further I have got in my studies, the more I have understood that as a professional, I need personal, deep-rooted comprehension and ability to make independent, thought-out decisions in practical situations. Skills like these I cannot get otherwise except through studying theories and learning to apply them. In a way it’s quite challenging, but also really rewarding – expertise is not some tricks to learn off by heart, but that the tools and theories are internalised and become a part of my own thinking, which makes me grow as a person and gives me the ability to think critically.”*

*“I have wanted to work in organisations in HR development for a long time, and I thought all I needed was a degree so I could do the work I want to do. With my studies, I understood that whatever I do for a living, whatever position I have, I am promoting certain values, and you have to be able to recognise an organisation’s values, for example, what values they hold regarding how they treat people in the organization, and in what direction should the staff or the activity be developed. Theoretical studies have awakened like another layer of comprehension in me, so that I can see, handle, and develop these sorts of things.”*

“I only understood the meaning of theories when at lecture I heard about Plato’s cave parable, where people live their lives chained in a cave and only know about the world outside the cave through the shadows that are cast on the back of the wall from people who are outside the cave. Reality can be imagined and comprehended through theory. In the real world, you only see shadows, but the nature and origin of the shadows can only be understood if you have a conceptual point of view from which to look at phenomena from different points of view, not just how you yourself have gotten used to looking at things.”

“Theoretical knowledge has given me the lenses to outline questions such as why is there early childhood education in the first place, why we teach the things we teach, the power that an early-childhood educator and the whole education institution uses, what kind of a world view we build with the substance we teach and the way we teach them. What if nobody considered early childhood pedagogy at all? How do the values prevalent in society influence what we think about early childhood education or learning, and what is done in daycare? Without theories and studying, I would just take everything as a given, and repeat the things I have seen others do, without the ability to think critically for myself about things, and through that, be able to influence how things could be done better, with my own actions.”



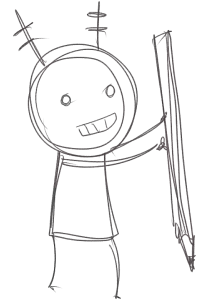
“In the early part of my studies I noticed that some theories just were somehow really annoying, whereas others felt really nice or interesting. Later, I started to wonder about this emotional charge that things had, and with that, I started to see what points of view into education are most natural to me, and which theoretical viewpoints I would like to utilise in my thesis. At the same time, it also felt like I got deeper into the more ‘annoying’ theories also, and noticed what added value they bring to my favourite theories.”



“When I played football and worked as a coach, I started to notice racism. I wanted to get into the field of education, because that gives you a great opportunity to influence this society and the kind of world we are producing and how new generations are treated. With the help of theories, your thinking can become free from immediate, concrete observations and reactions, the feeling-based worldview. Through conceptual thinking, I can unravel existing practices to reveal the values internalised in them, and make them visible, so that I can outline ways of doing things differently.”

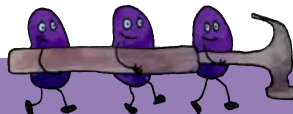
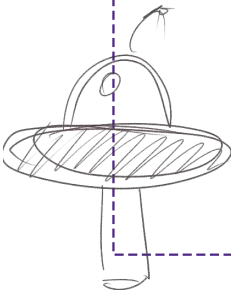


# Try it yourself!



## Task 1.

Think about some challenging situation that includes learning and interaction from your own life, your previous studies, summer jobs, or family life. Write down in brief who were in the situation, what happened. What aspects of the situation in your view supported learning, and what aspects made it difficult? As you get acquainted with learning theories in your studies, come back to this case and the interpretation you made. Which theory's points of view had you naturally accessed in your interpretation, and which points of view had been left unnoticed in your preliminary interpretation?




**Task 2.**

Examine how you feel when you think about theories. Consider and write down where your understanding or experience possibly stems from. Reflect what you wrote on the topics of this chapter.



**Task 3.**

Choose two theories you are somewhat acquainted with. Imagine a situation, in which the creators of these theories meet each other, and their task is to examine some challenging situation at a workplace or school. Write the dialogue of these theoretician characters.



#### Task 4.

Often theories are studied with an attitude of learning things off by heart. Comprehending a theory may be made easier, if you approach the theory as if you were its critic: not to view the theory as if it were up there in an ivory tower, but rather, as a text that has been given to you to be assessed.

You can think about the following questions, for example:

- To what extent does the theory describe how things would happen in an optimal, ideal situation? To what extent does the theory also capture the challenges related to the phenomenon being examined that we meet in our everyday lives, and how these challenges could be overcome?
- Which of the theoreticians thoughts are empirical findings, and in what ways are values intertwined with the thinking?
- To what extent does the theory express examining the human experience through individual dimensions, for example, through a merely cognitive, social, embodied, emotional, or societal point of view? To what extent has it created an understanding of how the different dimensions act as an interrelated whole?
- In what ways are the things described in the theory being implemented in current working life or at schools? What kinds of values or political aims are intertwined with these implementations?

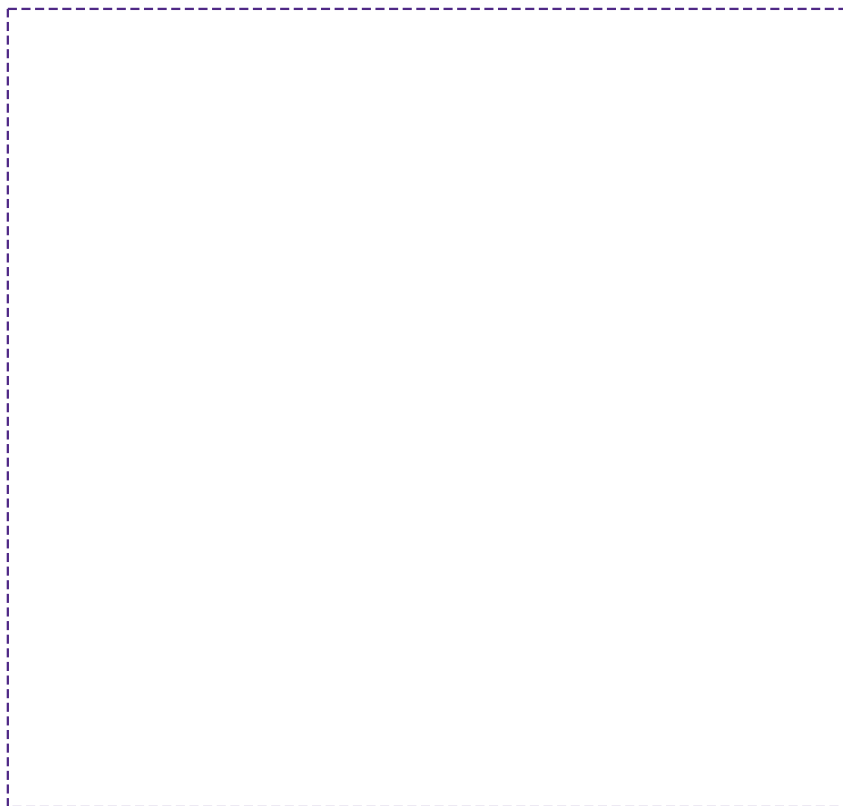




### Task 5.

School life is often discussed in public, for example, in the Letters section of newspapers. Examine some discussion on social media related to school, and locate from the commenters' posts their underlying assumptions and values.

What kind of a view does the commenter appear to have on learning? What kind of a view does the commenter have on the kind of people school should aim to develop through education? Has preserving something old or producing change been assumed to be a singularly good thing? What kind of a view does the commenter have on what defines the current state of affairs within schools? For example, are problems seen as stemming merely from pedagogy, or are the influences of economical structures or political decision-making being recognised?



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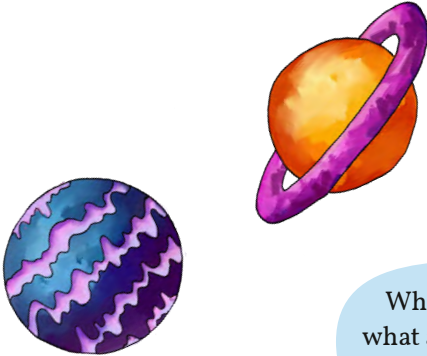
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# 3

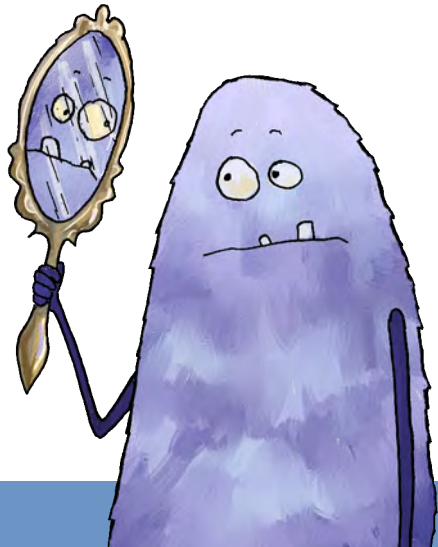
## Reflection Skills

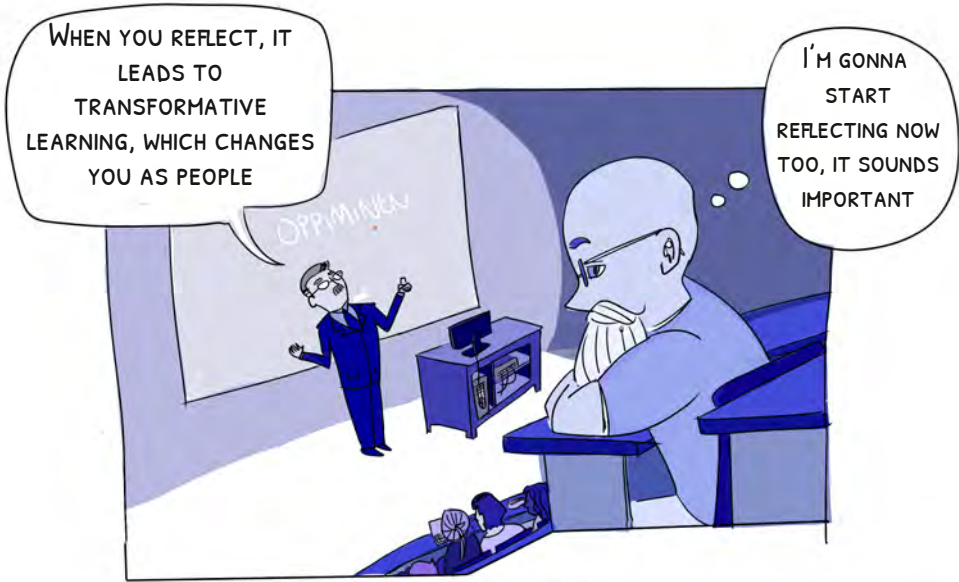


When the task is reflection, what am I supposed to do? And how do you know what you should reflect about?



This is no use anyway, my face always looks the same!







What does reflection mean anyway?



At it's simplest, it is focusing your attention of how and why we think in a certain way, and how and why we behave the way we do. Within the scientific world, of course, reflection has been given different kinds of meanings in different domains and fields of research.



I read an enlightening thing somewhere: the etymology of the word reflection refers to mirroring and to bending back, so it's like turning to look at yourself as a thinker, interpreter, feeler, and actor.



Within the educational sciences, the purpose of reflection is usually considered to be a deep understanding of the underlying assumptions and values of action and thought. Examining these critically enables changing patterns of thought, feeling, and behaviour, and more generally a more aware, responsible, and ethical action. The opposite of reflection is to have an uncritical attitude towards one's own thinking and behaviour. In that case, you are unaware of the root causes of your behaviour.



In other words, when you reflect, the intention is not just to report and blab.

It feels difficult, when you're used to always thinking what it is that the teacher or the person grading your essay wants of you and what they want you to say. How can I just suddenly turn my thoughts around to think about what I myself think and feel, or how I behave?  
Would have to start producing something from inside out, as it were.  
Why are my thoughts, feelings, and actions the business of someone who grades my essay?



I for one don't want to start revealing my thoughts and feelings to any outsider. It's really embarrassing.

Anyway, what if the thoughts are really immature and the person grading my essay will just laugh at them?

It's not just a question of your own thoughts, emotions, and actions. You're meant to include theory.  
Reflection is not just your own thinking; it is considering your own experiences analytically, together with theory.

Developing your thinking requires stimulation from outside, so that it would not be reduced into diary entries.



What's wrong with what I write in my diary? And anyway, diaries belong in a drawer in your bedside table!

C'mon, calm down now! Reflection is an important part of academic thinking and professionalism. In order to behave ethically in the first place, you have to have the skill of examining your own behaviour and thinking from the outside.



The purpose of reflection is to adopt a way of thinking, in which we understand how we often lean on self-evidencies. Reflection is a tool to make the self-evident visible.

It carries a possibility of transformation, of changing your own belief system.

With such change, we learn to understand how our own way of thinking has been shaped by the influence of the surrounding culture, the environment we grew up in, and the people close to us, and learn to examine it critically.

As you start to comprehend your own thoughts and feelings, you gain comprehension on what is taken for granted in the surrounding culture, and the current structures.



Yes but it still means that you get through your studies just by writing something about what you thought and felt.



It is not enough, if you want to reflect for real.

So what are you meant to do? Why should I dig into the depths of my own belief systems or whatever?

My beliefs and thoughts are a part of me. It feels horrible to even think I'd have to give them up! What will be left of me then?

Sounds horrible, and I don't even want to change, in the first place.

Are you saying you don't want to grow and become an expert?

Of course I want to be an expert, but isn't enough to read all course books and listening during lectures? I know how to think.







Theoretical knowledge is not integrated into behaviour without reflection. If theoretical knowledge just remains a separate island in your mind, it cannot influence behaviour. With reflection, you can bring your own beliefs, thoughts, and action into discussion with theory, and form your own, conscious point of view or way of thinking and behaving.



Well I for one can learn that theoretical information and put it into practice straightaway.



Yep! My thoughts are already good, so I can just stick theory onto them. I did fine at upper-secondary school, too!



That will land up with what many studies have shown: for example, teachers say they have a constructivist view of humanity, they can justify it beautifully and really think it's true, but then when you observe their behaviour, it is contrary to what they say.



No need to be the wise guy, Guidi! I've got on fine this way before. And I am a critical thinker. For me, theory and practice are perfectly in line.



Oh man, I don't know. Maybe this is asking too much. Some part of me says okay let's give it a go, although it's always difficult to get started, and another part says that his is a total waste of effort. It all just makes me feel so awkward.



That's a familiar feeling. That's an edge-emotion, a sign of our belief structure being challenged. The awkward feeling is the seed of reflection, and examining this will expose underlying assumptions and what is taken for granted. It is necessary, but can also be fun.



How can it be fun, when you just described it as painful?



Examining and exploring edge-emotions releases a lot of energy. You don't have to fear and avoid unpleasant feelings anymore, but you can take a more relaxed attitude instead, and see them as a basic part of life. You can see them as important friends or as something that light the way to developing your expertise. You can learn to relate to unpleasant feelings in a new way: allowing them to exist in your body, pausing to experience them, and learning how to function with them.



Shouldn't you take unpleasant feelings to a therapist or something?



Seeing edge-emotions as negative and scary is often taken for granted and should therefore be examined critically. This is the attitude we often learn in our culture. We could, however, consider them not only as unpleasant but also as necessary, as they guide us towards new thoughts and deeper understanding of our selves and the surrounding world.

The purpose of an unpleasant feeling is to protect us from excessive pain and to guide our thinking quickly back to the comfort zone, where we feel good and don't experience any threats. But if you always just avoid unpleasant feelings, in the end your thinking becomes narrower and narrower and learning stops. Not everything that is scary is dangerous!



If you don't, for example, reflect on being a teacher, you easily land up doing things the way they've always been done, and lean on things that are taken for granted. At least for a teacher or an expert, it is pretty difficult to justify your actions as a professional, if you cannot recognise the underlying assumptions of your behaviour.



Edge-emotions can be seen as a gate that opens the way towards new thinking. It also means giving up something old that has been a part of you. This can cause fears, as if there would be nothing left of me, if I now let go of the old.



Choosing your battles gives some relief and mercy: you can decide in which things you want to go through the transformative process now, and which can be left until later.



Oh man, I really feel somehow confused and ill at ease!



Don't worry, now you can if you like give yourself a little shake, release some tension, and then start to reflect and examine how your body is feeling and what lurks behind or inside this feeling. By working on these, it is possible to get to grips with the things we take for granted that work in the background of our behaviour and thinking, as well as the current assumptions in the society and culture in which we live.



## Hint:

Sometimes you may be given a reflection task in your studies without more specific instructions or tools for completing the task.

In such a situation, you can approach the teacher, for example, with the following questions:

- What do you mean by reflection in relation to this task?
- What kind of reflection process would you consider deep or shallow, in relation to this task?
- Could you give some concrete supporting questions with which we could get started with the task?



Reflection can be done alone or with friends.

Reflection isn't meant to mean curling up into your self!

When you learn new things about yourself, you learn new things about the world, and vice versa!



# Tracks of Thought and How to Expand Them

Fear is experienced in the body as an unpleasant sensation that guides us away from the situation that appears threatening. Thus fear acts as a message that helps us avoid harmful things<sup>17</sup>. These messages do not only indicate threat to the physical body, but also threats to the mind<sup>18</sup>. While protecting the mind, fear and other unpleasant sensations keep our thinking in familiar tracks. On familiar tracks, we feel safe, and we know the bumps and bends of the tracks. Although the bumps and bends do not always feel pleasant, they are regardless familiar and secure, they have grown to be part of our comfort zone.

Moving along familiar tracks feels so safe that stepping off the beaten track can arouse fear and thoughts of something bad or scary happening, if you slip from the track to something unknown. Fear acts like a preventative measure: it is aroused and arrives if we merely think of stepping off the usual track. Fear keeps us on track, in our habitual models of thought and behaviour. Remaining on track is also supported by everything proceeding well. When we move on familiar tracks without problem, we do not notice how they might also limit our behaviour or thinking<sup>19</sup>. We are not necessarily even going where we would like to go, but it is nice to travel on familiar tracks.

If we want to reflect on which tracks we are actually travelling on and perhaps also test what other opportunities for moving forward we have, we need to slow down our speed on the tracks that fear would guide us to remain on<sup>20</sup>. At great speed, it is difficult to examine the tracks. The view changes quickly, and it is nice to look at it without thinking too deeply, like watching the changing landscape from the window of a speeding train. Slowing down on our tracks helps us to see better what the tracks beneath us are and what actually lies outside them: is it really an actual danger we should fear and avoid, or does it merely look like it?

<sup>17</sup> Damasio 1999;2010

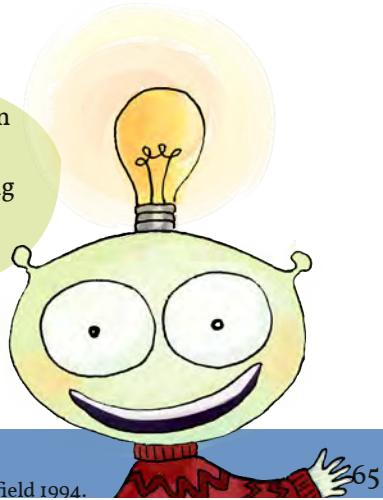
<sup>19</sup> Mälkki 2019

<sup>18</sup> Mälkki 2011

<sup>20</sup> Mälkki 2011

In order for us to get acquainted with our tracks and the ground beyond them, we should learn a new way of relating to the experience of fear. Fear will always feel unpleasant, and it will naturally stir a desire to get rid of the unpleasantness by avoiding the thing that caused the fear. We can, however, practice ways of relating to fear. Bravely facing fear does not mean forcing your way through it, or hiding it away. Fear should be melted by tenderly feeling around it, as if softly inviting it to come instead of running away from it. Then, the ground beneath fear will open up to be examined.<sup>22</sup>

What was earlier described as examining the tracks and the ground surrounding them is the same thing as reflection. In reflection, the intention is to become aware of the things we take for granted that direct our thoughts, actions, and feelings, and examine the validity of these apparently self-evident things and their culturally-bound and societal roots.<sup>23</sup> The unpleasant feelings protecting the unity of the mind can be conceptualised as edge-emotions<sup>24</sup>, which appear at the edges of the comfort zone.

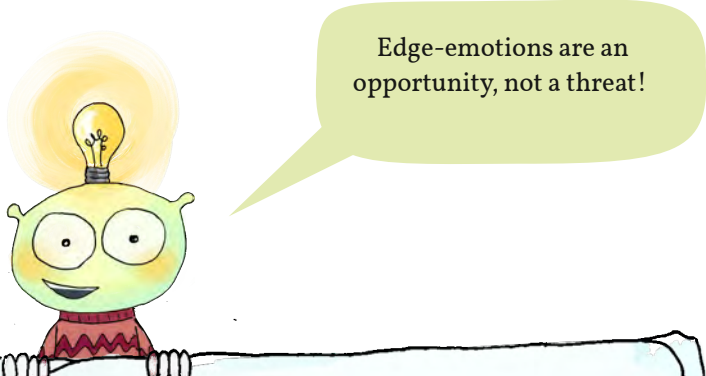


Being merciful to yourself is the essential in practicing reflection and growing as an individual human being, both in recognising and utilising edge-emotions, as well as in taking breaks from practising.


<sup>21</sup> Mälkki 2011

<sup>22</sup> Mälkki 2019

<sup>23</sup> Mezirow 1991; 2000; Mälkki 2011; Korthagen 2017; Brookfield 1994.



Edge-emotions are an opportunity, not a threat!




## Edge-emotions

Edge-emotions are unpleasant feelings, such as fear, shame, guilt, hate, frustration, and disappointment. These feelings arise

- when our beliefs, expectancies, or values become under question
- when we cannot understand a situation based on our previous experiences
- when our social relationships or experience of approval become under question.<sup>25</sup>

Edge-emotions are a signal that our relationship with the world has been challenged: our taken-for-granted way of viewing the world or ourselves becomes under question, when we are in interaction with the world.



The purpose of edge-emotions is to protect the unity of the mind from situations that might shatter it. The emotional machinery of fight, flight, or freeze has a biological base. The function of the unpleasant feelings, thus, is to guide us away from reflection, so that our thinking and behaviour would remain in the familiar, safe area <sup>26</sup>.

Indeed we naturally aim to explain and project outside ourselves the points of view and things that challenge our ways of thinking, and to act quickly, so that we can return to our comfort zones. For example, blaming others, brushing aside challenging questions, or explaining them as harmless are cognitive means for avoiding edge-emotions and returning to the comfort zone. We may, hence, automatically reject also new information, even if it was well justified – because it would simultaneously challenge us to change our thinking or behaviour.

In order to expand our thinking, learn new things and become aware, recognise, and critically examine the things we personally and our society culturally take for granted, it is worthwhile to gently practise utilising edge-emotions. Edge-emotions are like a gateway to reflection and new thoughts, if only we dare to let the unpleasant feeling be, accept it as part of our experience, and do not immediately spring into action to get rid of it. Indeed we could consider edge-emotions merely as a feeling signalling that we are leaving our familiar track.

Behind edge-emotions, some new understanding or perception we have not reached before is always revealed. This new understanding may have to do with our own set of values, beliefs, or previous knowledge, as well as with the world around us: things culturally considered a matter of course, the hidden structures of the workplace, or perhaps in the patterns of thinking or reacting among our group of friends.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Mälkki 2010

<sup>27</sup> Mälkki 2010; 2019





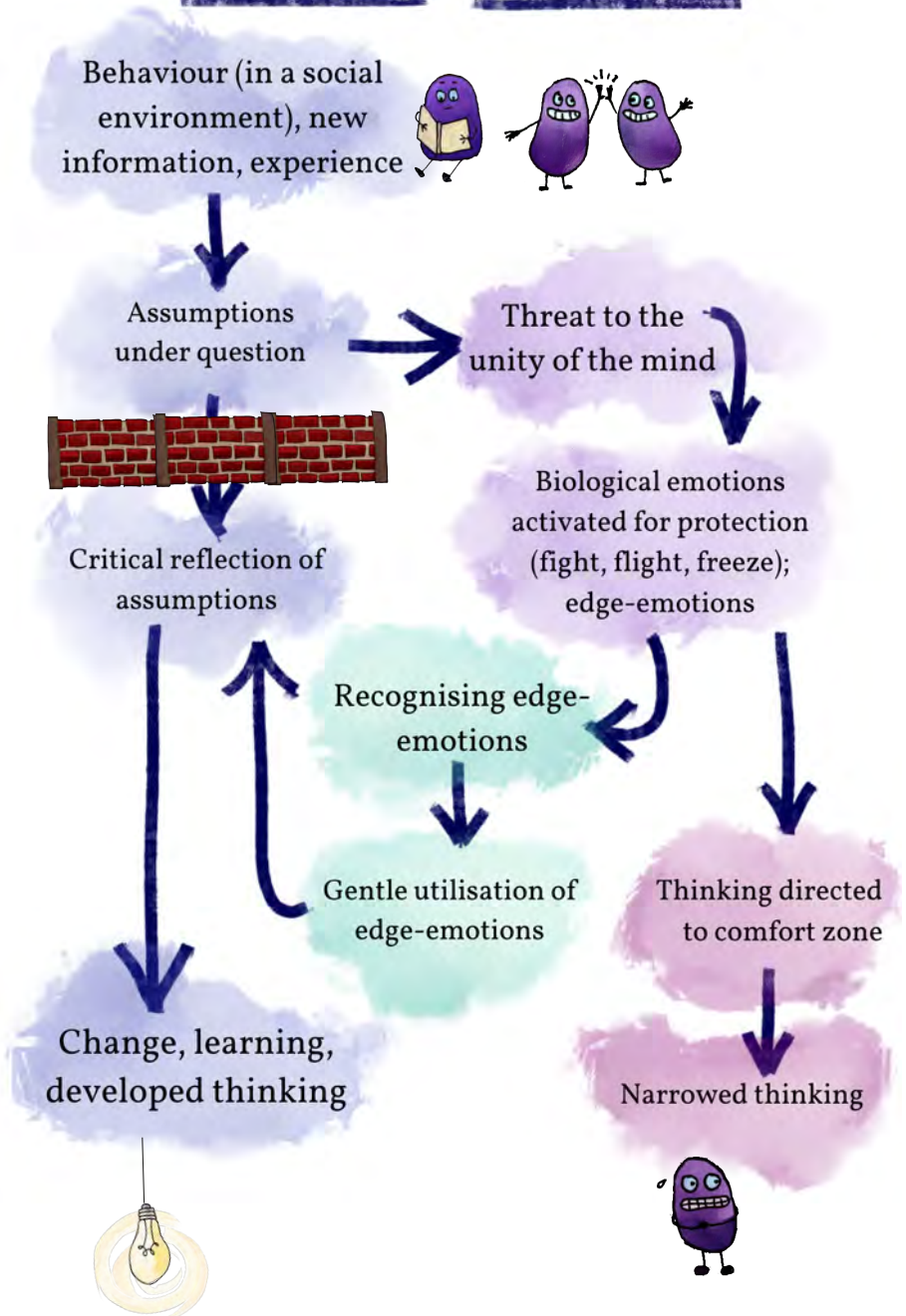


So edge-emotions are both a hindrance and a gateway to reflection – what’s that all about?

Yes, if we don’t know how to deal with edge-emotions, they become a hindrance, but if we become skilled in working with them, they open up a route to reflection.



# Reflection as a process



# How Do I Reflect?

Experiences of  
success

Do you know how to  
utilise edge-emotions in  
reflection?

Edge  
emotions

## 1. Verbalising the situation

What happened? What did I do?  
What did I say? What did I think?  
What was the context like?

## 2. Recognising emotions

What emotions did I experience in  
the situation?

## 3. Gently utilising edge-emotions and success experiences

To what kind of new thinking does this experience invite  
and open up the path?

Recognising underlying assumptions

- What kinds of personal, professional, institutional, cultural things and structures taken for granted can I recognise?

Examining the assumptions

- To what extent do the assumptions appear limited, in light of my current understanding?

## 4. Action


To what kind of action, in line with my values, does this  
new understanding call me?

Learning from successes  
Recognising strengths

Haasteista oppiminen  
Coping with incompleteness and  
uncertainty

Bah, I'd like to skip to that  
action part already!





### **Reflection within comfort zone**

- Making previous understanding visible

### **Expanding the comfort zone**

- Questioning previous understanding
- Giving up patterns of thought previously experienced as matter of course and as providing security
- Expanding one's point of view
- Own thinking becoming clearer



**New thinking and growing as an expert!**



I'm trying to reflect, but it feels difficult.



Patience, Essé! In reflection, the best way of moving forward is to first recognise what it is that holds us humans back. It is quite normal to want to hide away negative feelings.



Through examining your edge-emotions, you can learn new things and your thinking expands. When you get used to the process, it gets easier all the time. You can even get kicks from working with your edge-emotions. Even challenging situations don't paralyse you like they might at first.

Edge-emotions act as a gateway to a more flexible model of behaviour: if you add relaxedness and acceptance into edge-emotions, you add flexibility to the edges of your comfort zone and to expanding your thinking! With these, you can reach things and structures that have previously been taken for granted, personal as well as professional, institutional, and cultural.



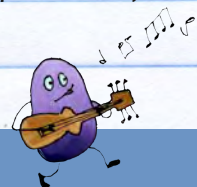
In the next pages, you can find many examples of reflection and edge-emotions.

## Students' Observations

*“The most trouble at the beginning of my studies were definitely all the tasks involving thinking about yourself as a teacher or that demanded reflection. I felt like I just couldn’t grasp what I should be thinking about! I don’t know what happened then, but it started to work at some point. If I had seen that “How do I reflect?” tool, I would have understood faster what it was that was wanted of me.”*

*“In educational sciences, at least I often feel like learning should always be something positive. Especially when it’s a question of developing thinking skills or other things that are considered really fancy. But just like everything about being a human being is part of your everyday life, learning doesn’t happen in some clinical laboratory where your thoughts just develop in a fancy manner, but instead you have to face your own humanness, all those emotions, when you are learning.”*

*“No matter how you mess up and what unpleasant things happen, with reflection, you can turn them all into victories, you can learn from them and your own understanding can deepen. I saw this inspirational quote online, where the jazz legend Miles Davis says that when you hit a wrong note, its wrongness is only sealed by the note that comes after it. So I’ve decided to take reflection as the note that comes after anything I mess up, and messing up doesn’t feel as bad anymore – at least for not very long.”*





“At first, reflection felt like sort of self-psychologising, and it didn’t interest me, because for me, all the sociological or cultural points-of-view were more important. Later, these two points-of-view started to come together when I heard something that made me think.

My friend told me that in the Afro-centric worldview, an ethical person dreams about a better world and thinks about how to reach it. So if you don’t think about what the world should be like and how to get there, you’re an unethical person. That made me think about what kind of worldview and thoughts I’m brought up to. As a Western person, ethics like that was shocking, because it felt too brave or arrogant and simultaneously just right. Anyway, I realised I have not been brought up to that way of thinking, that I’ve been socialised to different ethics. I understood that I need to reflect on what kind of thinking is the basis of my action, so that I can reach the things that are taken as a matter of course in Western culture, politics, and worldview. So, with reflection, you can see cultural and sociological phenomena.”

“In the early part of my studies, if people were talking critically about something that had happened in the university or in society, or about some theory, I always felt that everyone was being really negative. I felt guilty about questioning academic or societal truths. Now, afterwards, I have noticed that those discussions are the ones in which my thinking really developed, as they made way for new ways of thinking and envisioned possible worlds.”

“At first, I felt like I didn’t even understand what reflection or edge-emotions mean, like there was no part of me through which I could have recognised examples of them from my own experience. But then over time I started to note in my everyday life situations in which I felt uncomfortable, and then I noticed that I didn’t think very openly then, but instead just wanted to get rid of that feeling no matter what, even subconsciously, with some excuses. Then I started to see that this is exactly what is meant by escaping to the comfort zone. I started to practise enduring being with these uncomfortable feelings. They started to become much softer and with that, I became curious about what points of view and information I can dig out with them. It’s really good sometimes to think about different points of view, for example, from the Western culture, into which I’ve grown so much that I don’t even know to wonder why we relate to things the way we do here.”

“My friend called me when they were having all sorts of problems during a trip abroad. So I started to give them advice on what to do. My brave friend dared to send me a message about how bad they’d felt when all I did was advise and how they would have just wished I would have been with them in that shitty feeling, just shared it. I realised that the edge-emotions drove me to act, because it was uncomfortable for me because I didn’t know what else I could say or do. And to top it all I have been saying the same thing about all my relatives, who started to hand out all this advice when they heard about my depression, like, get a grip on yourself and go for a walk outside! Nowadays, I am better at just being there, but it is a case of endlessly practising, and mistakes happen all the time. This tendency of avoiding edge-emotions seems to run quite deep.”

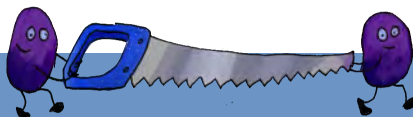
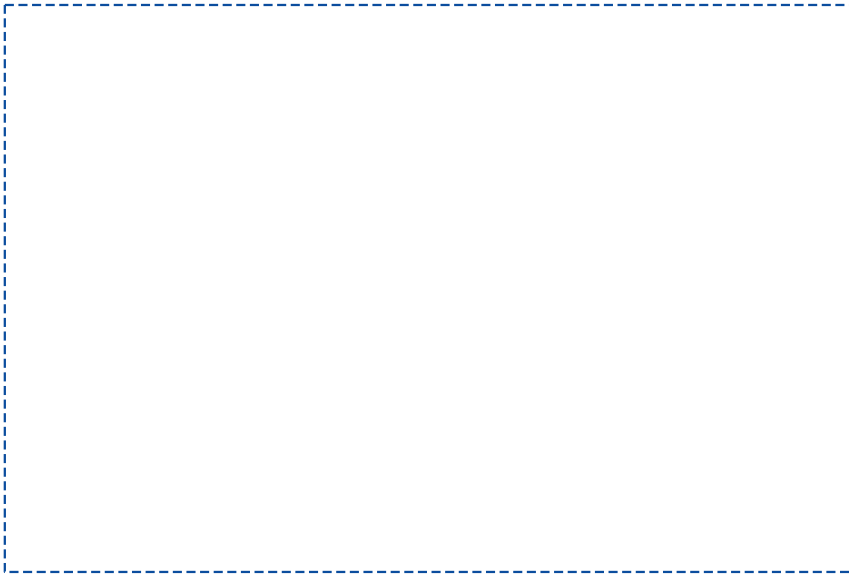


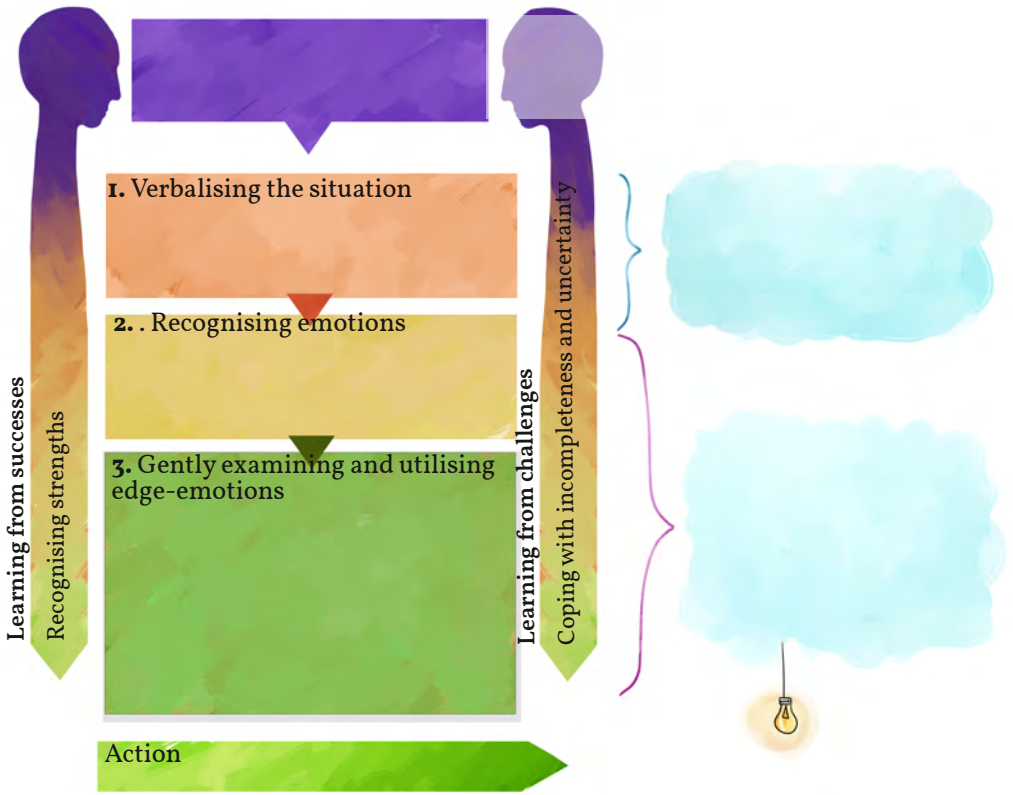


# Try it yourself!

## Task 1.

Practising the process of reflection. First choose some successful situation, or some situation that awakened edge-emotions. You can start from something minor, any occasion in which you experienced edge-emotions, or which felt really successful. What would that be? Once you have chosen the situation, use the “How do I reflect?” tool, and answer all the questions in it in order. In this way, you can practise reflecting, experiencing and working with edge-emotions, and grasping the understanding hidden behind them. You can practise alone or together with other students, and then start doing it while doing group work, examining situations that have come up during the group processes together.





Task 2



What have you written in your report?

I didn't know how to do it. Can you help me?

Try to find out what kinds of emotions arise in the situations?

Maybe frustration, and I said pretty sharply what we should do so that we would move forward.

What was the frustration like? Why couldn't you stay in it for longer?

We had to move on and I solved the situation professionally and quickly.

What are the underlying assumptions there?

By examining our edge-emotions, we can learn new things and our thinking becomes broader. When you get used to the process, it becomes easier and easier. You can even get kicks from working with edge-emotions.



Underlying assumptions? I don't know, maybe that a professional needs to know everything and be able to do quick decisions – although there wasn't any sense in the solution, in the end.

### Task 3.

You can practise utilising edge-emotions in a small group by having a soft toy to represent Yeabut. You can agree that if someone in the group gets an edge-emotion while working, they can take the character representing Yeabut in their hands and just allow the edge-emotions to be and feel them, instead of starting to act based on them. As the edge-emotions soften, the Yeabut character is returned to the table. The other group members can ask about the feeling, and the person experiencing edge-emotions can, if they want to, describe the feeling and the self-evidencies they discovered behind it. Were they to do with, for example, group work, the topic worked with, or studying?

How does this method of working feel to you? Does it feel possible or challenging to carry out? Why? What does this reveal of what in our society is taken as a matter of course?



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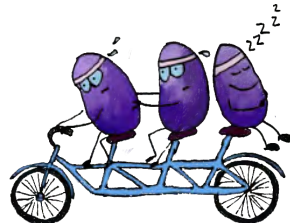
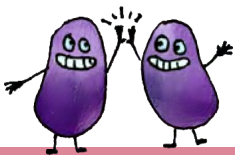
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# 4 Co-Operation Skills

Why do we have so much group work, wouldn't it be much more efficient to work individually? In the working life, we'll need co-operation skills, why aren't we taught those?





AFTER A WEEK



AFTER A MONTH

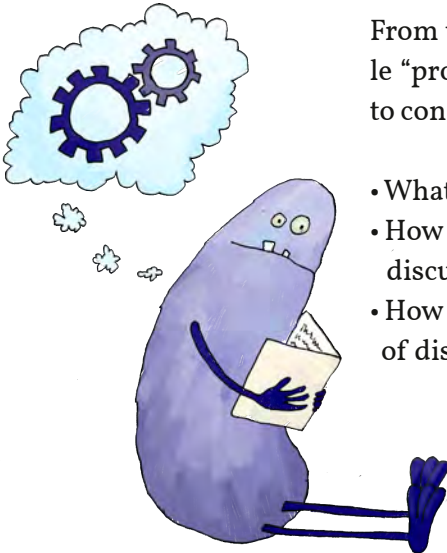




# The Dual Aim of Group Work: Emotional and Task-oriented

In student groups, group work often has the clear aim of getting a project or task done. Reaching the task aim is, however, not automatic, but the functioning of the group and its efficiency demands recognising and supporting the emotional aim of the group. The emotional aim refers to the magnet holding the group together: when the group functions well, people want to be part of it, and it motivates a joint effort towards the task aim. In order for the group to remain closely-knit in changing conditions, there is a demand on the group members to learn from each other's experiences, support each other, develop as a group, and formulate means and practices that support the survival of the group.

The emotional aim can be supported by spending a bit of time at the beginning and at the end of each meeting, for example, on a round of each member telling their news, or on some other part of the task, with the aim of giving everyone a chance to talk and settle for shared effort. At the same time, having a little conversation creates a nice atmosphere.



From time to time, you can also take a little “process break” in group work and stop to consider how the discussion is going:

- What kinds of emotions have arisen?
- How do you feel about how the discussion is proceeding?
- How could the group work and way of discussing be developed?

I get so annoyed when we're having a meeting and time is always spent on the discussion going off at a tangent to something that has nothing to do with the topic!

The discussion going off-topic is a common phenomenon within interaction. It has been noted that in difficult situations, where it feels like the group cannot move forward, the discussion naturally veers off-topic. It is like the group's collective defence, the group's common edge-emotion.

What can you do about it?

You don't necessarily have to do anything in particular about it. The veering off-topic can be looked at a way of calming everyone down. When you acknowledge that going off-topic often happens in stalemate situations, you can think about what the problem is and talk about it. You can also ponder on ways of solving the stalemate situation, and how to move forward.



So what's wrong with sliced co-operation then, if you do your group work so that the task is chopped up into bits and each member of the group does their bit and they are then gathered into one document?

The idea of group work is dialogue, to get something more than the sum of its parts, collaboratively, based on several people's points of view, some deeper understanding than what the individual participants could have reached.

At the same time, each participant's thinking develops, because as you discuss and debate matters with others, you have to and can think things out loud.

And what's more, from various points of view, reflecting on the participants' different experiences and drawing on their different interests, gaining further understanding. Furthermore, you learn co-operation skills as well as giving and receiving feedback – particularly if it's done consciously..



# How to get group work to function?

Group work as a study method often gets people's backs up. Working in a group can feel chaotic, and many people have bad experiences from some previous group-work occasions. Someone might feel that they never get their point of view heard in group work, another feels like they often carry the full weight of the task on their shoulders, and a third lands up keeping quiet in order to hide their annoyance.

The chaotic nature of group work is often a result of group work usually being done without structure and practice in co-operation skills. People often start out with group work with the substance matter first, thinking that the process should roll on naturally – everyone has, after all, done group work before<sup>31</sup>. Regardless of this, most people are quietly pulling their hair out at the ill-defined process. The participants, then, have to function without tools, and there is no safe common ground from which to work.

In order for group work to function better in developing thinking as well as in giving practice in co-operation skills, it is important to understand the meaning of group-work process, interaction, and everyone's assumptions on what constitutes good group work. Understanding these provides tools for taking responsibility and developing the group process<sup>32</sup>.

Each member of the group brings their expectations of how the thing should be achieved, based on their previous experiences. These are rarely discussed together, so group work can involve conflicting expectations, and the end result may be highly dissatisfied group members. Each one evaluates the joint effort based on their own expectations on group work – each has their own filter for evaluating the activity. The expectations also define what frustrates each member, or what they experience as rewarding. Some people may feel right at the heart of the issue, if the discussion digs deeper into the subject matter, whereas others may find the same thing a waste of time – particularly if it feels like the

<sup>31</sup> Öystilä 2001

<sup>32</sup> Öystilä 2001; Vehviläinen 2014

discussion is not immediately contributing to increased text in the document. Some people find a catch-up round of sharing news and feelings before starting to work to be an important moment that frees capacity for working together, whereas others find these a waste of time.

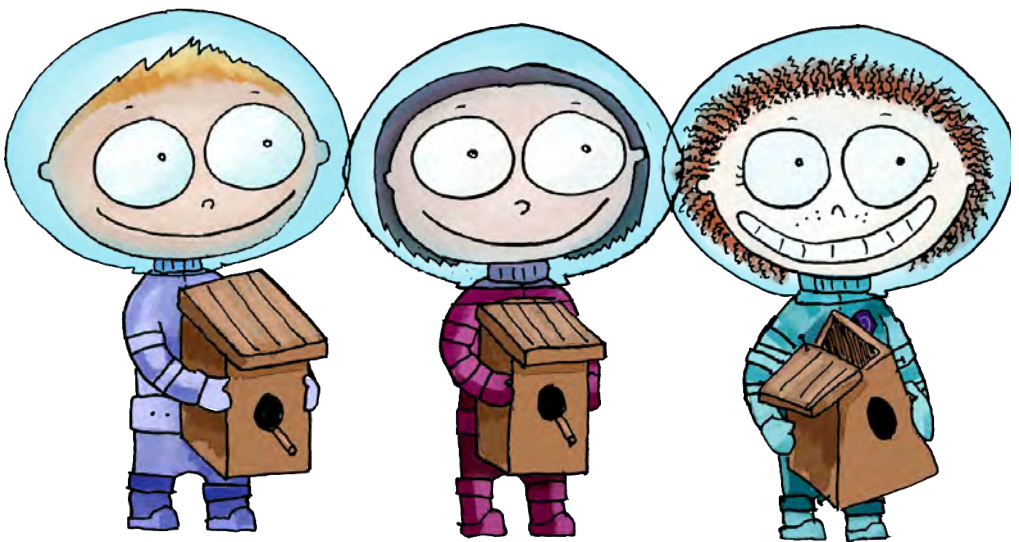
Getting oriented for group work can be made easier by accepting a certain “people margin” from the start: it is not possible for group work to fulfil every expectation of every participant. It is easier to talk about one’s own expectations with others once you have recognised their individual nature, instead of assuming they were shared by everyone. Based on the expectations of all members, a compromise can be agreed upon and verbalise also every member’s individual goals.

The chaotic feeling may also result from the assumption that individual differences should be faded out in a group, and that everyone should be a uniform member of the group. However, like in team sports, co-operation does not mean that everyone should be the same. In team sports, different players are needed for different roles, so that a best possible end result could be achieved together. What is essential is that everyone does their best in their own role, and can adjust their action to the different styles of others, and to the jointly agreed practices and goals.

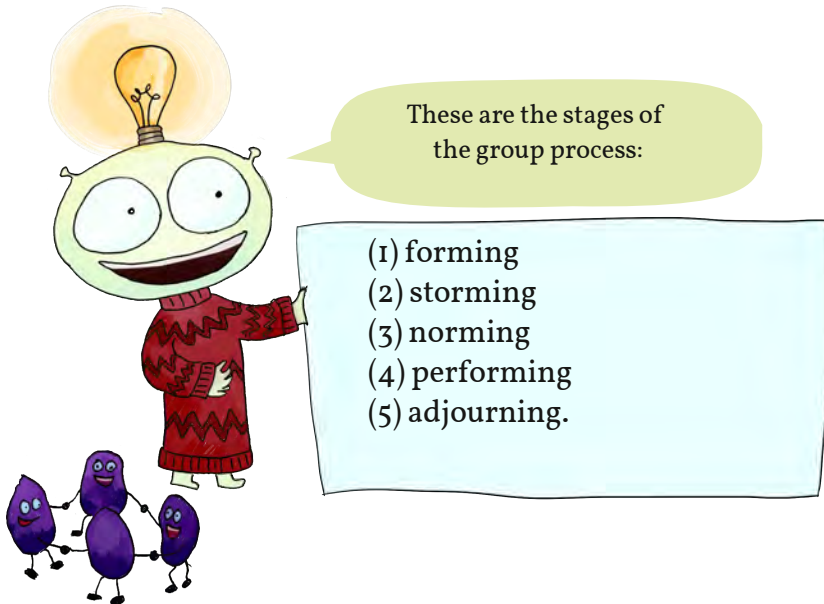
In group work, inevitably one has to face many kinds of feelings, because the activity of many different people is fitted together, while everyone is facing a new task at the limits of their ability. Co-operation works best when everyone can keep an open mind and curiosity towards different emotional reactions, and simultaneously practices experiencing these emotions and taking responsibility for them without offloading them onto others.

Within group work, taking responsibility for yourself supports remaining aware of your own needs. It is then possible to bring responsibly into conversation such personal experiences that are important to deal with together.

Everyone can best assist group work by bearing the responsibility for their own participation both in the group's task aim and the emotional aim. At the same time, the members bring their own good drive to the group, and endurance for handling also difficult matters is formed. A stronger feeling of togetherness can be created, when everyone has a sense of their own activity first and foremost. Then, there are many responsible agents in the group, who can achieve something more interesting and beneficial together than the sum of their individual efforts. A group can survive even strong disagreements, if everyone knows that deep down each member regards the others amicably.<sup>33</sup>



# Stages of the Group Process



These are the stages of the group process:

- (1) forming
- (2) storming
- (3) norming
- (4) performing
- (5) adjourning.

The group atmosphere is influenced by social-psychological phenomena related to the group process. These phenomena are often differentiated into different stages.

Tuckman's classical model consists of five stages:

1) forming, 2) storming, 3) norming, 4) performing, and 5) adjourning. In the forming stage of the group process, everything can appear to go smoothly, and during such a honeymoon stage it may not feel necessary to create rules and practices for the group. However, practices created together will carry the activity in the storming stage, in which challenging group situations often arise. The challenges of group dynamics often arise from the group members seeking a balance between mutual dependence and the need for independence. If the group process develops favourably, sense of security increases and the members can open up to each other, exert effort towards the shared work, and simultaneously look after their individual needs.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Öystilä 2001; Vehviläinen 2014; Lintunen 2017.

Do you have to go through all those stages every time? That's a lot of work!



In short-lasting group work, it may feel unnecessary to take the stages of the group process into account, as the process is over quickly and all stages are not necessarily experienced. However, also in short small-group sessions, it is worthwhile to take into account the pedagogical points-of-view regarding, for example, atmosphere, dialogue, and the stages of the conversational process. They are perfectly valid also in short-lived group processes, and assist in learning group-work skills also in them. It is worth it to utilise the tools presented in the chapter when formulating the group practices. If members are practiced in utilising the tools, co-operation can proceed in a more relaxed manner, as everyone can rely on possible challenging phases being overcome with the familiar tools.





If someone in the group experiences edge emotions, it would be good to bring this up, because with them, new points-of-view into either the matter being worked with or the group's culture of practice can be discovered.



I'm not going to dare to say that someone's interrupting everyone else all the time! Or if I think some idea is bad, I don't have any power to say so out loud. I am an outsider anyway.



I'm worried that the others will get upset if I say something about our group practices, or they'll just think I'm difficult.

People are social animals, and we have a natural need to belong in the group and be accepted.

It is normal to worry about what others think.

It is, however, important to notice when you extinguish your own thinking just to protect the collective comfort zone<sup>35</sup> or, in other words, the assumption of what it is acceptable to say. It might be that your friends would also be willing to turn things round a bit, but they may in turn be worried that you wouldn't accept them, if you disagree with them.



Yeah, I recognise that. So what should you do?

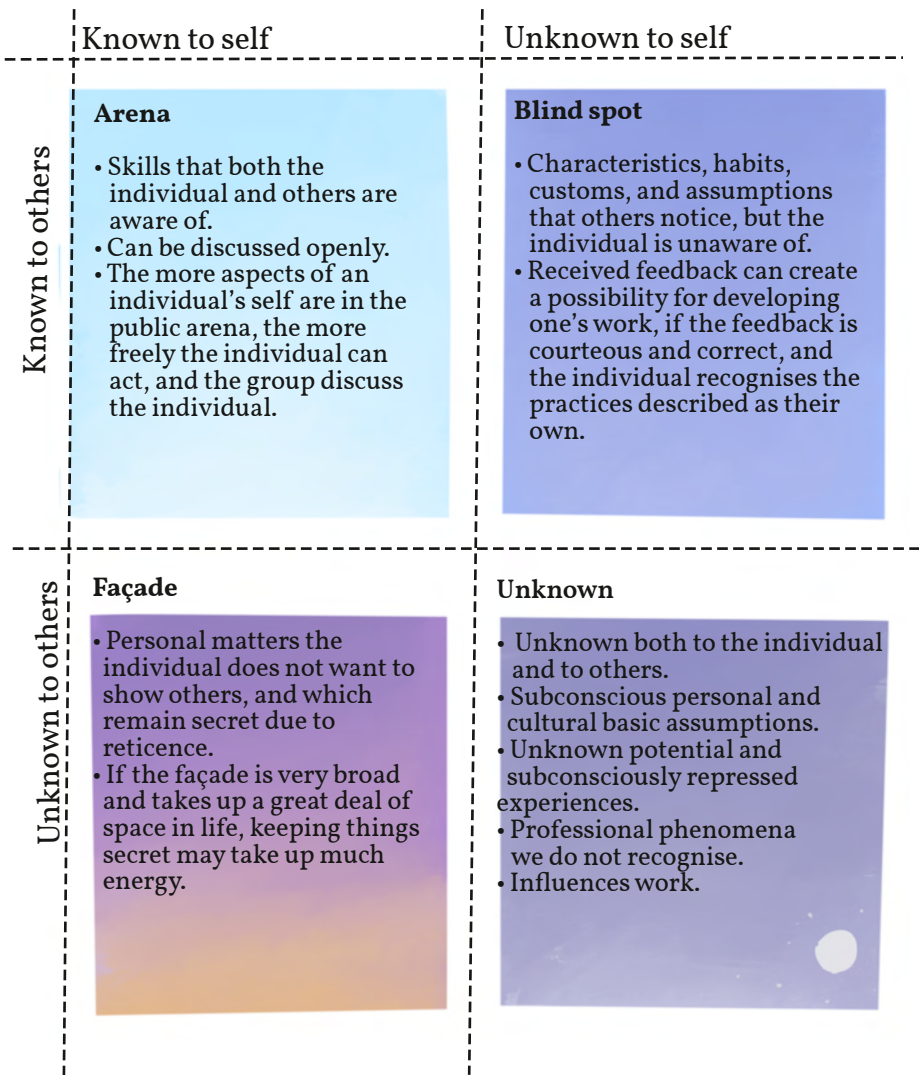


Talking about points of view that challenge the collective comfort zone is often quite difficult, but it would be important to practise utilising the edges of the comfort zone, so that we could develop our activity and broaden our thinking. Avoidance narrows thinking and leaves inappropriate power structures to define activity, and this, in the end, is not beneficial for co-operation or for individuals' learning.

Talking about things and a more open conversational culture can be supported, for example, with the group-work success catalyst, which is presented in this chapter.

Also the Johari window on the next page can be useful. It helps you see on what kinds of things it would be good to give feedback.





**Arena** is where the skills and know-how that the individual and others know about. Open conversation is possible about the things located in this area. The more things about a person are in the Arena, the more freely the person can act and express themselves, and the more freely the group can discuss the person's successes and failures.

**Blind spot** is the area housing characteristics, habits, customs, and expectations that other people notice, but the individual does not. Concrete examples include attitudes, gestures, manners, and some feelings and reactions. Feedback received about this area may increase self-knowledge and hence create a possibility to develop one's work, if the feedback is courteous and correct and the person recognises the patterns of behaviour as their own.

**Façade** is the location of the personal matters the individual does not want to show others and which remain secret due to reticence. Secret things, for one reason or another, may include, for example, professional weaknesses or strengths, as well as uncertainty and fear. If the Façade is very broad and takes up much space in our lives, keeping things hidden can take up much energy.

**Unknown** is an area unknown to the individual as well as others. Subconscious, personal and cultural basic assumptions are at work here. Unknown strengths as well as subconsciously repressed experiences or professional phenomena of which we cannot become conscious are located here. Also this area has an effect on work.

A broader Arena both on the individual and group levels leads to issues being easier to handle. It is, therefore, good to aim towards increasing the size of this area, for example, through reflection (see, Chapter 3). Everyone can do their share in this, and also help others. For example, you can avoid forming assumptions of others, openly tell something located in your Façade area, and create an atmosphere where everyone can be an equal and accepted member, with their different characteristics. You can help others increase their Arena size by giving feedback on their strengths as well as their weaknesses.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Luft & Ingram 1961



I feel really uncertain about myself as a giver of feedback. I've read about the hamburger model and others, but I still don't really know what should be evaluated and what you should take into account when giving feedback.



Giving feedback is more than just putting some time aside for it or completing a certain format. It is important to recognise that you land up giving feedback between the lines all the time: with silence, expressions, gestures, and tone of voice.



I just get really upset every time, if I hear something critical! There's always some shortcoming that people pick on, it's so annoying.



Sometimes it can be harder to perceive what you can do than what still needs improving. That's why it's important to give feedback about things that go really well and make them visible through verbalising them. Thus, also self-confidence is strengthened, which feeds a beneficial cycle and the will to exert effort in learning.



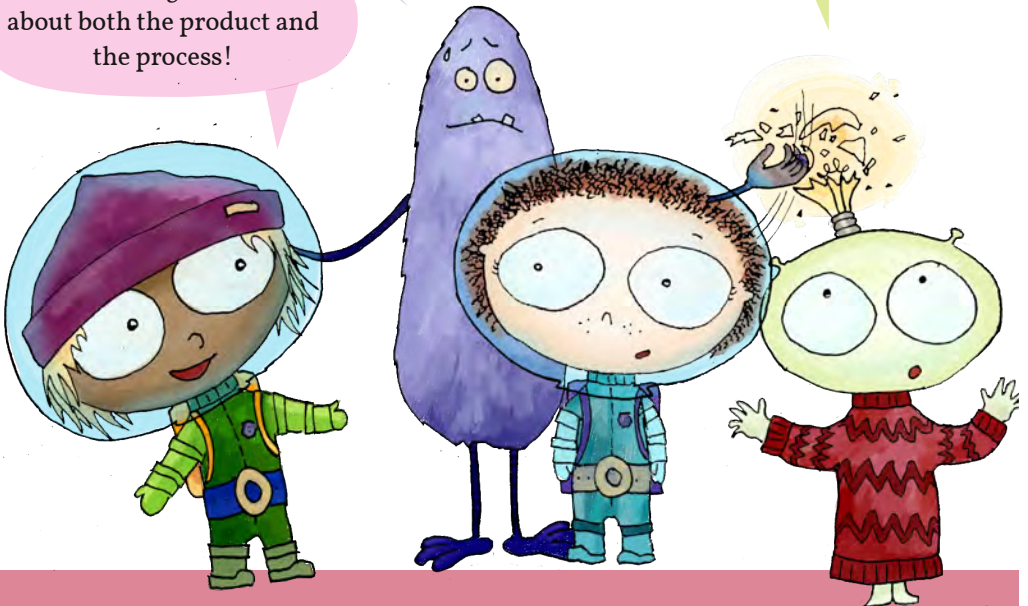
Exactly! Feedback should be given about things that an individual can influence and develop, like passing a ball forward and not just look in the rear-view mirror<sup>37</sup>. Getting feedback from, for example, being too easily dismissive about others' ideas does not mean that you are a dismissive person, but that you have in that situation behaved that way and that you now have a delicious opportunity to behave differently in the future. It helps if you remember that the critical feedback is not aimed at you as a person, but rather, at your situational behaviour.

Well if someone says to me that I've behaved stupidly, of course I will get upset and afterwards it will be really hard to concentrate on anything!

Because of a feeling like that it is terribly important to give others praise! Feedback experienced as negative, especially when it comes as a surprise, causes emotional turmoil. It eases the storm if you feel safe and accepted, and can rely on the good will of others.

Feedback is not one-sided evaluation, but always a discussion. Feedback is a different thing from evaluation. Feedback covers all the information you are given on your behaviour: verbal and non-verbal feedback, and also your own reflection.

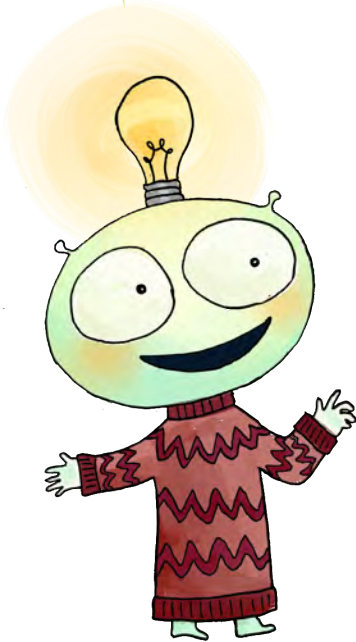
Remember to give feedback about both the product and the process!



The purpose of feedback is to help the other person increase awareness on their behaviour, and thus it offers an opportunity to recognise one's strengths and notice the areas one needs to develop. Thus feedback is a path to change. Evaluation, on the other hand, relates an individual's behaviour to an evaluative scale. The person receiving feedback can also give feedback to the person giving feedback.

According to Vygotsky, the support and encouragement of others is important for learning. When people are operating at the very limits of their abilities, they are particularly vulnerable. When giving feedback, we can verbally and non-verbally give the message that the other person is good, that they are enough.

That felt really important to hear, thank you, Lite. Giving feedback sounds to be just as difficult as receiving feedback.



# GroWS Group-Work Success Catalyst



## Start GroWS.

a. Each group member describes what their hopes are for group work and what they would like to avoid, based on their previous experiences. The group formulates shared rules and practices that will support desired working culture.

b. Each group member describes their personal development goal related to co-operation. The group can think about practices that will support each member in their effort to develop. Group members can also tell what kind of support for their development they would wish to have from others.



**Middle GroWS** will take place halfway through the group work, and a date for it is settled already at the start.

a. The group discusses how the group process has proceeded in comparison to what was agreed on regarding rules and goals.

b. The group discusses each member's personal development goal: how has it gone, have they received the support they need from others?

If needed, goals and support action are updated for the rest of the duration of the group work, based on topics raised in the Middle GroWS.



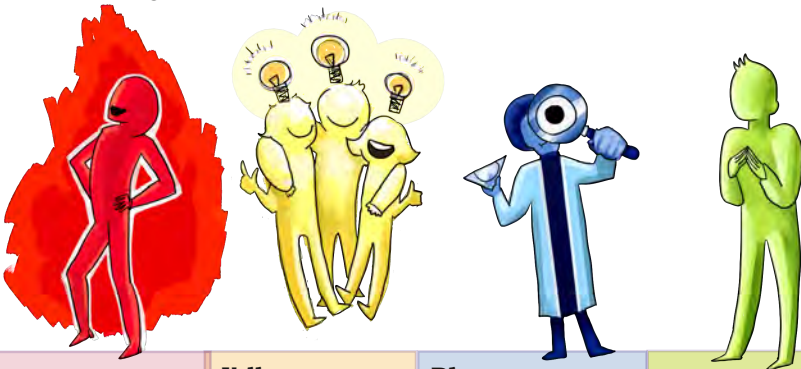
## End GroWS.

In the end, the group discusses the groups' as well as each member's personal goals and actions.



# The Power of Diversity

There are many theories and conceptualisations on how people can be classed into different personality types. One of these – although unscientific, but still one that increases understanding – is Thomas Erikson’s colour characterisation from his book *Surrounded by Idiots*<sup>38</sup>. Personality is dynamic, not something set in stone. Erikson’s tool can nevertheless help us understand how different people behave in different ways. In the following, the colour types are introduced very briefly. According to Erikson, almost everyone represents more than one colour at the same time. Some colour can, however, be more domineering than others. The emphasis of colour may change depending on the environment, situation, or self-control. The colour types can increase self-understanding as well as understanding differences in others’ ways of thinking and behaving.



|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Red</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leader type</li> <li>• straightforward</li> <li>• gets things done and loves their own ideas</li> <li>• has no patience to listen, particularly if the other person doesn't get directly to the point</li> <li>• speed is of importance</li> </ul> | <p><b>Yellow</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creative</li> <li>• loves new things</li> <li>• sociable</li> <li>• appreciates a good atmosphere</li> </ul> | <p><b>Blue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analytical</li> <li>• content-focused and interested in things</li> <li>• not that talented in human relations</li> <li>• can get really involved in anything for a long time</li> <li>• sharp: notes all possible problems</li> </ul> | <p><b>Green</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic type: characteristics of all colours</li> <li>• behind action lurks a fear of something bad happening</li> <li>• procrastinates with getting started, but does get the job done</li> <li>• hates conflicts and avoids them at all cost</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|--|

With the colours, we can easily perceive that the best result is achieved, if several colours collaborate together.

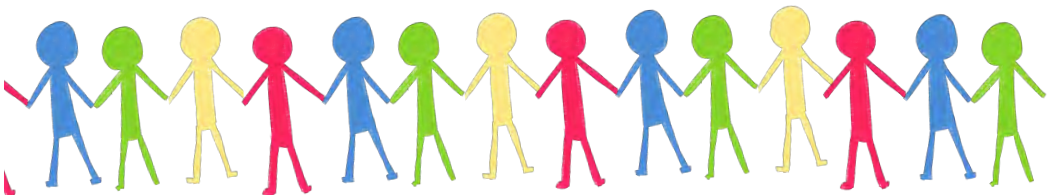
<sup>38</sup> Erikson 2017

# What happens, if there is only one colour in a group?

- **Reds** easily go off-topic, because they think their own view of the task is better. They argue about points-of-view, which others find aggressive, but for them, it is only communication.
- **Yellows** maintain a good atmosphere and create many ideas, but cannot make a start of doing the task.
- **Greens** first sit in silence, because nobody dares to say anything for fear of conflict. When they get started with the task, nobody expresses their disagreement directly, but it can be evident in behaviour.
- **Blues** focus on conversing on what is wrong with how the task is presented and how it should be interpreted. They think carefully about every detail, but do not get very far.

When the group work is presented:

- **Reds** all want to be on stage and are proud of their product, even if it is not in line with the task they were given.
- **Yellows** also like being centre of attention, and the presentation consists of characterising the process as well as entertaining stories.
- **Greens** are not easily got on stage. They are in agreement and do not mention any disagreements, although their body language speaks of it.
- **Blues** did not get very far with the task, but what they present is concise and precise.



In group work, it is good to utilise some kind of jointly-agreed working order to structure the activity, so the work remains focused. It is also useful for all members to be at the same stage simultaneously, so that, for example, one member does not start criticising when others are merely throwing ideas around.

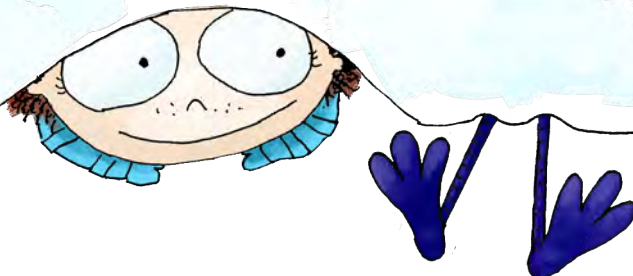
Here is one possible model.



# How Do I Act in a Group?

Below are a number of statements that can be used to help reflection during different stages of group work.

- I do my best to motivate and encourage group members to work for common good.
- I attempt to look at matters from other's point of view.
- I attempt to be flexible in my opinions.
- I aim to have a respectful attitude towards members of my group.
- I aim to work hard for common good.
- I practise so as to improve my ability to recognise my own strengths.
- I practise enduring that I do not always know things or how to do something.
- I recognise strengths of others.
- I try not to dismiss a suggested idea, but instead offer constructive feedback about it.



# Strategies for Directing discussion

Someone in the group may take on the role of director of the discussion, or you can carry the role collectively. The director can try out these strategies<sup>59</sup>:

- Encourage asking questions and noticing problems.
- Help to identify and define topics of discussions.
  
- Entice people to express their views or opinions.
- Help people express, clarify, or reformulate arguments.
  
- Unpack views that have been presented.
- Interpret what has been said and check, whether the interpretation corresponds to the speaker's intention.
  
- Demand consistency.
- Demand definitions, illustrations, and examples.
  
- Seek underlying assumptions.
- Point out logical fallacies.
  
- Ask for justification.
- Ask the speaker to tell how they know what they know.
  
- Encourage seeking options and guide in comparing them.
- Classify ideas.
  
- Refer to possible connections, distinctions, and conflicts between ideas and views.
- Guide the discussion to a more general level and deeper into philosophical questions.

<sup>59</sup> Tomperi 2017, 108.

## Students' Observations

*“Accepting differences. Nobody else has ready thoughts either.”*

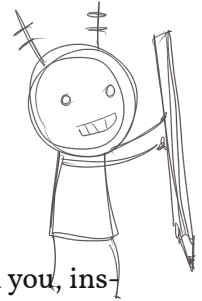
*“Once I did group work so that I didn’t know the others. Everybody was meant to read an article and then we got together to discuss them, and what we should focus on in the group work. So the atmosphere was like everyone going “I didn’t learn anything from the article I read and how it was all just basic blah blah blah”. So I noticed this dynamics and just tried out throwing a totally different comment in: I explained about what I’d read, all excited like. I risked my social status in doing that, but it turned out so that to my surprise everyone else joined me: they’d all learned something, too. Maybe the others were also scared of showing their incompleteness. When you’re excited, you kind of show that hey, I hadn’t understood this before.”*

*“Sometimes people just go straight into it, without creating an atmosphere at all. I then feel like why would I even start doing this thing and wonder, what’s the matter with me that I just cannot be bothered. But then if the group has put some effort into the atmosphere and created this nice, warm, humane space to be together, then I start having thoughts I want to share with others. I think about a lot of things by myself, but the social space can also be really dampening, if no effort is put into it.”*

“Even in elementary school I would hear from my teacher and classmates feedback about being a leader type. I felt it was really negative, it was like, “You are such a leader!” I have tried since then to change my way of behaviour in group work. Then I started to feel in general upper-secondary school that I am quite a good leader, because I’ve been practising it for so long. That I know how to take others into account. For a little while I could enjoy that feeling, until once I was in this situation where I was told that I force my own ideas on others and don’t know how to listen with enthusiasm to others. And again I was on my toes with my most natural, leadership role. So now in these studies I have started to see that my most natural role is not bad in itself, that leading a group is not a bad thing at all. Just have to learn to develop that skill so that others feel good and that I don’t dominate the whole process. While developing that it is good sometimes to try some other role, and that practice of arranging the space and atmosphere for giving feedback, you learn more quickly to see how you handle that role.”



# Try it yourself!



## Task 1

When someone in a discussion completely disagrees with you, instead of starting to argue and convert them, ask questions and try to understand how the other person has landed up thinking the way they do.

## Task 2

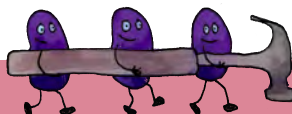
In group work, as each other regularly the question posed by Kahneman (2011, 104): *"Do we still remember the question we started out trying to answer, or have we developed an easier question along the way?"*

## Task 3

Think about your typical way of behaviour in a group. What worries you the most? Do you think, for instance, about whether you walk all over other people, or that others walk all over you, or that not everyone gets an equal turn at having their say?

## Task 4

If a smaller or larger conflict flares up during group work, utilise the colour types and describe your orientation to the situation with the colour types. Thus it is easier to verbalise and communicate each participant's point of view and created shared space for understanding, through which ways of undoing the stalemate situation can be found.



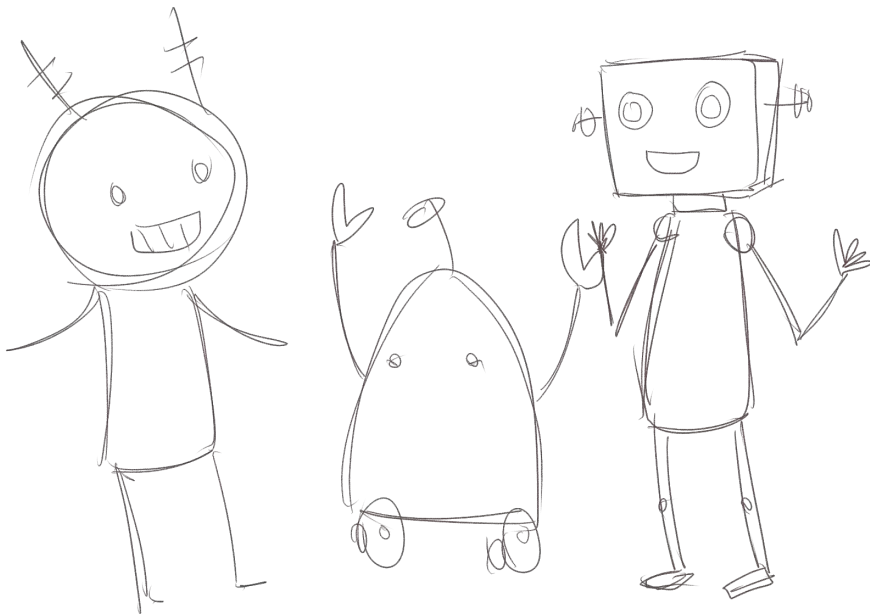


## Task 5

Imagine the following situation:

*On a course that is about to begin and that contains group work, they have adopted the practice of having a group-work godparent. The group must ask someone outside the course to be your group's godparent. The godparent's task is to come to some specially arranged group meetings to direct conversation and to be an external observer. They will help the group to observe the customary practices that have developed within the group, and to bring to discussion things that might be difficult for group members to notice or bring into conversation.*

With a friend, think about the situation: What feelings and thoughts arise from such a practice? What group-work assumptions are revealed? To what extent do you think group work is professional, in the way that someone could come to observe and help developing the practices? What do you think should be expected of the person acting as the godparent?



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# 5 Writing Skills

I'm so inefficient

I'm such a lazy shit

Nobody's told me what the different types of texts mean at the university. In general upper-secondary school, we went through different text types in detail and here they just throw you in at the deep end.

Nobody's told me what the different types of texts mean at the university. In general upper-secondary school, we went through different text types in detail and here they just throw you in at the deep end.



## JOY OF WRITING

Often writing is made harder by an overly critical, even derogatory attitude towards one's own effort. Also excessive demandingness and strictness eat up the joy of writing. These attitudes can form a hindrance to writing. It helps to overtake the hindrance to practice gentleness and acceptance towards the thoughts one is putting on paper. We easily forget to think what joy writing can bring. For example, writing can be seen as a means of thought: when writing, thinking slows down and becomes concrete. Thinking is often quick and formless. When we start to talk or write, our thoughts are given a form and become concrete. The processes of understanding that go on within the mind become visible,

and it can be rewarding. Sometimes thoughts can get stuck and go round in a circle in one's mind. Writing can then feel like a release, because it helps in letting go of the thoughts going round and round, and put them in motion so that space is freed for new ideas to appear.

A gentle attitude towards your own thoughts can be learned, when you practise looking at your own thoughts as something separate from yourself. That gives you enough space from them, and a light attitude towards them becomes possible. We absorb points of view from the surrounding world, and these are externalised when writing. When you have got your thoughts down on paper, you can look at them and wonder: what are they like, and where did they come from?

Especially study-related texts are meant to be subjected to the gaze of others, which can be frightening. Will others accept me and the thoughts that have come out of me? Instead of feeling like the feedback is aimed at you, you can think of it telling something about how others view the world. Feedback is indeed a gate into other people's worlds, from points of view that may appear strange to us. Everyone uses words from the standpoint of their own experiential world, and others, in turn, interpret these words based on their own experiences. According to Wiio's<sup>40</sup> law of communication, communication usually fails, except by chance. Feedback helps you get an understanding of how others have perceived your words. Reflecting on others' points of view and perceptions of your text helps clarify what it is you want to say with your text.

While examining others' feedback, and also when modifying your own text later, you will note that no text is ever completely ready. Every text, even textbook texts, is always unfinished. Therefore, it is worth it not to stress too much about your own text needing improvement still. Thoughts and people are always on the move: the criticism aimed at a text does not hit a stable selfhood, but rather some transient thing of the past, something written earlier by an earlier version of you.

<sup>40</sup> Wiio 1978



I would need help with writing.  
It doesn't seem to be working at all.



Is procrastination<sup>41</sup> a problem you're familiar with?



I guess so. Always when a deadline approaches, my home becomes shiny clean and all handouts go in order into folders.



What procas...? Do you have to use such awkward words! Just say being lazy. I can't get anything done either. I drift online to browse all sorts of useless things.



You're not lazy or inefficient. You are doing all sorts while you are avoiding writing. That's what procrastination is all about. Procrastination comes from the Latin word *procrastinare*, which means moving something until tomorrow. Procrastination is more than voluntary lateness, because it has a little of the Greek word *akrasia*: doing something opposite to how you would if you'd thought about it more in-depth.

<sup>41</sup> Sirois & Pychyl 2016. Steel, P. 2012.



Well isn't that the same as avoiding work, and therefore the same thing as laziness?



No it isn't because with procrastination, we are avoiding something, often fear. What is it that frightens you about writing, Essé?



Maybe my fear is that I cannot make perfect text, or even good enough.



Good! You recognise your fear. By dealing with it, you can also move forward from procrastination to doing. I had to exercise a lot to get a feel of my own fears.



Precisely! We procrastinate, because we don't dare to experience and listen to the feeling that arises in us in the situation, and instead try to push it away by escaping to all sorts of other activity. It is a survival method against boredom, anxiety, uncertainty, frustration, resentment, self-doubt, and other horrible feelings. In that situation, it often doesn't help that the focus is on the task to be completed, or punishing yourself with various things, like apps that limit your phone use. Attention should be given to the feeling arising from the job. Our bodies are trying to tell us something, but we usually just silence it.



In the fear of the blank page, you can, for example, be afraid of appearing stupid and your imperfections being exposed through the text to others. Or if you're used to thinking of yourself as a loser, it may feel strange and frightening to think you would actually succeed in something.



That I do recognise. I pile up enormous pressure about succeeding as well as possible, when at the same time I daren't even think about actually succeeding. Isn't this tricky! But even noticing this seems to improve matters.



The addictiveness of procrastination stems from the relief that comes from doing other things. Your mind has learned that when you return to your comfort zone, you can move the uncomfortable feeling aside for a moment, and that's why you do it over and over again. When moving the work aside, you leave it to a future me who appears more like some stranger and less like I myself. When I leave this undone now, it feels like someone else will take care of it at some point.



So how can you get rid of this vicious circle?



That is a challenging process, but it's worth it soldiering through it, because then procrastination becomes easier to beat.



You cannot just command yourself to stop procrastinating, because then you cannot reach the root cause giving birth to it in new situations.



The cure for procrastination is to learn to recognise your own edge emotions. If you don't recognise them, you might think that self-control techniques or, for example, learning some writing method would solve the situation. They will support forming new habits of behaviour, but they don't change the underlying dynamics leading into the situation over and over again.



Alright, so you just have to make peace with the uncomfortable feelings.



And just let them be in your body. A better, more lasting solution to the momentary relief of procrastination has to be found, so that the mind dares to give it up. You need to learn to work with your biological machinery in a new way.



Usually I have just accused myself of laziness, as if laziness could be controlled just by punishing yourself. But it seems that will just tighten the vicious circle.



You have to forgive yourself for procrastination. It helps to move away from the stickiness of procrastination and mercilessness towards yourself. Maybe it's worth it to practice kindness and warmth towards yourself instead.



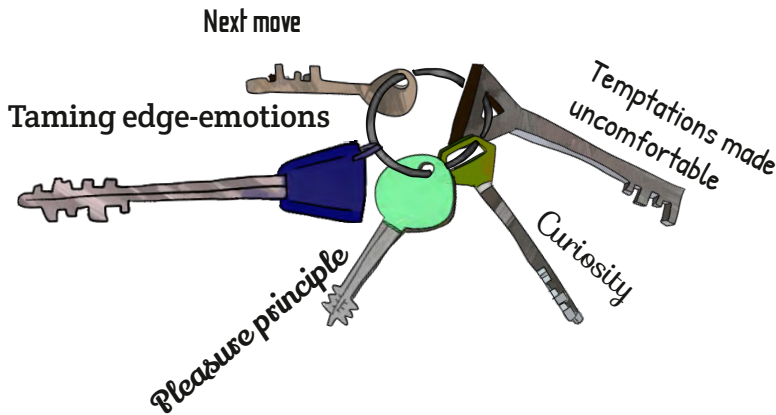
It is also important to remember that procrastination is not only something beginners have, but instead, it is something also experienced writers suffer from. You don't have to worry if you find yourself procrastinating. What is essential is to learn to recognise when you procrastinate, and practice habits that help you move as calmly as possible back to writing again.



Sounds good, but how do you get started at that?



# Keys of Writing Liberation



## Taming edge-emotions



In disassembling procrastination, a central thing is to change our attitude towards edge-emotions: we can learn to utilise the uncomfortable feelings and experiences appearing at the edges of our comfort zones as tools for learning and our own, personal guides into development. Then, we do not always have to subconsciously try to get away from the discomfort by pushing aside challenging things. Processing edge-emotions gently can be practised by first dealing with another situation, in which edge-emotions are easier to recognise, for example, some conflict situation with someone close to you. When, through examining these situations that are not related to writing, you note the advantages brought by processing edge-emotions – that challenging situations can be turned into learning and new vistas, and that uncomfortable feelings soften when you do not fight them – it is also easier in the procrastination situation to turn your attention to the edge-emotions, and consequently, to unpicking the dynamics of procrastination.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 3



### Curiosity<sup>43</sup>

Examine the experiences that arise from your mind and body. What feelings guide you towards cravings and “side activities”? What part of the body do you experience these feelings? What do they remind you of? What apparently self-evident interpretations they awaken? What happens to the thoughts of procrastination, when you start to examine them? Do they become more intense, or do they fade? Do they cause other feelings? How do the bodily experiences change, when you continue to be consciously present in them?



### Next move

Concentrate only on what you will do next. This helps in getting started: when you concentrate on thinking about the next little move only, you get yourself moving as if in secret. I will just open the document, I will just write the date on the top of the document, I will just write a to-do list. Do not wait for a special mental mode to arise, because motivation follows action. Start with a small thing, and notice how a motivated mental mode will follow you.



### *Mielihyväperiaate*

Write about a part that most appeals to you. If writing one section does not work, move to something else. If it feels difficult to write full sentences, write bullet points, which can be reformulated into complete sentences on another day



### Temptations made uncomfortable

Situations are easier to change than your behaviour. Use the information you have gathered on procrastination, and create obstacles between yourself and your temptations. Displacement activity should include an amount of frustration or anxiety, so that landing up doing it feels unpleasant. For example, you can create a difficult to remember password for your social media applications, so that opening the application becomes a little more painful and less rewarding. Or you can make uncomfortable things as comfortable as possible, for example, by choosing as your writing spot a pleasant place that requires some effort to leave.

<sup>43</sup> Different procrastination tips (particularly in English) can be found by their dozens by browsing the internet. The tips mentioned here have been adapted from the New York Times article “Why You Procrastinate (It Has Nothing to Do with Self-Control)” published 25.7.2016.

# Students' Observations

## GETTING STARTED

*"It helped me when I practiced writing bulk text. It was so hard at first, when you're used to writing polished text. And generally all the texts written by others that you read are finished and complete, so the model for writing you get is actually quite unrealistic! It was painful to see how unfinished you yourself are. And it felt such a waste of time. So I was on a creative-writing course, churning away, and some lock just opened up and the flow was transferred to academic writing, too. The supervisor just said that shit text gives fertile ground for editing. So that's how I've been getting on, and I achieve a lot more like this."*

*"The idea behind bulk text is to produce a large mass of text without caring about how it looks, and then in the editing stage concentrate on polishing the [ideas as well as the appearance of the] text. This clarified the core idea for me."*

“I often read scientific articles with the “howdoIfeel” approach; what starts to annoy me or what do I find exciting, and what I think is well written and what poorly written. Then I examine more carefully what things have caught my attention, and at the same time, I learn about the substance, about scientific writings, and about my own underlying assumptions and tendencies.”

“I haven’t got over the feeling that producing bulk text just feels like extra work. I write bulk text in my mind and bring ready text to paper. I got writing going by setting myself a daily word-count goal. I write 500 words of my Master’s thesis every day. It’s a good amount: not too much, but the thesis progresses. If I get stuck in some part, I just move to another section. I just keep an eye on the word count.”

## PROGRESS WITH THE TEXT

*“Understanding the meaning of structure saved me. I thought that I’m free and I don’t need any structure. Then, with a friend of mine, we tried an applied version of the pomodoro technique and things started to progress. In therapy, we also talked about structures that are important for well-being, and I started to get up always at the same time, and always have breakfast. This really sounds like a cliché, but that really got me moving forward and achieving stuff. I started to relate with the same appreciation to time used for studying as I do for working hours. At the same time, it became easier to commit to doing something every day. Then, I have a free evening, and weekends too, which I really deserve as free time after the work I’ve done. It reduced stress and made things feel meaningful and rewarding.”*

*“I start my writing hour in my diary document, in which I write my current feelings in brief, both in general and as regards my writing. Often it happens that when I write about how I feel about my writing, I land up writing about the thing itself, and in the end I land up copying thoughts from the diary document to my actual text document. Formulating the ideas in the diary document feels safer, there I don’t feel the pressures that I easily feel in the actual document.”*

*“The impostor syndrome is apparently common in the academic environment. When you start writing in a group with such a mentality, it is no wonder that you’re all in agony over your text and daren’t show your unfinished bulk text to anyone.”*

*“When I’ve got some section written, I print it out on paper for myself. Reading it off the paper makes me feel good, that I have actually achieved quite a lot already, and it’s nice to make markings in the text with different-coloured pencils.”*

## MELTING YOUR FEARS AWAY

*“In the Master’s phase, I got good advice from my supervisor about how to chop the research work into clear phases, on which you can plan your schedule, and get concrete work stages for each phase of work, which you can do even quite mechanically, even if you aren’t feeling overwhelmed with some super motivation inspiration. Somehow, I didn’t want to utilise those tips then, and I got myself pretty badly stuck, as if I was waiting for that great research result to appear in my documents by itself. Afterwards, I’ve been thinking about this, I had made like a mythical thing of the whole thesis, into which concrete, step-by-step work didn’t seem to fit. Or not just me, but it feels like quite a few Master’s students have the same problem that you kind of inflate the idea of your Master’s thesis into something so great and grand that your own reading, writing, and thinking seems way too lame by comparison.”*

*“In educational sciences, in classroom-teacher training, it seems like the common understanding is that when you write your Bachelor’s or your Master’s, you report the views of classroom-teacher students’ views, and nothing more theoretical. For me, however, it turned out to be most interesting to get inside the dynamics of broader phenomena by utilising theoretical tools for examining the empirical data.”*

"I discovered process writing and other tools, which I utilised when writing essays. But then I caught myself thinking that they just seemed to raise the bar! The most important thing with these is that you start writing something that will be graded as a pass, and then you improve on it. To achieve at least something! Got to let go of that aiming for perfection thing. 'Best' is an enemy of 'good'."

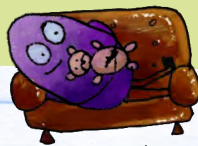
"Sometimes when I can't find my own ideas after reading sources, I start telling my cats about the things I read, and record it. As I speak out loud, I start getting ideas on things not mentioned in the sources, and viewpoints I would like to bring up."

You can read to us too!




“I don’t understand why everyone makes such a fuss about the Master’s thesis, when it’s just the same thing as a Bachelor’s, only broader in scope. I had got quite far with my Bachelor’s thesis, when I realised that the skills needed for it are exactly the same as what you need for all academic writing and group work. Like, even though it is always emphasised that your thesis is your own, independent work, but all essays’, group work, and different projects demand independent effort just the same. Theses are actually easier in the end compared with all these other texts, because you get a clear framework for them and guidance about what kind of text should go in which chapter, that there is a summary, introduction, framework, research questions, method chapter, results chapter, and conclusions. Each are there for a reason, and you can get help with them, unlike with essays or project reports or learning diaries, with them you’re always a bit like ummm, what was I supposed to write here now.”

“Sometimes when writing is really sticky, it feels like my emotions have been tied in a knot, too, and that the end of the world is night. Then I give myself permission to stop working for that day and take some time to relax and experience my feelings. That’s why it’s not worth it leaving things at the last moment, because then you don’t have a security buffer in case life comes up with something unexpected.”



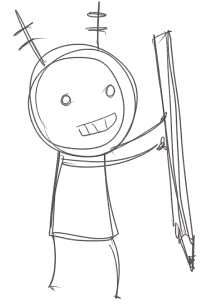


“There’s a lot of guidelines and methods for writing and for theses, underneath which your own effort sometimes seems to get lost. I found it a relief when my supervisor said that you can do almost anything as long as you justify it well. I understood that these aren’t things that are set in stone, but crystallised understanding of what kinds of things usually work. If it appears that your own work needs some other solutions, then there isn’t really anything stopping you from doing things differently, if it is actually necessary. But first you have to get an understanding of what the idea behind the original instructions were, so that you can justifiably modify them.”



“My five cents’ worth of advice is to go with the bit that seems to be working, go with the flow. If you get stuck, work on another part. Without noticing, you’ll be progressing with all of it like that.”

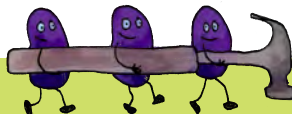
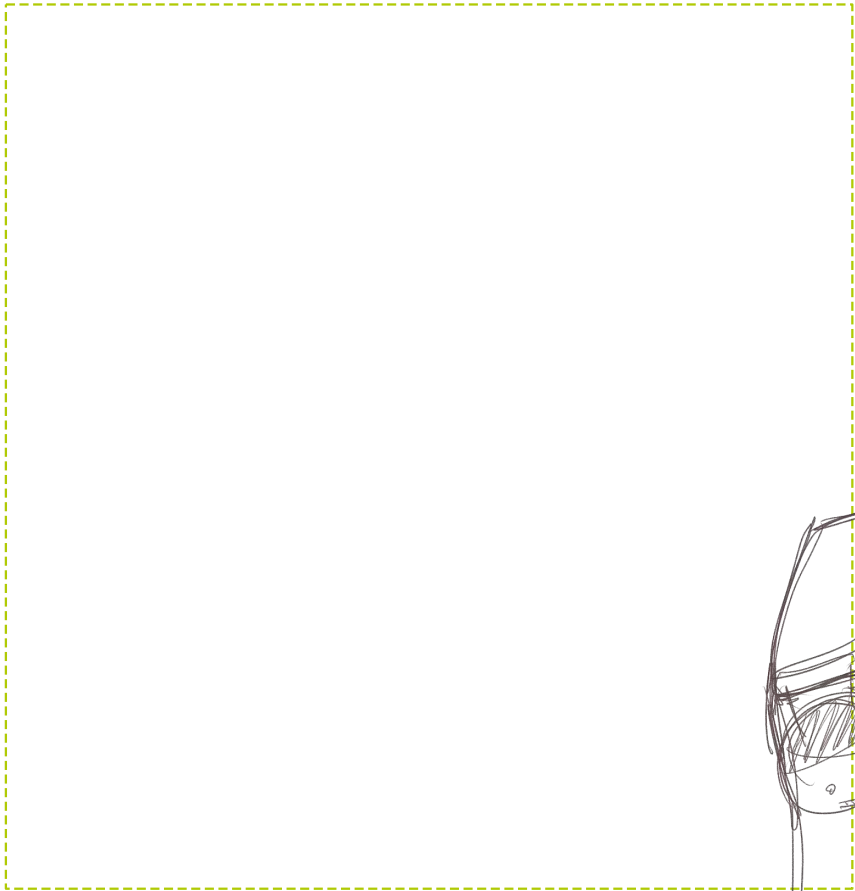
# Try it yourself!



## Task 1.

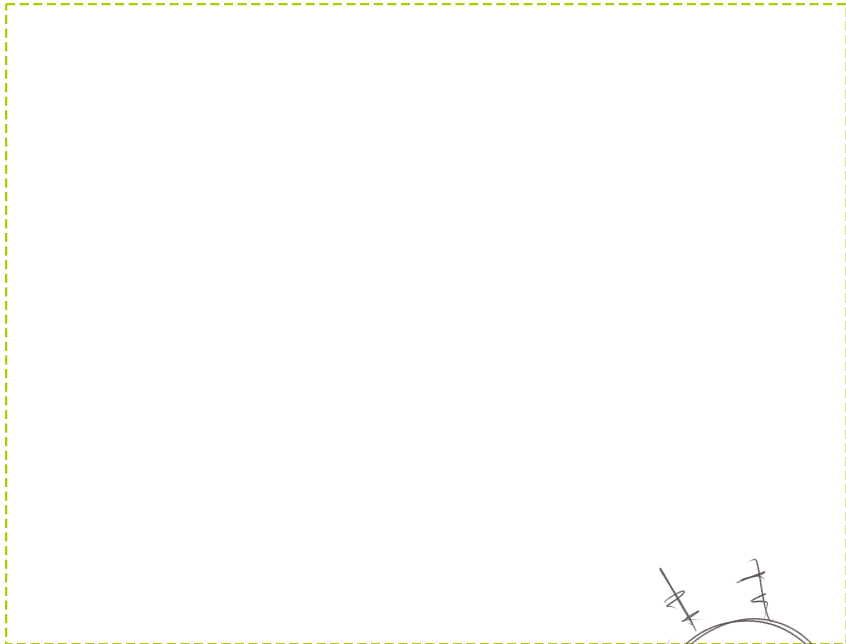
Think about your own writing process.

What typical characteristics, stages, and feelings does it contain? At which stages do you feel creative? You can, for example, compare your own writing process to the stages of process writing, which are described as an attachment to this chapter.

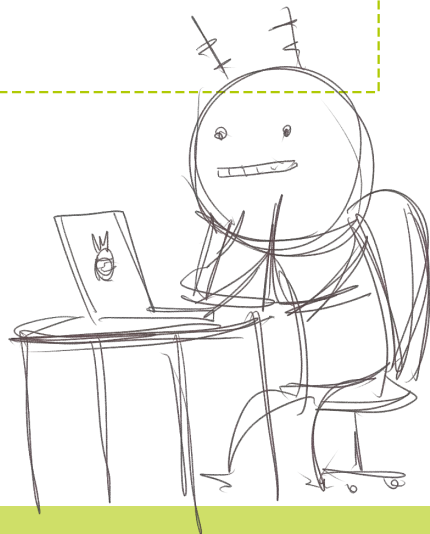


**Task 2.**

When you are writing an essay, thesis, learning diary, or other goal-directed text, try different ways of working on different days. Move the focus from completing a writing task to testing out methods (see, the attachment of this chapter). If some method does not work for you, you can blame the method instead of yourself. Examine what works for you and what you are like as a writer. At the same time, almost accidentally, you produce more text.



My TOP 3 Favourite Methods:



### Task 3.

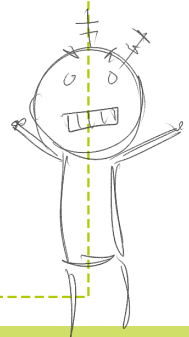
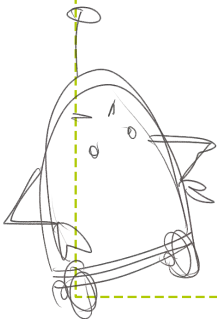
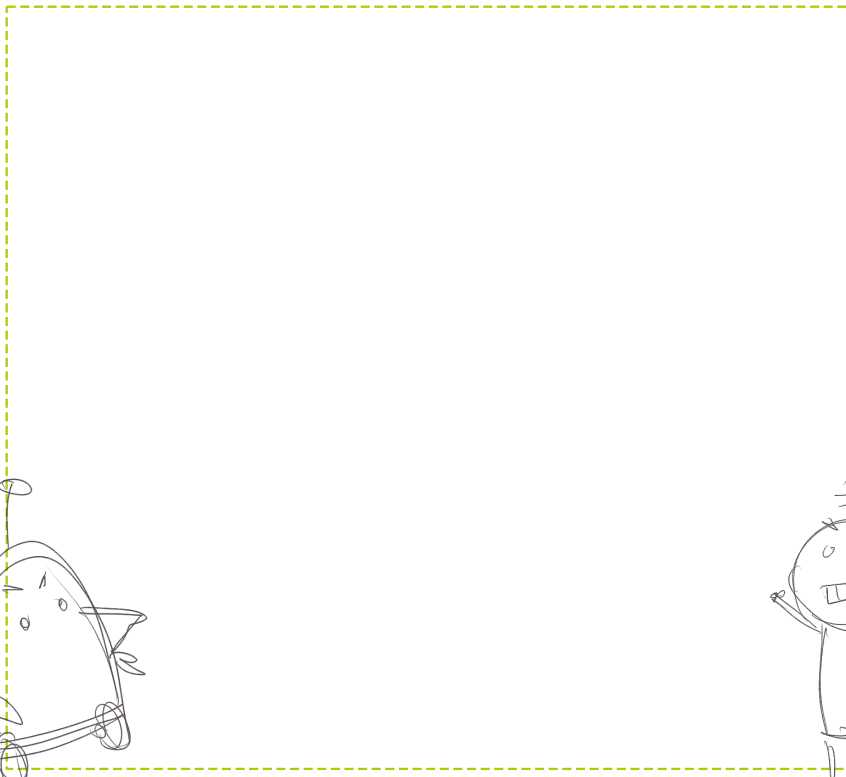
First, think up two topics you currently find exciting that are to do with your studies or with any other part of your life. Write half a page about the first topic freely, in your own style, without any thought of having to show the text to anyone. Observe what this feels like, what bodily experiences and thoughts arise. After that, write half a page about the other topic in as proper, grammatically correct manner as possible, with the thought that this text would be evaluated. What does this feel like, what kind of bodily experiences and thoughts arise? If the latter task felt trickier, starting by writing bulk text might be a method that works for you, in other words, first focusing on getting your thoughts out on paper, without worrying about grammatical rules. You can then set out, as if taking the position of an external editor, to polish the existing bulk text to be in line with the style required.

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed border, intended for the student to write their response to the task. The box is positioned below the text and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

#### Task 4.

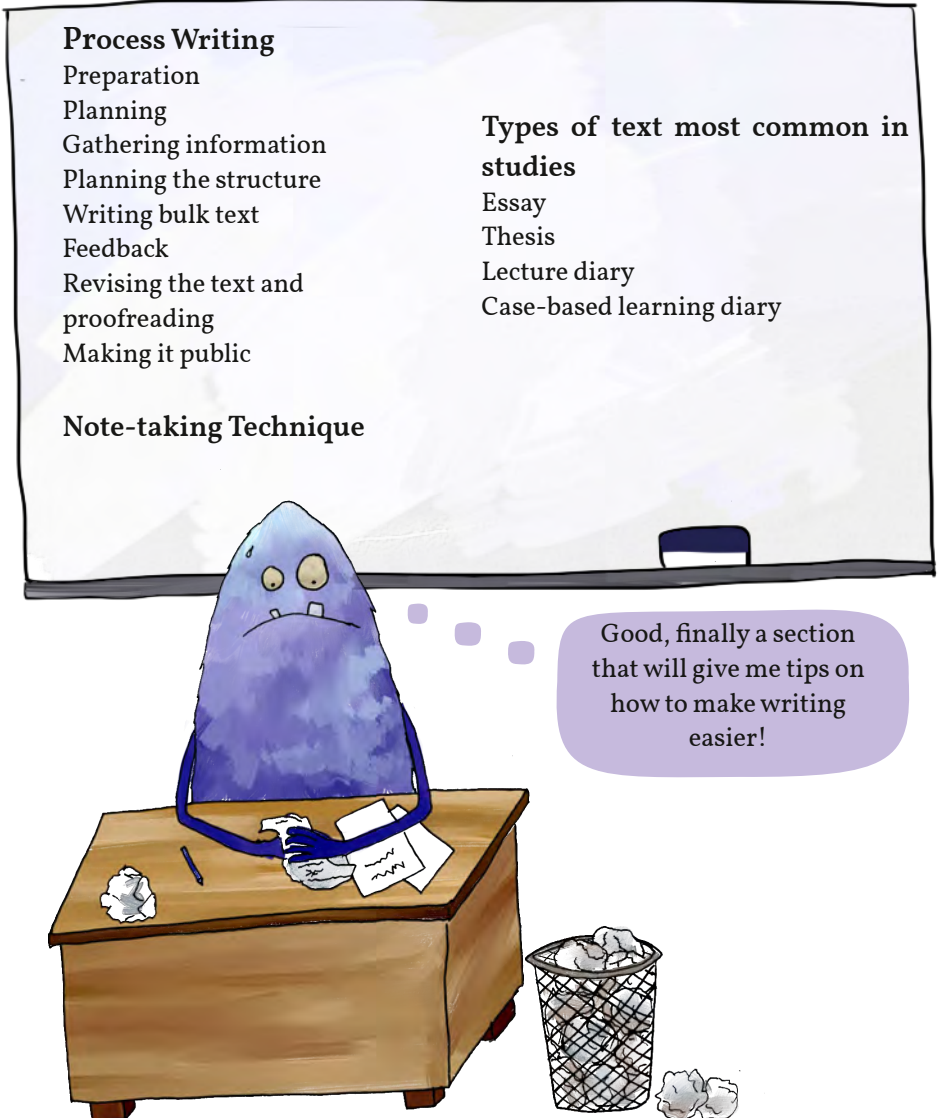
If you get in a situation where writing becomes difficult, you can get yourself started with the following exercise. Write a freeform, personal text on the topic “writing has become difficult”. You can write about, for example, the following things: What does it feel like when writing just isn’t working? What are the thoughts going round your head, when it isn’t working? What is annoying about it not working? What kinds of fears arise? When does it usually stop working?

The main issue is that you write about the feeling, during which your writing stopped working last time, or usually. Examine the feeling, let it be, and immerse yourself in it. Try to write about your feeling the way you actually experience it, not how your head wants to interpret or explain it. You can also add pictures, drawings, or poems to your text.



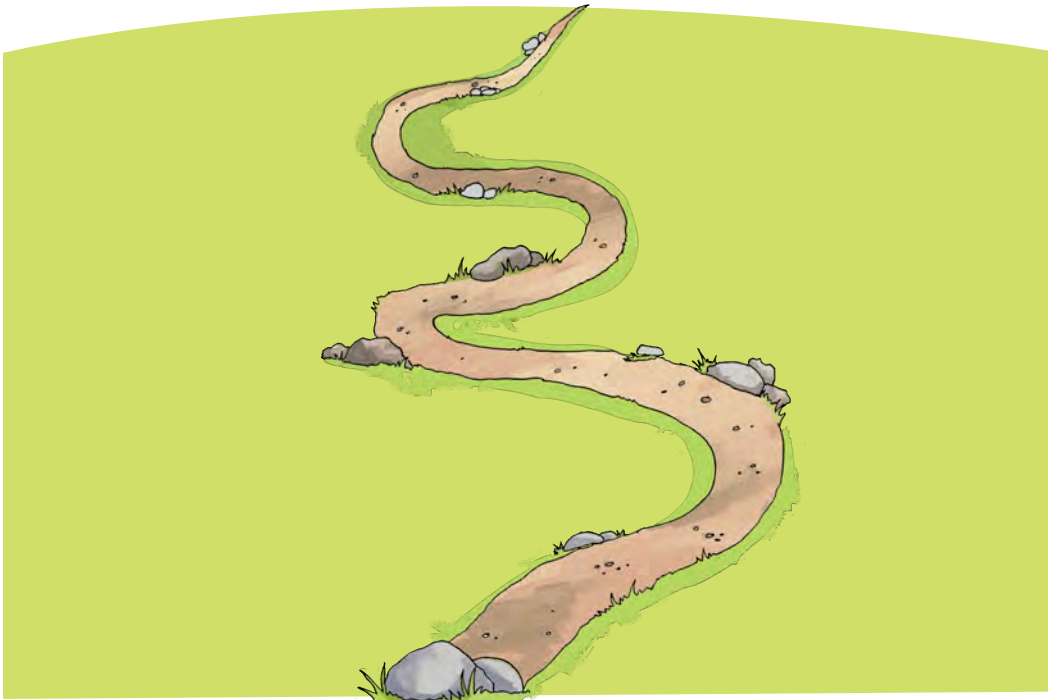
# Attachment: Writing Tips

There are various writing techniques that may ease producing text. Here, we give a brief overview of a few of them. You can find more methods for producing text from guidebooks that focus on writing.



# Process Writing

The foundation of the theory of process writing<sup>44</sup> is an understanding of the significance of the different stages of writing. Its basic idea is that the text is consciously produced in different stages. The intention is not to produce ready text immediately, but rather, that thinking and expressing thoughts develops in a process, in which thoughts become more organised and clearer. Process writing is a discussion between one's own thinking, reading, writing, and the feedback received from others. Next, we will introduce the typical stages, which everyone can apply to suit different situations and themselves. We stress that the process is individual for each person and also often slightly different at different occasions, but recognising the common stages helps in noting the stages also in our own activity.



<sup>44</sup> Mattinen 1995; Linna 1994

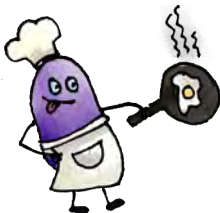
## Preparing for process writing

Preparation can be divided into two phases: subconscious and conscious.

Author Rosa Liksom has described the subconscious phase as gathering different things and frying them in a frying pan in your head. In the frying pan, news you have read, conversations you have had, stories you have heard, your own experiences, and novels you have read brew together to form different combinations, and may change their structure. The preparation stage of the writing process demands gathering information and forming an opinion. This part of the process is very big and often underappreciated. In writing, what remains for others to see is only the tip of the iceberg. Seeing only the tips may add to the pressure to perform that we may experience, and it is therefore good to recognise that we are indeed writing also when we are not physically doing so.

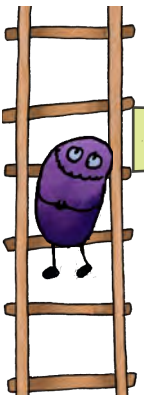
When we start conscious preparation for writing, we tune in to the topic by tasting the mixture on the frying pan, or making, for example, an uncensored mind map on the topic. You can remind yourself and list the different thoughts, information, experiences, opinions, and artworks that are connected to the subject.

Tip: allow time for the conscious preparation! Continue noting down ideas and points of view over several days, so the subconscious process can also do its part. When you have tuned your subconscious in to the subject, it works while you rest or do other things. At any moment, new ideas may pop up from the subconscious, when your mind is suitably relaxed.






# The Ladder of Process Writing




## Planning

In the planning stage, think in concrete terms what it is you will write: what point of view you will choose, what things that arose in the preparation stage you will keep, and how you will proceed. You can also plan the argumentation of your writing (see, Chapter 1). Plan a preliminary timetable for yourself.



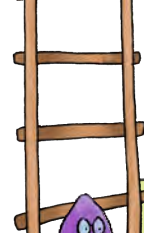
## Information gathering

Now is the right time to seek relevant sources and get to know them. In addition to books, do remember recent articles and research. You can also look for sources from other people's theses. It is worthwhile making mechanical notes on source materials, without forgetting the citations, because you may unexpectedly need them at a later date.



## Planning the structure

You can plan the structure by shaping your argumentation and utilising structures preferred by the scientific community, such as the IMRD (introduction, methods, results, discussion), or the structure used in theses (see the introduction to types of texts in this attachment).



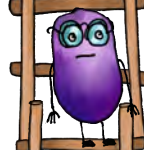
## Writing bulk text

Bulk text or unrefined text is text that is intended to fill the structure quantitatively. The intention is to produce stream of consciousness on the topic, based on all the things you have got to know in the previous stages. There is no need to worry about spelling or appearance. The idea is to produce text that will be worked on in the next stages.

A tall wooden ladder is positioned vertically on the left side of the page. At the top of the ladder, two purple, round, cartoonish characters with large eyes and small bodies are standing on a rung. They appear to be looking at each other. A light green banner with a wavy right edge is attached to the ladder, containing the word 'Feedback'.

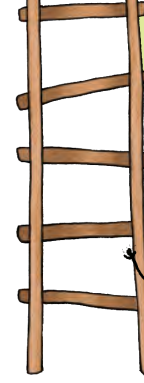
## Feedback

The feedback stage supports further work on refining the text. You can give feedback yourself and possibly get it from others. You can ask your friends or supervisor for feedback. The intention is that feedback may open new points of view and may help you find out if your thoughts moves along logically in the text. If you do not have the possibility of receiving feedback from others, you can print out a paper copy of your text and take a little break from writing, in order to get some distance to the text before moving to this stage.

A purple, round, cartoonish character with large eyes and a neutral expression is standing on a rung of the ladder. A light green banner with a wavy right edge is attached to the ladder, containing the text 'Revising and proofreading the text'.

## Revising and proofreading the text

Getting there! In the revising stage, feedback is taken into account. Narrow the topic down, check the structure works, and remove what is irrelevant in the text. Clarify the elementary parts and refine the beginning as well as the ending. In this stage, you also remove the characteristics of bulk text, change it into factual reading material, and examine how sentences and paragraphs are structured. Usually, the text makes for clearer reading, if each paragraph has one central idea or topic, which the other sentences in the paragraph refine and complement. In addition, it is worth it to refine the layout.

A purple, round, cartoonish character with large eyes and a wide, happy smile is standing at the bottom of the ladder. A light green banner with a wavy right edge is attached to the ladder, containing the text 'Making it public'.

## Making it public

Finally, it is time to make the end product public, for example, by handing it in to the course teacher. You can congratulate yourself on your success. Well done!

# Note-taking Technique

The purpose of the note-taking technique is to bring forward the central content of the source you have read. You can have one document for all the sources you have read, in which you list the notes you have made alphabetically by the author. Or you can have different documents for different themes. First, it is good to write the reference according to the correct citation practice. Next, write down the arguments expressed in the source in your own words. Then, gather a few of the central concepts, which you can utilise in your thinking and writing also later. In addition, you can jot down some direct quotes from the text. Then, it is time to bring all the notes closer to yourself: write your opinions and critique, comparisons and relations you observe between different authors and concepts, as well as all connections to issues that interest you that you noted during reading.

Do you need to take notes in some specific way?

I read that you remember them better if you write them by hand, but notes taken on a computer are easier to share.

Notes are taken for yourself, so everyone can take their notes in the way they see best!



# Types of Text Most Common in Studies

In the following, we outline the types of text that are most common in studies. Check with the teacher of each course so you know the aims and instructions for the task they have given. As a rule of thumb, references are used in all academic writing, unless otherwise stated in the instructions.

## Essay

**Type of text in a nutshell:** A reflective text on a limited topic. The topic is approached from a chosen angle, which can be original and speculative.

**Aim:** To show that the writer understands the basic concepts of the topic and can examine the topic and associated sources critically and originally.

**Structure:** Introduction (including the introducing and justifying the topic and the point of view), the body text, and conclusions.

**Style of writing:** Rules and practices of scientific writing. Can have creative approach.

## Thesis

**Type of text in a nutshell:** More systematic, the free reflection allowed in essays is not appropriate. The author's own voice can be heard in how source texts are commented, and how results and their significance for research and educational practice are interpreted.

**Aim:** Systematic and justified examination of the chosen phenomenon with the scientific method.<sup>45</sup>

**Structure:** Introduction, theoretical framework (including examination of previous research), research questions, method section, results section, and discussion or conclusions.

**Style of writing:** Rules and practices of scientific writing

<sup>45</sup> Vilka 2015; Varto 2011.

## Case-based Learning Diary

**Type of text in a nutshell:** Conversation between theory, practice, and personal, reflective stance.

**Aim:** Examines practical experiences or situations utilising theory and own reflection (see Chapter 2 for tips on connecting theory and practice).

### Structure:

- Describing the case: *What happened and where? Was there some aim or objective? Was something in line with assumptions, or was something unexpected and surprising?*

- Concise description of theoretical viewpoints:

*What source?*

*What is central in it?*

*What concepts are used?*

*What new things or aspects of the phenomena does the theoretical spotlight enlighten overall?*

- Analyse the case in light of the theoretical flashlight:

*What kinds of dynamics open up for examination?*

*Does the theory open up something new in relation to how you would ordinarily examine the case?*

*Is the new way of examining in line with your previous way, does it enrich it in some way, or is it contradictory to it, to some extent?*

*What kinds of things, phenomena, or aspects of the phenomena remain in the dark, when you examine it in light of the chosen theoretical flashlight?*

*Do some critical observations on the theory arise?*

- Free-form reflective summary

**Style of writing:** References are used, but freer in style and more personal than an essay.



## Learning Diary (or lecture diary)

**Type of text in a nutshell:** Considering the topics of a series of lectures or a course process in a freer form than in an essay, but more factually than in a personal diary. The author can be faded or present. What is most important is free-form reflection on the course topics (research, theoretical points of view, sources) and linking these to other topics, phenomena, and experiences.

**Aim:** Personal processing of topics covered for deeper learning.

**Structure:** Free-form. You can utilise, for example, the following questions regarding each topic to be discussed:

- *What do you remember from the lecture/book as most important/interesting/annoying?*
- *What things did the teacher/book/article emphasise, how do you see their significance?*
- *How do the things you learned link with what you have learned before?*
- *Which practical situations does what you have learned link with?*
- *What kinds of questions arise around what you have learned?*
- *What previous understanding does what you have learned challenge?*

**Style of writing:** Reference practices may differ – check with the teacher!



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# 6 Development of Professional Identity and Expertise

How can I motivate myself into studying, when I don't know what I'll do when I graduate?

Everyone keeps giving what they think is really good advice, when all it does is bring more pressure!

I have done all sorts of odd jobs during studying, I wonder if they are of any use in my future profession?

How can I make choices so that everything isn't ruined or that I will definitely get a job?





# What Will I Be When I'm Big?

During studies or even later in life we can get worried about whether we have chosen the right path. Many people wonder, whether they have made the right choices and whether they should change their plans. Could I still find a secret passion I could proceed to fulfil? The uncertainty associated with these questions can feel unpleasant, when the edge-emotion can guide us to seek a quick solution. An amount of uncertainty is part of reflecting on one's professional identity, and the problems are not solved all at once.<sup>46</sup> Instead of seeking an immediate solution for getting rid of the unpleasant feeling, it is worthwhile to orient towards a certain vagueness being part of your life for quite some time, perhaps throughout the working life. It would be important to focus on finding out what your interests are, at what kinds of tasks you feel you are at your best, what kinds of things you want to influence, and what kinds of challenges feel meaningful to you. Your own professional identity, in other words, your view of yourself as a professional person will clarify little by little as you gain work experience. Worrying about an unclear professional identity while studying is a little like being annoyed at not knowing what thoughts will arise after finishing a book while you are still reading it. It is good to think about and ponder the matter during your studies, but without pressure of having reached a conclusion yet.

Professional identity develops continuously. It is created within work-related situations and thoughts, during membership of a work community, as part of the individual's other growth and development.<sup>47</sup> At the work place, while working on different tasks, we get a concrete feel about what kinds of tasks are an appropriate environment for us and our know-how, and to which direction we feel we need to deepen and broaden our expertise. Therefore, any kinds of work – also the summer jobs or odd jobs that may feel irrelevant – may give an important opportunity to reflect upon our professional identity and also teach about the requirements of working life: responsibility, social skills, different organisational tasks and fields of work related to them, for example, planning, implementation, and development.

<sup>46</sup> Tennant, McMullen & Kaczynski 2010; Mäkinen & Annala 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Tennant et al. 2010.

Professional expertise means an ability to recognise problems that are typical in the field, and to solve them. It also entails an understanding on the limited and relative nature of knowledge, in other words, on the fact that we often have to make decisions and choices based on our best judgment and incomplete information.

Then, we can evaluate and justify different options, and modify as needed both our problem-solving strategies and the assumptions, even beliefs guiding our own behaviour and thinking.<sup>49</sup>

Professional identity is a view of yourself as a professional agent. For example, Guidi's expertise refers to abilities that, in a way, come from Guidi towards the outer world, towards the tasks of their field and problem-solving, whereas professional identity is Guidi's personal experience of their expertise in relation to the outside world.



<sup>48</sup>Tennant et al. 2010; Lindén, Annala & Mäkinen 2016.

# What Use are University Studies for Professional Expertise?

Expertise is often understood as know-how – knowledge about issues and how to do things. Then, one can often question the use of something studied on a particular course specifically for one's future know-how. Focusing attention on the immediate benefit of a particular course content may, however, lead you astray from what growing into an expert actually is.

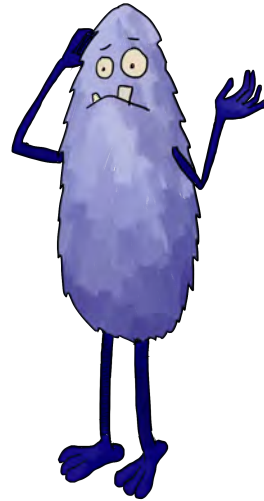
So what use should university studies be for developing expertise? Knowledge and information are constantly renewed, and topics and subject matter of today are not fully valid after a couple of decades. In-depth familiarity with a certain field of knowledge, such as educational sciences, and practising critical thinking do, however, offer an essential basis for expertise: deep familiarity and strengthening conceptual thinking modify the student's own knowledge structures, developing, as it were, lenses to see and discern certain phenomena and their interrelationships – to think like an expert. Modifying knowledge structures gets us acquainted with how changing our thinking and broadening our point of view opens up a new kind of understanding and perspective both on the world as well as on ourselves (see also Chapter 3). Thus it is natural that individual learning and growth continues also as an expert, supported by increasing experiences and new information. Deep familiarity also increases understanding on how information can be evaluated and what kind of information can be valid and reliable.<sup>49</sup> Critical thinking and other skills useful for citizenship and within the working life<sup>50</sup> cannot be learned without some content, through which they are acquired. For example, co-operation skills within the working life are not simple interaction, but rather, interaction in the context of some substantive task, so critical thinking is an equally important part of functional co-operation. Critical thinking, in turn, requires the foundation of sufficient substantive familiarity.<sup>51</sup>

The question may also arise of how come studies require attendance and interactive participation, although all substantive

<sup>49</sup> Mäkinen & Annala 2011.

<sup>51</sup> Lindén et al. 2016.; Mezirow 1991

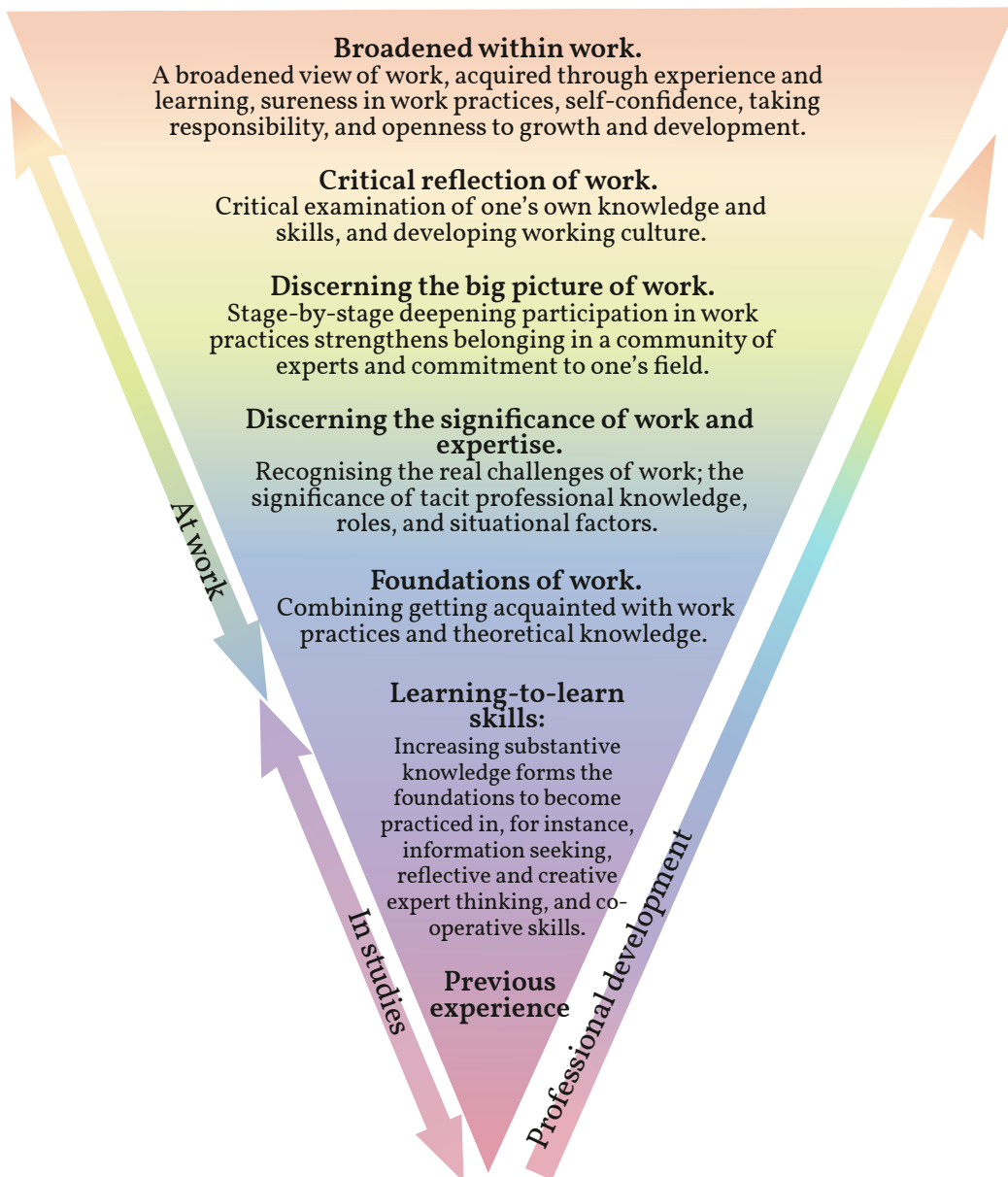
But can't you just develop expertise from home? I have done distance learning and MOOC courses on all sorts of things.



content could also be relayed digitally. Development of expertise is not simply an issue of information or an individual process, but rather, expertise develops through participation in an expert community<sup>52</sup>. Abstract matters become concrete during discussions with student peers and teachers. While working with people who are interested in the same things, we come to join a broader community of experts instead of remaining a separate professional in the field. In working life, people rarely act as individuals only, but rather within different collaborative networks, so the communal nature of the student years offers a natural starting point for becoming skilled in collaborative activity.

Developing expertise, hence, is not merely gathering information or developing skills, but also a kind of a socialisation process into the deep knowledge- and practice structures of the profession, as well as into the local work community and its practices. Expertise is built within communities, by joining them and learning more about the world and ourselves through shared activity. Neither is expertise an end point or result to be reached. Creative, developing expertise is defined in particular by individuals' readiness to recognise and develop their own patterns of thinking and action.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Tennant et al. 2010; Wenger 2009.



In professionals' thinking, theoretical knowledge, experience-based knowledge, and reflexive knowledge are combined, or integrated, into a flexible whole.<sup>54</sup> This kind of integration is important to practise already during your studies. The objective of studying is not to load the students full of theoretical knowledge that they would go and apply once they graduate, but rather, to give them practice in flexibly bringing together theoretical, practical, and reflexive knowledge, and in challenging one with another. Thus, students gain good skills for developing their expertise throughout their careers. Continuous development of expertise enables solving new kinds of problems. In fields, in which expertise is thriving, problems do not seem to have a ceiling: there is always a higher level from which to approach the problem. Then, problems are not solved merely by applying previous knowledge, but by building new understanding.<sup>55</sup>

The picture on the previous page shows what forms expertise. Studies form the core of expertise, and the broader layers of professional development are formed with work experience, when you become part of the reality of work – either already during your studies, or after them.

There is quite a lot to this Chapter, could we maybe take a little break now?



<sup>54</sup> Tynjälä 2008.

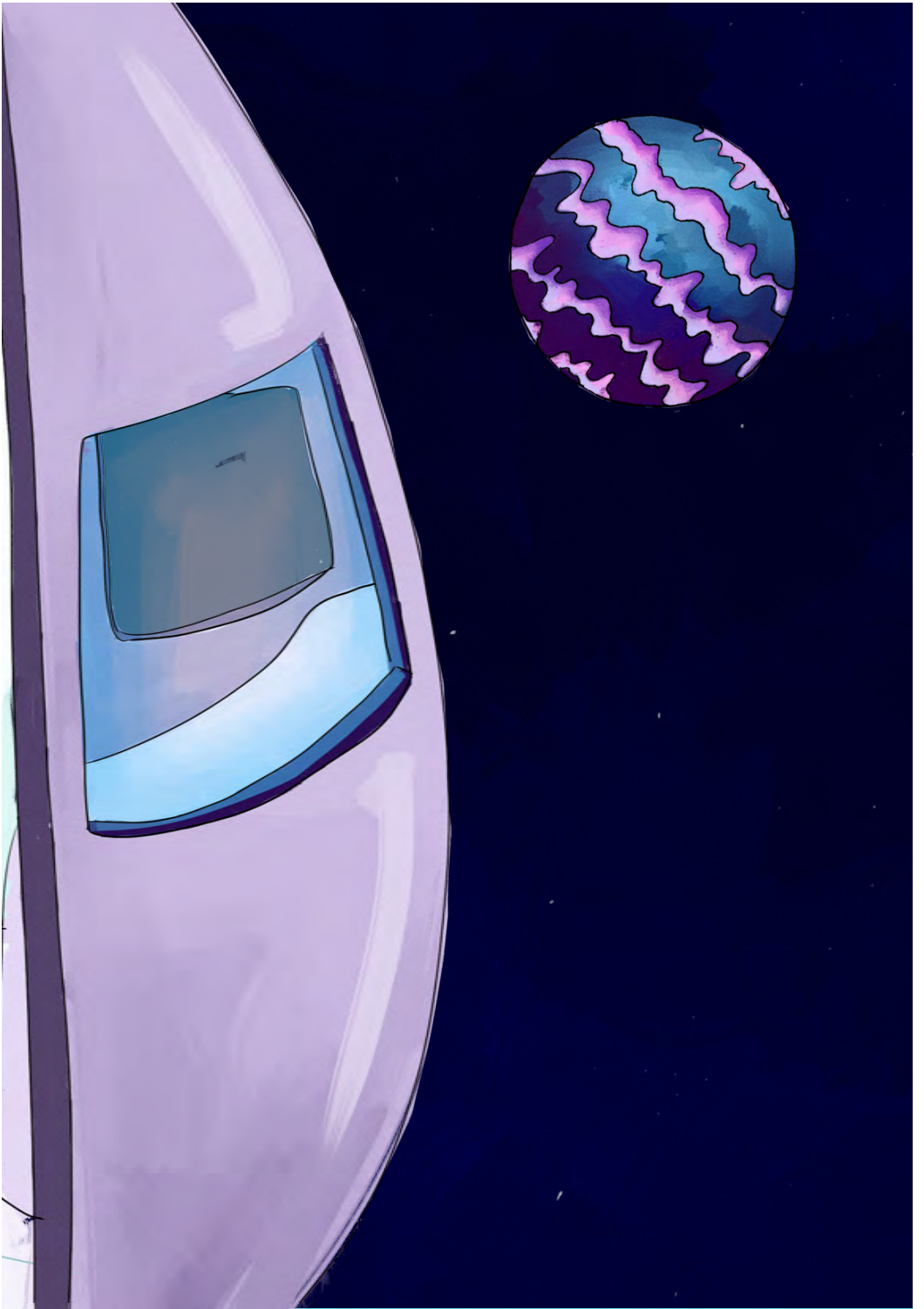
<sup>55</sup> Tennant et al. 2010.

*"Settling down to rest requires an ability to turn one's gaze towards one's own needs, emotions, and deepest life values. The courage to be strongly on one's own side. When one questions the conditionalities of being, restfulness comes near. The source of action is then in the natural human curiosity and activity. Energy is released for doing what comes from within, not for proving one's significance. Rest naturally, when there is a need for rest. This is the foundation of acting from inner motivation. Then, you do not work at your own expense, but rather, with deep respect towards yourself."*

Iida Mäkikallio, Filosofian Akatemia Blog 154

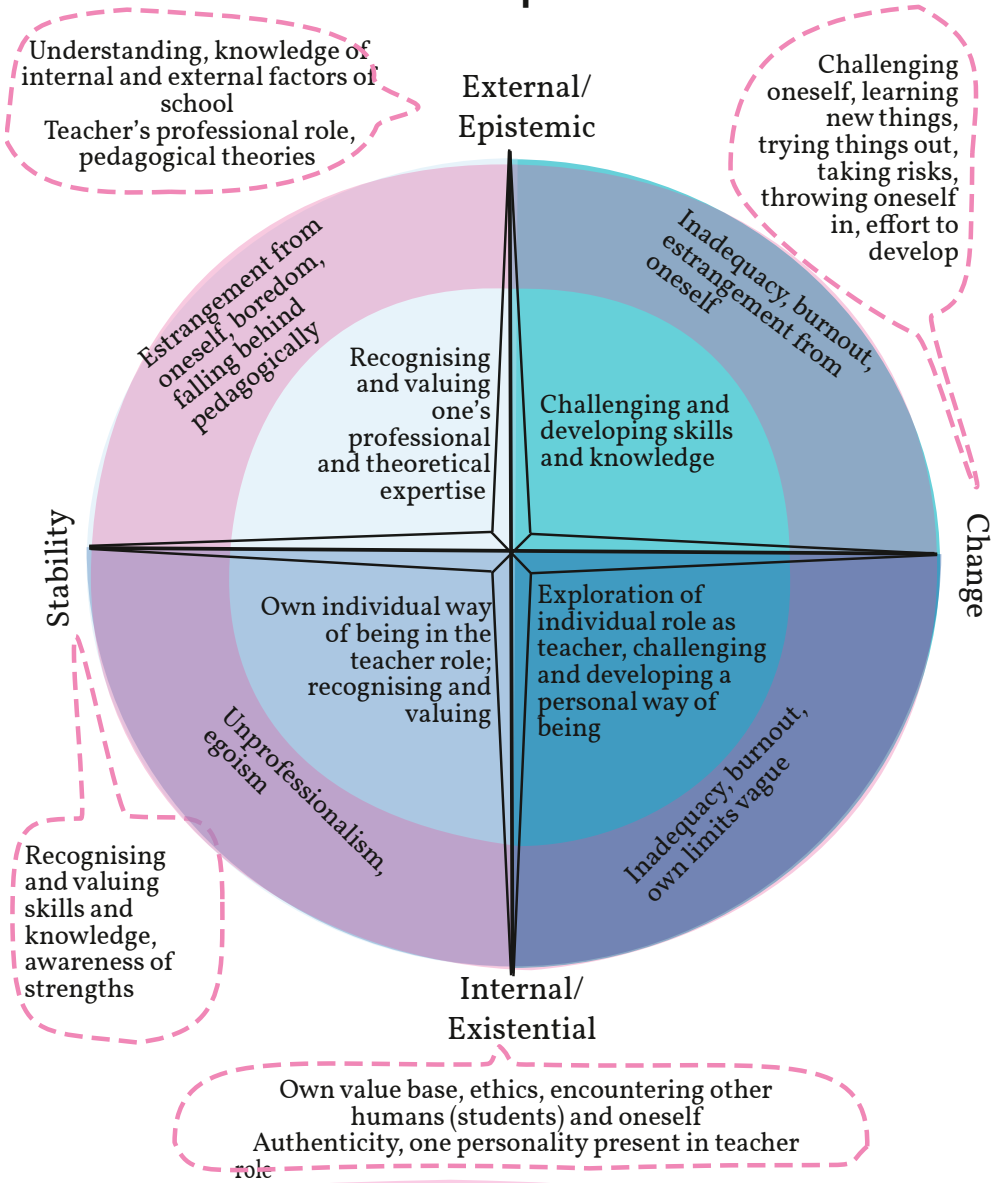
A little breather is good for everyone, and helps in concentrating. It is also good once every now and then to get up from your books and computer and move about or stretch a bit!







# Sustainable Development as a Teacher

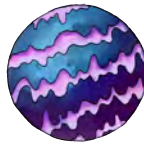


The inner circle describes the elements of sustainable teacher role, which are important to keep in balance. The external circle describes what happens, if one area becomes over-emphasised and the balance is shaken.



When working or in work practice, you do not have to be a complete expert. Although it is important to develop oneself and one's expertise, it is equally important to recognise what you already know. If your attention is only on what you don't yet know, burnout can ensue, and you may not have the energy to develop.

In order to have the energy to develop, it is important to take your own well-being into account. From the well-being point of view, it is good to do things you already know well. However, if you only do the things that you do well, and do them the way you always did, you can become stuck in your ways. You must find a balance between these things. From time to time, you must rest by doing things that are easy for you, and at other times struggle with the things you have decided to develop in. You must also continuously develop your own strengths. In the picture on the previous page, the central squares describe the important areas of being a teacher.



I will graduate soon and I have been thinking about what it is I as an educational scientist know of the world. If I want to go and work as a human-resources manager, for example, why should some organisation employ me, not a psychologist or someone with a degree in public administration theory?



Educational sciences gives wide-ranging expertise. Compared with psychologists, we see humans as more than psychological creatures whose problems can be solved individualistically. And compared with sociologists, we see humans also as individuals, not simply creatures through whom societal phenomena flow.



Isn't that a bit exaggerated? I know psychologists from the media who understand societal phenomena or who acknowledge how individuals are influenced by their environment and vice versa.



Of course this is an exaggeration. I used it to make it easier to understand things that separate educational sciences from, for example, psychology or sociology. Different fields develop different expertise and understanding of the world, and the emphases within the field also change over time, based on the findings of the field as well as other fields.



It is still left unexplained why understanding gained in educational sciences would be good in HR management – or even in the task of classroom teacher.

The basic studies in educational sciences consist of history of education and schooling, educational philosophy, pedagogy, educational psychology, and educational sociology. The multifaceted knowledge base leads to an educational scientist developing systemic thinking.

We have information from many different points of view, and we have the ability to discern how things influence each other. We form our view of the world based on this knowledge.

We can see the human side of things, and understand the interrelated processes of learning and developing in different environments.





In other words, the effects of the situational environment as well as broader societal and individual factors. For example, we understand how learning, growth, and development can be supported within institutions, and, on the other hand, what different factors affect the ways in which these can be supported in different institutions.



Quite. I've been thinking about how sometimes it feels like, for example, learning difficulties are taken as an individual's personal problem, and they are treated by helping the individual only. Do people forget all the surrounding structural factors? Same thing with, for instance, bullying or challenges in group dynamics.

I mean, the school as an institution, or the home environment, create conditions in which the basic needs of people are not necessarily fulfilled, and that affects their behaviour and how they can best attend to some task. I don't mean that people wouldn't be personally responsible for things they do, but rather that everything that surrounds them also has an influence, either supporting or hindering how someone copes and achieves.



Yes. In addition, an educational scientist often develops an attitude of hope. That can be found in education itself: the idea that humans can grow and that they can be educated. Structures and the mind do not fully define or limit what a person become or how things are done, but instead, there are always means of doing things differently and developing culture and practice. You can see radical hope and pedagogical love in that.

# From Focusing on Dichotomies to Sensitivity to Dialectical Tensions

As elsewhere in the world, phenomena we encounter in the field of educational sciences are rarely dichotomous, in other words, black-and-white. Often, it is more useful to discern things dialectically<sup>57</sup>, as both/and, and after that, critically examine these different parties. For example:

- Growth is about both becoming socialised into a community and about developing as an individual.
- Becoming an expert is about both adopting the traditions of one's field and about developing them.
- As an educator, one must be able to support another person so that they can become independent little by little, that is, support them so that they learn to act without support – you cannot simply leave them unsupported, but neither can you support them so that they have no room to develop. It is necessary to give another person space and freedom, but also bring limits, conditions, and norms.
- The behaviour of an individual student can be viewed from both a group-dynamics and individual point-of-view.<sup>58</sup>

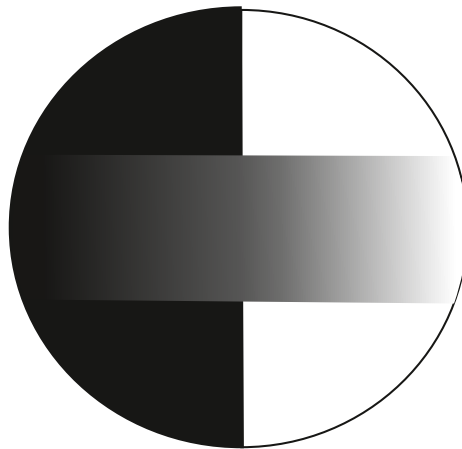


The dialectical framework recognises the necessity of bringing together differing points of view. Then, it will not be the case that a single perspective would take over one's thinking and shut out differing or unsuited perspectives. Instead, differing viewpoints are brought together, and the tensions or contradictions created between them are examined. Contradictions can only be solved situationally, because the tension will continue in the phenomenon, even if we were to find a way of balancing between the extremes that would be appropriate for a given situation. Encountering and solving conflicts is a central tool for developing action.<sup>59</sup>

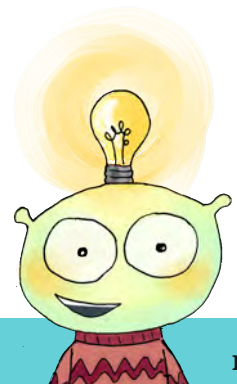
<sup>57</sup> Baxter & Montgomery 1996; Engeström 2015; Rainio 2010.

<sup>58-59</sup> Rainio & Hilppö 2015: 2017.

From the perspective of agents within the field of education, discerning the contradictory nature of phenomena is important not only for analysing and developing activity, but also, because it enables discerning what in the situations is within “my sphere of influence” and what is a “property of the world”. For example, a group of students simultaneously exhibiting a need for togetherness and a need for individual separateness is not a “problem” dependent on the teacher, but rather, a “property of the world”. The teacher, experiencing it via their edge-emotions, often recognises and senses the friction within a classroom caused by the existence of such mutually contradictory needs. Although the individual teacher is present and experiencing it, it does not mean that the friction is the teacher’s fault\*. On the other hand, although contradictory dynamics may be a property of the world, the teacher cannot leave them unattended. On the contrary, it may be easier for the teacher to take action on these different needs, supporting learning and devising different solutions, if they recognise these controversies.



There are many shades of grey!



\*See, Mäkinen 2013

Ready, situation-specific solutions for dialectical contradictions cannot be offered beforehand or from the outside<sup>60</sup>. In the same way as a script for successful balancing on a balancing board cannot be given from the outside, but rather, one needs to know the previous movements, so as to know in which direction to make the corrective move. It is good to understand that the situational friction is not “my personal fault”, and that in every situation there are many possibilities for action, and one must always remain flexible and open to sensing the situation and the situational needs that may arise. It is, however, easier to discern possibilities for action, when you understand the dialectical tensions already at work in the situation.

I read all this and now they say there are no ready solutions?



Isn't it brilliant that things aren't all black-and-white!



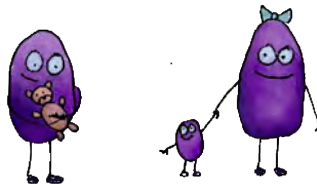
<sup>60</sup> Rainio & Hilppö 2015; 2017.

# Developing Authority

Working in the field of education, be it with children or adults, pedagogical activity includes balancing between control and freedom: a group or an individual must not be left neglected and undirected, but neither can the focus be one-sidedly on control, without support and space left for spontaneous processes.<sup>61</sup> In order to discern this issue, it is good to reflect on the concept of authority. It is often thought that one cannot be an educator if one cannot be an authority. However, what is meant by authority is, instead, quite rarely considered.

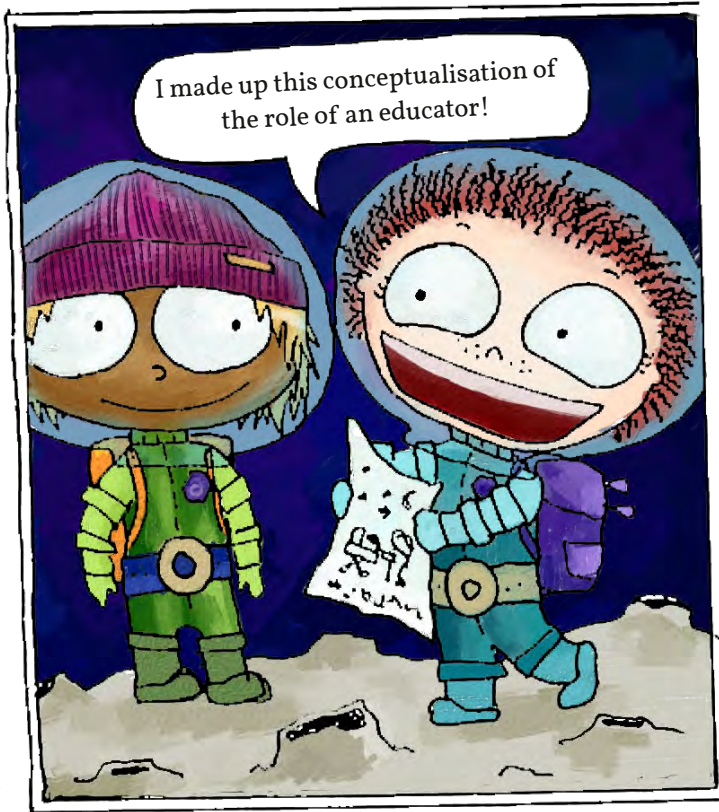
Often authority is seen as something one either has or does not have: either one is really strict, or an extremely lenient listener. In between these end poles lies each teacher's individual way of being in control of the situation and finding contact with the group. It is also good to remember that skills of authority can be learned, and they develop over time.

The authority of an educator is not necessarily complete control, but rather a sureness that acts as a foundation for opening up to situational sensitivity, as well as for co-operation and supporting another individual's potential. The stronger the teacher's expertise, the more space they can also give to others as and when it is appropriate, and take different roles as needed, as well as orchestrate the situation more broadly and ethically, compared with actualising one's skills as handing out orders, or telling others how things are and what they should know.



<sup>61</sup> Rainio & Hilppö 2017.







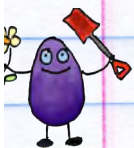
## Students' Observations

*“During my studies, I had fretted over whether I as an educational scientist knew anything at all really. During work practice, I worked actually for the first time with people who weren't educational scientists, and it was only then when I could see how much I actually know. I noticed that I have without noticing it developed an educational-sciences expert perspective, and I could justify my views theoretically and develop practical applications, whose value I only understood when I realised that the people around me don't necessarily recognise or think about those things and phenomena and perspectives at all.”*

*“It feels like many (including myself at the time) get anxious about not really fitting the saintly, saving-the-world image of teacherhood that seems to be quite common.”*

*“Many people perform their studies without thinking what kind of expertise they want to develop. All the elements of your expertise don't have to come from a ready degree programme. You can look for additional bits and topics of interest from other faculties and also from outside the university.”*

*“What helped me most was the thought that a person needs a shovel in one hand and a flower in another: it can't all be just efficient, goal-oriented labour, you also need something pleasurable, aesthetical, something that doesn't give immediate benefit. Although the flower of course provides the benefit of helping you stay balanced and sane.”*



*“In work practice, it’s good to remember being merciful towards yourself. Many things can go differently from what you expected simply because many elements in work practice make it different from the working life, when you go as a temporary worker into practices formed by other people, without an official status. As a practicum student, you should keep in mind you are no less valuable than the supervisor. The whole concept is there for the practicum student, and it gives you courage.”*

*“Afterwards I understood that the apparently trivial ideas and questions and frustrations that arose in response to the practical aspects of my work practice have, in the end, been important themes and perspectives of my own teacher identity and pedagogy.”*

*“Means a lot to be listened to. If you get positive feedback for having given feedback, you feel like it was good to have noticed the thing you commented on. That you know how to look at things critically, not just swallow without chewing everything you’re offered. It supports the feeling that you’re on the right track, and know what you’re talking about, strengthens your view of yourself as a professional.” (Source: Jokela, 2015)*

*“It’s worth it to practice the skill of prioritising already while studying, because latest in the working life, you’ll need it. Not like now you have to study perfectly so that you are ready for the working life, but that now you have to study also the ways of working that help you cope in the working life.”*



“I think at this day and age it would be important to remember that you don’t have to have anything right here and now. If you think of future freshmen, they are more and more going to be young people in the education rat-race, directly from upper-secondary school, on average very study-oriented.

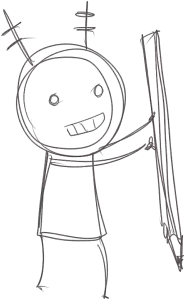
This will easily cause a growing mass hysteria that you have to do everything immediately and well, in order to cope. Read books, do minor subjects, have a job, go on exchange, network, grab many qualifications. I only realised a couple of years ago that even though I think about many things that I will never have time to do this or that during my studies, I have in the end had time to do everything essential. One year I have concentrated on something, another year on something else. Five (-ish) years is enough to wrap up quite a good set, if you accept it that university isn’t something to be performed, but something to be experienced.”



“I would define it so that the general basic job of someone with an academic degree is to be at some workplace, recognise what can be achieved together, recognise the challenges related to that and be able to develop co-operatively some ideas and practices for solving the challenges, and preferably also be there to solve them.

In other words, that you approach the thing with your active side first. While you're busy doing things, you will notice what kind of approach your own ideas are born from, and what concepts are the ones you use to get hold of phenomena and structure them, and which surfaces you couldn't have reached without training, or which angles someone with a different educational background approaches the same things from.”





## Try it yourself!

### Task 1.

a. At each course, ask the teacher what their professional path has been like. In this way, you can gain information on what kinds of tasks an educational scientist can land up doing, and how.

b. Think about a field that interests you and find someone who works in it. You can send them an email, for example, or ask them if you could have a fifteen-minute chat on the phone, so they could tell you what kinds of skills they need at work.

### Task 2.

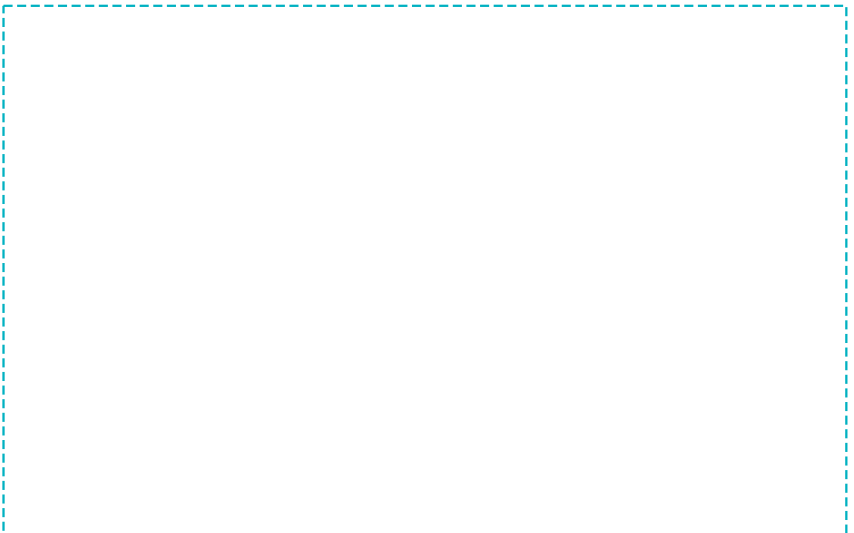
Observe yourself in different situations. What kinds of goals do you have when you enter situations? How does it guide and possibly limit what you see in the situation? You can also think back on some situation in which things did not go like you would have wanted them to. What was it in that situation that tried to get in your way, and how did you react to it?

**Task 3.**

Sometimes it can be good to try planning something really quickly. Reserve 15 minutes and plan a lesson on the topic X together with a friend. In the end, you will notice that you can achieve a lot in a short while, and often if you start to get stressed you end up spending a lot of time on being uncertain about whether anything makes any sense at all. Also in the working life, you can utilise help from your friends if you face a tricky situation; you can call a friend and ask for a fifteen-minute consultation phone call, or a joint planning session to solve the difficult issue.

**Task 4.**


After your work practice has finished, write down your goals for the next practice. The goals may change along the way, but they make development visible.





### Task 5.

In working life, you can sometimes meet people who have worked there for a longer time, and who as if smother the spark of someone recently graduated with their pessimism and reality-remarks. Together with a friend, invent ways of defending yourselves from attempts to put out your spark. You can get started by thinking about the cultural and institutional structures that may lie hidden behind this phenomenon. In what kinds of situations has it been difficult for you to express what it was you wanted to say? What kind of worldview and pedagogical perspective does the person have, with whom you find it difficult to talk? Why do you feel that they cannot receive your thoughts? PS. Apply also to your own teaching: you can contemplate on whether your students might have the feeling that it is difficult to express what they want to say, to you or to each other.



### Task 6.

Ability to recognise and describe your own skills improves employability (Tuononen, 2019).

In work practice, you can practice recognising the areas of expertise related to your own field as well as your own skills:

- a) observe which skills you have that others in your work community also have



b) what kind of skills do you have that others in your work community do not

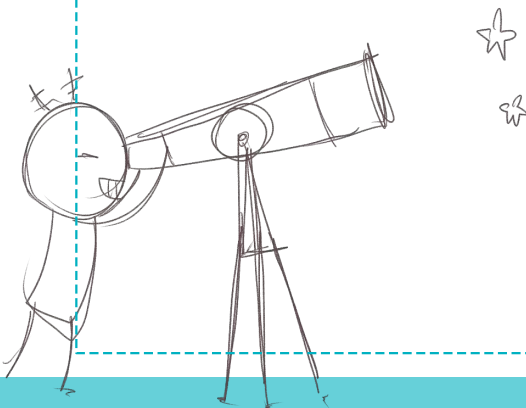
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c) what kinds of skills others have that you would like to develop

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d) what kinds of skills would be useful in tasks that your work community does not have. Locating and verbalising your own skills can be assisted with examining what parts of the job feel most exciting to you, and which feel duller.

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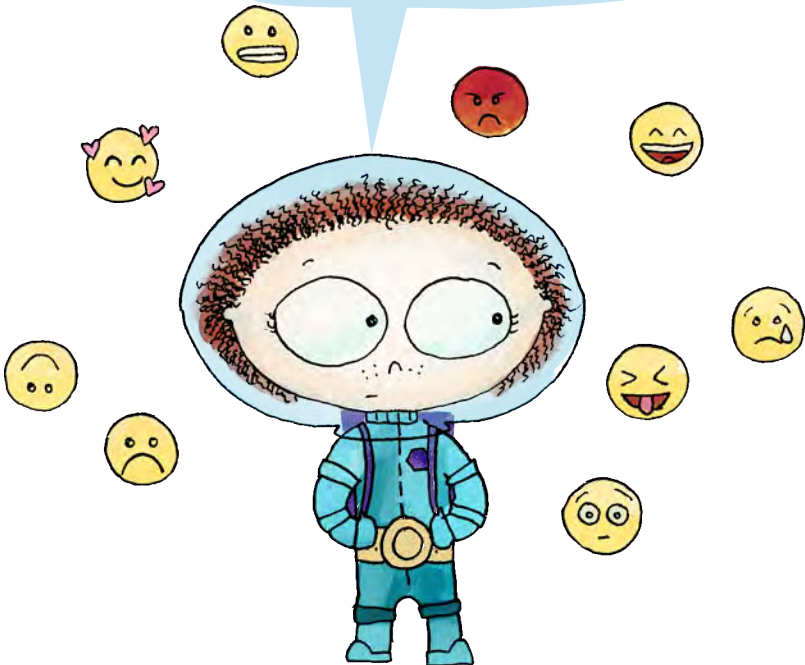
# 7 Emotional Skills

Why do we have to talk about emotions in this context or at all?

How should emotions be handled, so that things would go more smoothly?

How can I as an educator direct others to deal with or handle their emotions so that they don't disturb being and learning at school or at work?

Children are being taught emotional skills, but adults don't know them either!



I'm ashamed!

Well because it feels like others look at me in a nasty way.

About what?

In what situation?

I went and called someone a woman and they said they're not a woman. And I didn't know how to do anything about it, I just stood there with my mouth open.

Everyone makes mistakes sometimes.





Yes but now they're going to go and tell everyone, and everyone will judge me as forever stupid. I'm so ashamed I want to bury myself somewhere. If I weren't so embarrassing as to keep assuming people's genders all the time, nothing bad would have happened!



At this point, might you think about how guilt would work in that situation?



What do you mean?



Would it be possible that this was actually a situation, in which you acted thoughtlessly? The situation should be rectified, instead of you yourself being somehow a bad person and that you should just be ashamed and bury yourself underground.



Precisely! If the situation would be about guilt, and if you felt it, you could take responsibility and move forward better.



Yes, sometimes more precise choice of words can give better access to the situation and emotion. Then, a new interpretation of the situation will also open up, which might be more appropriate.



But I'm not a psychologist, why should I understand emotions so precisely?



Knowing how to name emotions is like becoming socialised, growing into a collective understanding of emotions and emotional grammar. Words influence how we feel. If you learn a diverse emotional vocabulary, you can observe emotions more precisely and not simply as a blurry mess. Depending on the situation, you may experience, instead of mere happiness, excitement, joy, satisfaction, elatedness, and hopefulness, or you can feel relaxed, playful, inspired, proud, ecstatic, grateful, or blissful.



The danger about this naming business is that you can just look up a list of emotion words and think whatever fits the moment best.



Yes, as if it were only a question of solving the whole thing by finding the word, or that the emotion should be diagnosed like some kind of complaint.



The important thing is to be able to experience and feel the emotion, same as what we said about edge-emotions. And only after that begin to reflect.



The most important thing might be that there at least is a way towards feeling and opening up to experience the emotion. Otherwise you land up suppressing it. Often emotions come in a bundle in which many different emotions are mixed up, and it isn't very easy to go and name them then.



Words can also be created, or you can find them in other languages. Emotions can also be described with metaphors or movements, if the correct word cannot be found. The more emotion words you can find, the better your brain can predict situations in the future, and you may not have to experience, for example, shame unnecessarily. When you learn to see that “your behaviour has been bad, not you yourself”, the feeling you experience is guilt, and it takes you forward better than shame.



Now I understand! Shame folds in upon the self, whereas guilt is related to actions and to how others have experienced them, so it is aimed at others. If you just allow the ground to swallow you so you disappear, you cannot take responsibility for what you have done.



But if you just feel guilty even though there’s no reason, it paralyzes you. You feel you are inadequate to fix everything. Then all your strength is used on carrying the emotional load, and you fold inwards into yourself.



That reminds me that just naming emotions is also self-centred. It is not enough. You need also to reflect on your interpretations of your emotions, because often things culturally taken as self-evident and your own previous experiences add extra spices to your interpretations, which skew your understanding of your emotion and situation. On the other hand, this kind of reflection is also a good way of examining what things we culturally take for granted as well as our hidden values, and how they are made evident in our behaviour and professional practices.





You can approach emotions from many angles: You can start with your own thoughts and examine what emotions lie behind them. You can also think about how you have behaved, and through that examine what emotions were present and what you felt at different points in time. Or you can just listen to your body, what's going on in it and what it feels like to think about different things. You can aim to reach the feeling itself directly, examine it and what kinds of interpretations for the feeling arise.



But hey, more than this experiencing and naming emotions thing, I am interested in how to cope with and analyse emotions, so that I could do better in my studies and how to get rid of harmful emotions more easily.



Before analysing them it is important just to dare to experience emotions. To take responsibility for seeing yourself, with your emotions. Only after that can it be meaningful to analyse. Often the starting point is all back-to-front, as if by analysing you could get rid of an emotion you never dared to experience. Often just allowing yourself to feel the emotion helps the harmful emotion to turn into a friend, who gives us important information, when you observe it with curiosity and gentle criticism.

# What are Emotions?

Emotions are an inseparable and necessary part of human behaviour and well-being, like oil for a car, keeping different parts functional and processes working. Emotions carry much understanding about our environment and ourselves. We are, however, socialised often to interpret emotions in such a way that the understanding they bring forth is difficult to take into use. We also often learn to avoid our emotions and suppress them. Emotions become difficult when we do not collaborate with them.

It is not entirely straightforward to learn how to function with emotions, because emotion and cognition are always connected. Thus, both experiencing emotions and interpreting them is socially constructed. It is important to seek to find a balance in not steamrolling emotions with thinking, but that emotions are not taken uncritically either, as if they told the truth about situations directly. Both emotions and thinking are socially constructed, so they require critical examination as part of a reflexive awareness of and responsibility for one's own behaviour (see, Chapter 3). Critical examination is, however, not possible, unless we first allow ourselves to experience and feel the emotions. Experiencing them, in turn, may be challenging, if we have learned to consider emotions as difficult and harmful. Being able to see the important role of emotions as part of being a human being, and becoming theoretically better acquainted with the nature of emotions, may be useful in practising experiencing emotions.

Fundamentally emotions serve human survival and guide behaviour so that we avoid danger and seek shelter<sup>62</sup>. We naturally get rid of unpleasant sensations: pain feels unpleasant, so we know how to behave in order to stay alive, and fear has us seeking shelter or defending ourselves more actively, unless we feel unable to act and freeze instead. Sensing the security or dangerousness of an environment comes naturally to us. For example, we can be focused on reading a book, when the fire alarm sounds. Culturally, we have learned the meaning of a fire alarm,

<sup>62</sup> Damasio 1999; 2010.

alarm, so our activity is automatically directed towards survival and reading ceases. The same mechanism works also on the social and cognitive level: edge-emotions, experienced as unpleasant, awakened when we sense threat towards our social relationships, our own belief systems, and sense of control. They direct our thinking towards areas that feel safer, where threat is not experienced.<sup>63</sup> This often happens at the expense of learning and the breadth of our thinking. Accordingly, we also feel relatively comfortable when nothing appears to be actively threatening these fundamental human processes (for the relationship between edge-emotions and learning and reflection, see Chapter 3).

While emotions are anchored in biology, they are also socially constructed. In other words, although the bodily states are experienced in the body, the status and meaning of different emotions is constructed within culture. The fundamental task of emotions is supporting survival, but the way emotional, social, and physical threats are interpreted and experienced varies in different cultures and in light of each individual's experiential history, and also within the individual depending on situational factors.<sup>64</sup>

For example, a clenching feeling in your tummy before an exam can, after a swift subconscious processing, feel distressing and paralysing. The same feeling can, in a different context after subconscious interpretation, turn out to be just a little bit of excitement that is simply useful for performance. A bear playing at the zoo and another one walking towards you on a forest path cause different experiences. Another person's taciturn, expressionless bearing can be experienced, for example, as unfriendly or as respectful, depending on one's cultural background. Expressing one's feelings feels different in a safe atmosphere among people you know, compared with the occasion of giving a presentation to a large audience. Likewise standing by a crevice with or without a safety harness brings about different dimensions to the fear one experiences. People observe situational factors, such as the safety of the environment, bodily experiences, or other people's facial expressions subconsciously and quickly, and compare them with their previous experiences.

<sup>63</sup> Mälkki 2011; 2019.

<sup>64</sup> Feldman-Barrett 2012; Mälkki 2011; Ahmed 2018.



Subconsciously, the mind attempts to predict the situation as well as possible, and to arouse a bodily feeling that will most effectively support survival.<sup>65</sup>

In everyday situations, emotions are often considered as inborn things that well up in our minds and are born from our reactions to the world. We easily assume that emotions happen to us, although in reality, our brains build our experience of the world based on the biological foundation, previous experiences, beliefs, observations on the environment, and our need for survival. The brain is a machinery that creates meanings and narratives, which always wants to remain informed on what is happening and why. The brain registers also bodily sensations in addition to external situations. Predictions are constructed in the brain based on previous experiences, which are then felt in the body: if previously, I have breached a contract and the other person has had an expression lie that on their face and my throat has felt constricted, I have experienced guilt, and based on similar symptoms, that is what I am experiencing now. Guilt has been a prediction that has suited the situation, and it has worked well and supported survival in the social world. Cultural experiences of emotions shape our physical experience and behaviour in the emotion process.<sup>66</sup>

Culture also influences how easy or challenging it is for us to recognise and experience emotions. If the culture appreciates hard work and perseverance rather one-sidedly, a cultural habit of bypassing emotions and not caring about what goes on in the body can be formed as if unnoticed. Then, not only recognising emotions but also experiencing them requires practice. If emotions are habitually seen as something that hinder action or as socially undesirable, when an emotion surfaces, the generalised reaction is to push them aside and hide them from others and from oneself.<sup>67</sup> Then, the first step in practising should be to examine one's own attitude towards emotions. Often one's attitude is influenced by the kind of environment one has grown up in, and how emotions have been seen in it. In experiencing emotions, it is important not to attempt to define and decide beforehand what they are about.

<sup>65</sup> Feldman-Barrett 2012; 2017.

<sup>66</sup> Feldman-Barrett 2012; 2017; Damasio 1994; 1999.

<sup>67</sup> Mäilki 2011; 2018.

It would be essential to allow the emotions to become experienced in the body, without attempting to hasten to interpret and delimit with meanings what is acceptable or desirable to experience and feel.<sup>68</sup>

In emergency situations, emotions help us to act, before we even have time to figure out what is happening. When immediate reactions are not necessary, it is important to settle down to listen to the fine-tuned messages of emotions. Experiencing emotions is like becoming visible to oneself: only based on that can we figure out what kind of action is necessary, or whether it is important simply to calm down for a moment, distance ourselves from bogged-down thought-processes, or physically rest after a hectic phase at work. When feeling around our emotions it is often more fruitful to ask what and how questions rather than why questions.<sup>69</sup> Why questions request that emotions be clarified with explanations that point backwards in time, whereas questions such as what am I feeling and how am I invite us to more open exploration of our feelings, and more diverse description and naming.



<sup>68</sup> Feldman-Barrett 2012; Mälkki 2011; 2019.

<sup>69</sup> Eurich 2017.

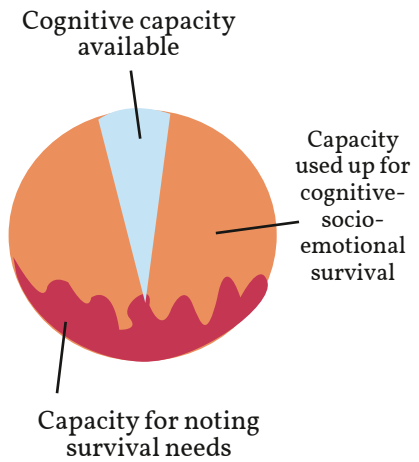
# Cognitive Capacity in Group Work



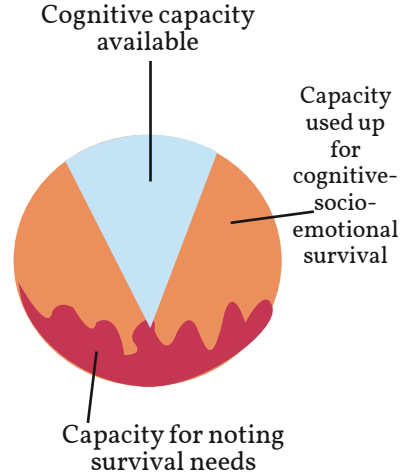
In a group work situation, you receive a comment that contests what you have said.

The structure and culture of practice of the group influence the emotional reaction following the comment. The more emotional capacity the situation demands, the less cognitive capacity remains free for use.

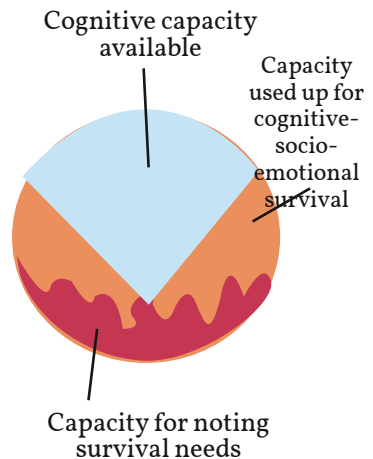
The members do not know each other, and the group emphasises performance...



Familiar faces you don't know properly...



The group has a safe atmosphere, different perspectives are allowed...



## Students' observations:

*"My parents told me "you just have to cope with things, just to get a grip on yourself, we have coped although it's been difficult". The belief that emotions are something embarrassing and a sign that you're not coping runs pretty deep in me still. Although it is actually the exact opposite, the mentally strong are often those who dare to (find and) keep their sensitivity."*

*"I thought for a long time that recognising your feelings is everybody's own business and has nothing to do with other people. Then I realised that others notice my feelings even if I try to hide them. And the more I recognise my own feelings, the more I can be present for others."*

*"Sometimes it feels like when you come to university, you are supposed to leave your emotions outside the university, although emotions are there in thinking and learning just as much as the rational mind. It could be an easier environment to be and learn in, if you didn't need to be so stuffy formal all the time. Part of being stuffy and formal and the whole study culture is the view that emotions don't affect anything and they have to be at least controlled. Now that I have started to recognise my feelings, whether they feel unpleasant or nice, I have noticed that I also get a lot more kicks and satisfaction and feel pride, when before all I did was perform and achieve and wondered why nothing felt like anything."*

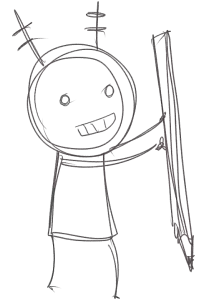


“For me, experiencing and expressing emotions has always been even a bit too easy, it’s more like I have to work on not filling up every space and situation with my own reactions, but rather that I leave space for others, too, and focus on listening to others instead.”

“There’s always so much talk about stress that I started without realising it to assume that stress is some inevitable, vague state that just is a matter of course everywhere. Now, I take the attitude that if I am stressed, it’s a sign for me that some other emotions are hidden underneath it. At first, stress can be like nice adrenalin for getting yourself moving. Then at some point, if the situation persists, the feeling is just of panic. It wears you down and distances you from your own needs. If I simply see it as stress that is a matter of course, I will continue forever, even if I have run out of strength. For me, leaving the rat race is made easier by noticing my fear of ceasing to exist, if I don’t keep pace with some assumed hectic speed of the world.”

“In studying, the best thing for me is to be with friends exploring some interesting things. You feel this sense of belonging and enthusiasm, and a sense of meaning develops from the things that you get to do. It feels happy that I with my own part can do things and influence this world to become a better place both for us as well as for future generations.”

# Try it yourself!

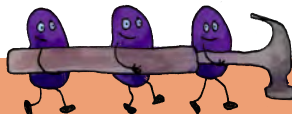


## Task 1.

There is much research information available on emotions, but applying this knowledge as part of everyday activity is often challenging. Think about the themes of this chapter with your friends, and invent ideas for practical application:

a) How could group work be developed?

b) How could university courses be developed?



**Task 2.**

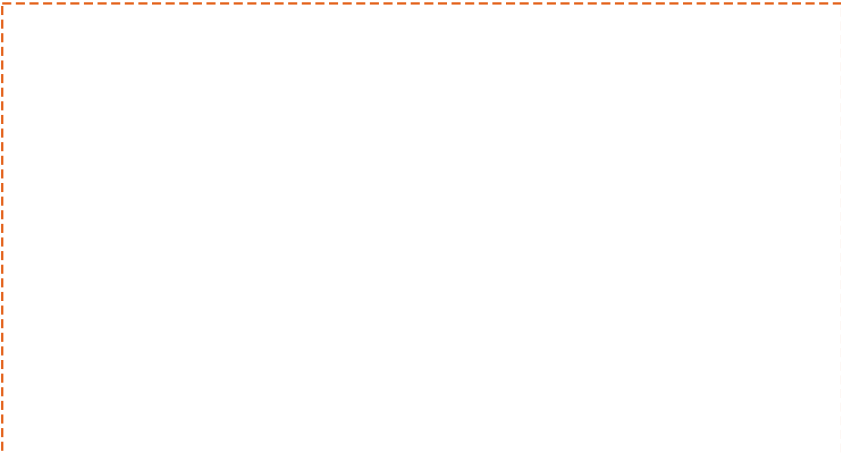
a. Test the influence of your own attitude on experiencing emotions. Focus on identifying the emotions you are experiencing right now, from the point of view that emotions are a disturbance and something unnecessary, and you would only like to focus on doing the task.

What emotions do you recognise? How does your body feel?



b. Focus your attention to experience your current emotions and feelings openly and curiously. Appreciate emotions as important, unique, and unmatched, something you do not yet completely know – a little like meeting a new person, whom you would like to get to know.

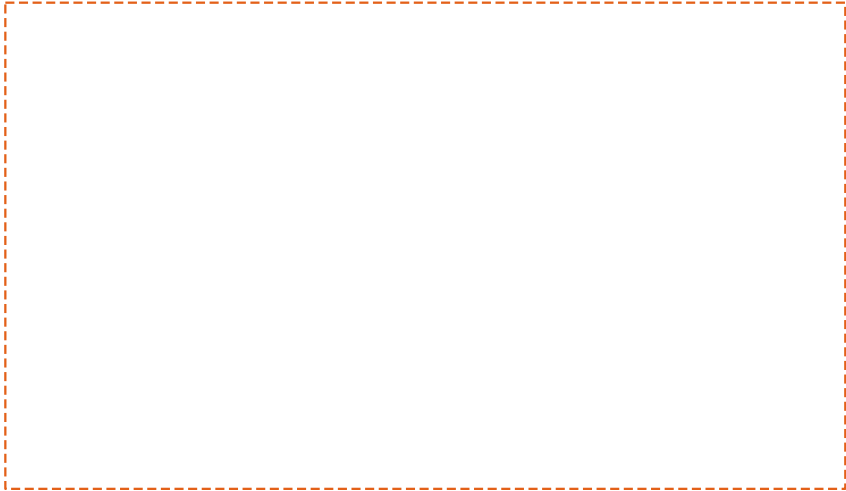
What are you experiencing now? How does your body feel?



**Task 3.** Think alone or discuss with a friend!

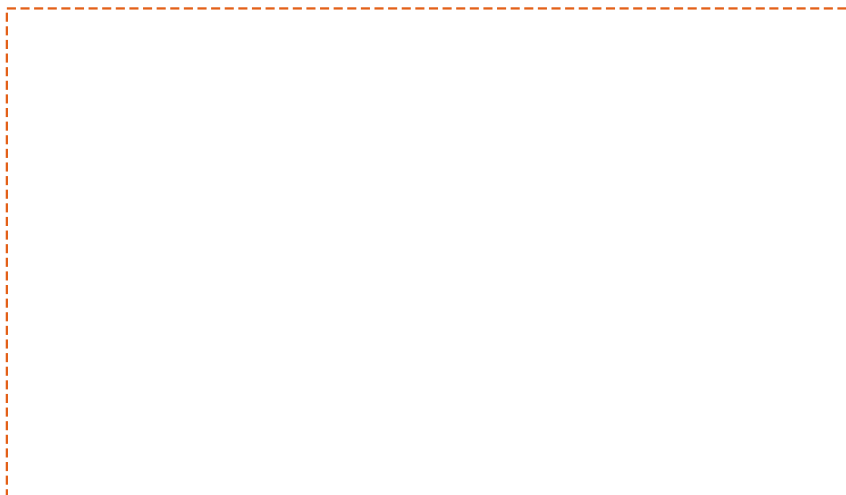
a. Think about some recent, memorable moment or situation that was particularly pleasant. Examine the situation in light of the attached list of needs.

What needs do you recognise in the situation?



b. Think about some recent, memorable moment or situation that was unpleasant. Examine the situation in light of the attached list of needs.

What needs do you recognise in the situation?





# Needs

## WHOLENESS, INTEGRITY

authenticity  
honesty  
presence  
unity

## INDEPENDENCE, AUTONOMY

change    choice  
freedom  
knowledge,  
information  
privacy  
responsibility  
  
spontaneity  
space

## SIGNIFICANCE

achievement  
life made richer  
challenge  
gratitude  
celebrating life  
spirituality  
inspiration, enthusiasm  
self-expression  
growth, learning  
creativity  
meaningfulness  
inclusion  
competency

clarity  
stimulation  
grieving  
purpose  
efficiency  
consciousness  
promoting well-being of  
others  
hope  
importance  
assurance  
understanding

# CONNECTION, INTERDEPENDENCY

appreciation  
 empathy  
 tenderness  
 mental security  
 care  
 attention  
 attentiveness  
 being taken into  
 account  
 acceptance  
 intimacy  
 continuity  
 consistency

attachment  
 companionship  
 respect  
 trust  
 warmth  
 closeness  
 compassion  
 love  
 realities  
 encountering  
 seeing another  
 being seen

hearing others  
 being heard  
 support  
 stability  
 mutuality  
 interaction  
 care  
 togetherness  
 cooperation  
 understanding  
 being understood

## PLAY

joy  
 fun

humor  
 adventure

## PEACE

predictability  
 harmony  
 ease  
 order  
 fairness  
 protection  
 balance  
 equity  
 communality  
 beauty  
 comfort  
 accord

## PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

air  
 touch  
 rest  
 exercise  
 warmth  
 pleasure  
 nourishment  
 relaxation  
 sexual expression  
 security, protection  
 sleep  
 water  
 light



*Where I found my ancient Rome  
And loved the conversation  
My heart had with those stones.  
The forgotten way  
Of each emotion.*

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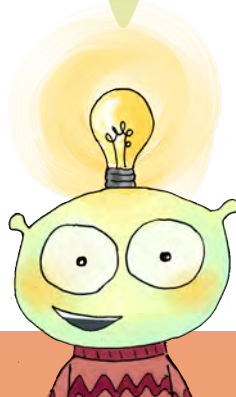
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If you are concerned about coping and the well-being of mind or body, do not remain alone! Talk with a friend, and you can find more information and help on the web pages of the FSHS.





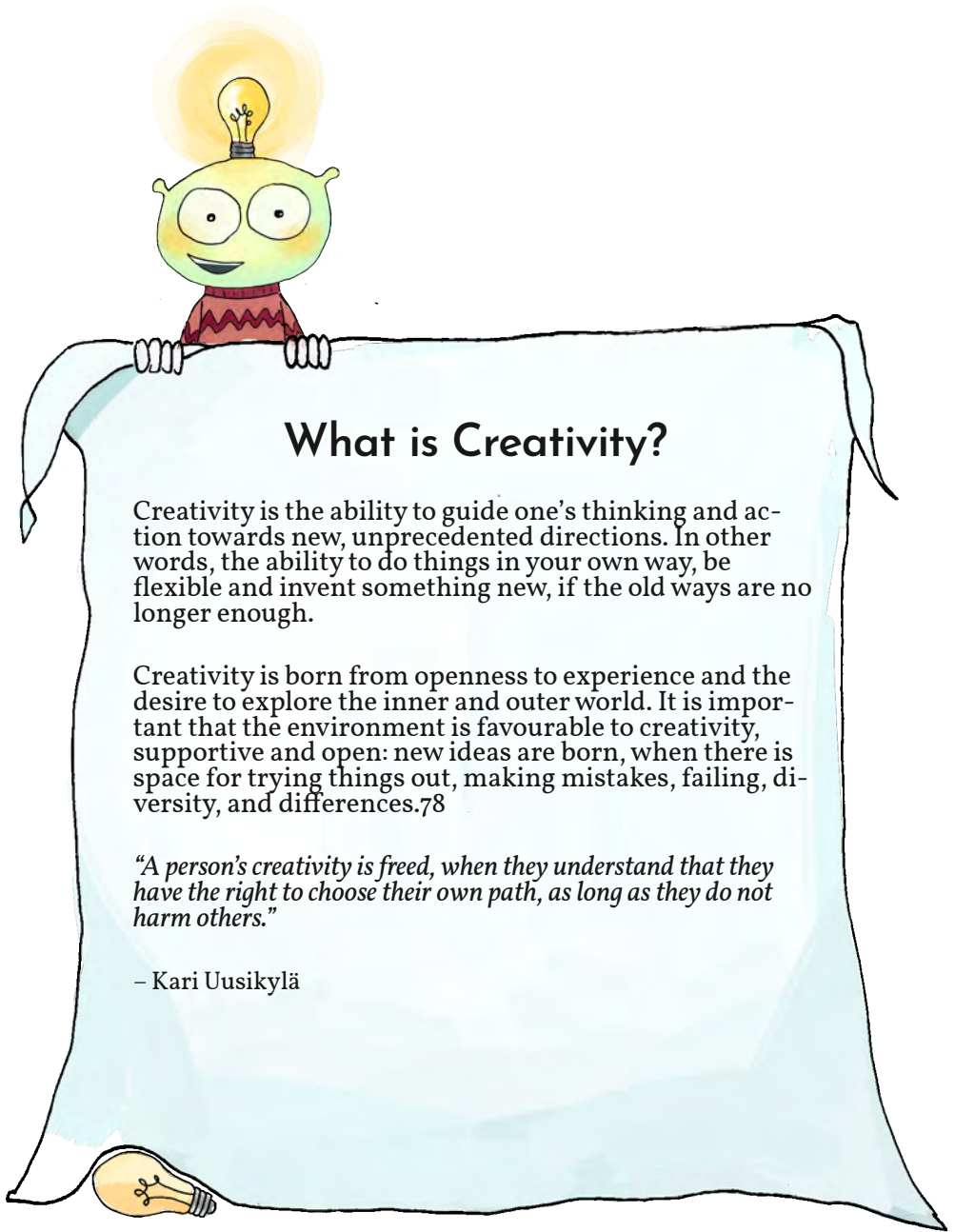
# 8

## Creativity

Why should you be creative? There are already artists, innovators, and superstars in the world, and I'm not one of them!

Now and then I do get some ideas, but I don't dare to do anything, in case it turns out that my productions are totally mediocre!





## What is Creativity?

Creativity is the ability to guide one's thinking and action towards new, unprecedented directions. In other words, the ability to do things in your own way, be flexible and invent something new, if the old ways are no longer enough.

Creativity is born from openness to experience and the desire to explore the inner and outer world. It is important that the environment is favourable to creativity, supportive and open: new ideas are born, when there is space for trying things out, making mistakes, failing, diversity, and differences.<sup>78</sup>

*"A person's creativity is freed, when they understand that they have the right to choose their own path, as long as they do not harm others."*

– Kari Uusikylä



## ACT 1



Are you alright? Did you hurt yourselves?



Where have you come to?



Are we in Mars?



Stop the craziness, Essé!



But it looks so different here from any other place I've seen before. It's so beautiful!



Beautiful can sometimes mean dangerous.



I think we should go and explore what there is here!



Move around? Why? We should stay right here – we don't even know where we are!



It sounds different! It could be interesting!



I have always wanted to go somewhere but I've been uncertain...



A step into the unknown, a dive into dangers! I can hardly wait!



I strongly disagree with Essé. We need an expert, not a risk-taker as a leader.



I agree. Guesswork instead of reasoning is not good.



We need a guide! Someone, who is not afraid and who knows the way!



Well don't look at me!



But you've always talked about a place you've always wanted to visit but where you've never dared to go. Maybe we'll go there together.



But Yeabut doesn't even trust himself. How can we follow him? He is the one who needs a teacher or a mentor!



Maybe he needs to discover more about himself...



Discover more what? More self-doubt...



I think that you are the bravest one of us. I have anyway learned so much from you about how I don't always need to try and explain things as if I understood them. And don't have to avoid dealing with things I am uncertain about, but rather can keep an open mind and explore what each one is about.



This is true, Yeabut copes with uncertainty. This is needed for putting what you have learned into practice, instead of just knowing it in theory.



Yeabut, show us what you like! Don't think about the risks. We are after all together on this voyage of discovery!



Voyage of discovery? This is taking things too far!



I think Essé meant exploration.



It is not ok not to know where we are going!



I think that is what is the best thing about this!



Maybe it really is a question of knowing the unknown. You got me thinking.



Lite, could you remain reasonable? We cannot lose you as well!



This place is, for us, a new, wild land, but it's not distant. These deep feelings always seem to awaken in me when I think of its exceptional beauty.



Are we talking about experiencing an imaginary journey or what?



This is going to be so exciting!



When I lecture too much, the students are bogged down and get anxious, and if explain too little, they lose the track completely. We still don't know what this place is, if it even really exists, and what kinds of risks are involved in this journey. Trips always involve many kinds of challenges, confrontations, and threats.



Maybe this is a moment for a bit of critical thinking for all of us. We should minimise risks and focus on problem-solving and decision-making.



I second that! This feels more and more like balancing on a trapeze. We should return to our learning and get rid of all this mystery stuff.



I think walking on the trapeze is fun! We should at least try!



I don't have more information about this trip, and it would be foolish to ask all of you to follow me.



Information can only offer a map of a particular area.



Oh, Essé, it is always necessary to know the precise epistemology of this place in particular – which appears pretty impossible to reach.



We have now really limited information for evaluating this trip. We in fact lack the skills to embark on a trip like this entirely.



I agree with Lite. There is not enough clarity, precision, evidence, relevance, coherence, or any sense at all to head off to some weird adventures in a new world.



I seriously feel like we should definitely go! Staying in the mainstream brings no change.



You never learn, do you?



It's time to challenge old habits!



## ACT 2



Where's Yeabut? It's so dark here, the forest is so thick and labyrinthine, and there's hardly any light!



We must find the ancient oak tree. When we get there, this will turn easier.



Don't look at me, it's not as if I didn't warn you. Now we're stuck in the dark.



How will we get out of here? I'm losing hope.



I've never had more fun in my life!





I never doubted it that you would enjoy the weirdest situations, Essé!



We're almost there!



I think this is just a long tunnel of branches, bushes, and gloom.



How long have we been gone? It must have been at least a few hours!



More! I would guess half a day!



Not even an hour!



The concept of time is relative in a forest like this, but we'll be there soon!



Finally, I can see light there!



I can see it too!



And the old tree!



Courage and determination are on our side!



Fortitude – I never doubted it!



I am proud of us!



Yeabut, where are you running to now?



Follow me this way, to the open meadow. We must hurry!



This is so exciting! More adventures!



I have this strange feeling, as if a little bit of excitement was flowing through my body.



I must admit I feel it too.



This is a barren land, but the landscape will be different.



I feel lighter, as if I were floating in the air...



Welcome to my world!



In spite of the danger, I am happy we went on this journey!



Be prepared for the colours changing soon.



I am ready!



Yellow and golden colour...



Such warm light – a lovely, warm embrace.



Here at last! Come and join me.



I don't think I have ever been in a place like this before.



Me neither. Weird that I've never come here before.



This wasn't far, but I couldn't reach it. If only I'd...



...opened my mind a little bit more...



This place makes those two say funny things. I like this even more!



We tamed our fears, doubts, and insecurities.



Could we stay a little longer, Yeabut?



Essé, absolutely! In fact, I wouldn't mind building a house here!





*You are love  
and freedom.*

*Don't forget your light  
along the way.*



*Persuade you heart to speak.  
We need more courage.*



*There is nothing more beautiful  
Than a wild heart.*



*We learn from waves,  
Not from a quiet sea.*





*There are stories waiting for you  
Loving you secretly.*



*We long for that  
Constant  
Breath of life,  
That is lost  
In the landscape  
Of our map.  
A sign of revolution,  
A mark of love.*



*There is art  
in the way we fly,  
in the way  
we fall.*

*A leaf with feelings.*



*This is our skin.  
When we love.  
Poetry.*



*Look at these words  
Wearing sunshine for you.*



*You are never far  
From your soul  
When you dream*

*In the plumage of our mind  
A poem has a rhythm, as the human body's  
breath  
It takes our hand  
to the child of our soul  
A different kind of cognition  
Real and dreamed  
A nonchalant revolution  
A time without owners,  
Without productive capacity  
Consumption and repetitive work.  
A resistance against the routine of our society,  
The habituated monotony of life  
Too often. Too present.  
The emotional absenteeism.  
What do we know about our songs?  
The language of logic is too strong?  
An identity without rain  
There is no precise loss  
In the pureness of each emotion  
And yet, Inside the organs  
An endless freedom*

*Photopoetry by Marco Briano*





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# Team

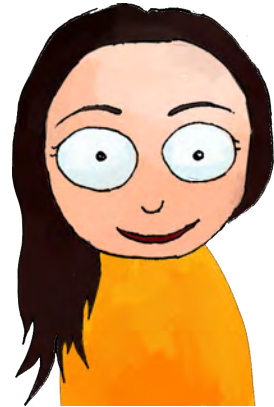


Kaisu Mälkki (PhD, Docent of Educational Psychology) works as University Lecturer in university pedagogy at the University of Tampere Faculty of Education and Culture. Kaisu is a pedagogue, theoretician, and artistic spirit. She is interested in what limits the human mind from developing, and how these limits may be overcome, alone and with others. Her research and development activity is located at the intersection of reflection, transformative learning, and pedagogical development work.



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Mia-Carita Hahl (MEd) graduated as a classroom teacher from the University of Tampere, and teacher fifth grade at a Tampere school. In the Pocket Tutor, Mia-Carita was responsible for creating the visuality of the characters as well as drawing the images.



Saara Fu (MEd), while avoiding graduating as a Master of Education from the University of Tampere, coloured the illustrations in the Pocket Tutor, drew the comic strips, visualised the figures, and arranged the layout.





