

Tips & Tools

Revolutionize Your Learning. Transform Your World.



Creative Learning Events or “Same Old, Same Old”?
It’s A Choice! It’s a Process!

Over the years there has been much debate about the following sequence of [The Eight Steps of Design](#)©:

1. Who?
2. Why?
3. So That? (Transfer)
4. Where?
5. When?
6. What?
7. What for? (Achievement-based Objectives)
8. How? (Learning Tasks)

Many people come to the recognition that without fairly complete answers to the “first” six Steps, and definitely the seventh (“What for,” Achievement-based objectives), the eighth, “How,” may not lead to the learning or the level of learning sought. Today’s issue will present a new consideration for this discussion: *That this sequence also can enhance creativity in designing.*

I suggest that by thoughtfully and knowingly exploring the places where opposing needs and desires (forces) arise, you can purposely use this energy to birth new insights and flexibility in Learning Tasks and in learning by all. Read on for one simple example.

Upcoming Events

Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach

October 4-7, 2011

Washington, DC

with Valerie Uccellani

(valerie@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: August 9

[register now](#)

November 1-4, 2011

Toronto, ON

with Jeanette Romkema

(jeanette@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: September 6

[register now](#)

Advanced Learning Design

November 16-18, 2011

Montpelier, VT

with Peter Perkins

(peterp@globalearning.com)

Early Bird deadline: October 5

[register now](#)

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Creative Learning Events or “Same Old, Same Old”?

...continued from page 1



One Simple Example

Attitudes: Resentment vs. Enthusiasm

A percentage of people are being “sent” to training unwillingly; others are enthusiastic. When we embrace the opposites or opposing forces, we can come up with questions like:

- What learning tasks or actions, might bring the greatest appreciation for the content’s work and life value given the nature of these two attitudes?
- What content will be most useful to each group?

See the section: *Using strategies from creative writing to increase creativity in designing learning events*, for strategies for tapping into creative “answers” and ideas for these and other considerations.

Juxtaposition

Juxtaposition of polarities or any two or more distinct items has long been used to raise awareness and change beliefs within psychology, philosophy, and Wisdom teaching traditions (Zen, Christianity, Tao, and others); Dialogue Education often includes comparison in [Learning Tasks](#). “Holding the opposites” (Jung) can increase creativity during the design process too. By recognizing, honoring, and exploring opposing forces, designers actually create the space for insights and new ideas.

How does this relate to The Eight Steps© and designing?

Too often instructors, designers and educators tend to sketch out the activities or Learning Tasks (“How”) prior to either completing a Learning Needs and Resource Assessment (LNRA) and/or writing out their Achievement-based Objectives (ABOs). In addition, even the most experienced Dialogue Educators can use juxtaposition to increase creativity, and personal and student dialogue—and therefore learning, as well.

Three concrete examples

In my recent designing of *Wisdom, Wellness and Wonder for Busy Women: It’s a Choice*, there were three areas (pieces of content) where the opportunity for creativity in the use of seeming polarities can be seen:

- Business leads to burn out *and* is rewarded in many ways
- Culture builds cohesiveness *and* punishes non-conformers
- Roles are fulfilling *and* engender stereotyping

If I held one or the other attitude implied in the above, what might be the implications be for the Achievement-based Objectives or Learning Tasks that I created? How do you check yourself for your assumptions? It is the capacity to hold both possibilities that births new options.

Using strategies from creative writing to increase creativity in designing learning events

In *Writing the Wave*, and *Writing the Natural Way*, by Elizabeth Ayers and Gabriele Rico respectively, readers and writers are invited to tap into their linear *and* imaginal brain capacities. The following Juxtaposition Exercises build on the intentional integration of linear thinking and the imagination, and use juxtaposition to increase creative responses.



Juxtaposition Exercises: Two Options

The following are two creativity exercises, followed by an example of use for each one.

Option 1: What I Imagine

Create a t-chart, write one polarity on the right and the other on the left. Set your timer for 7 minutes, and immediately begin listing every consideration (phrase, feeling, synonym, etc.) that comes up for you.

At the end of the 7 minutes, reread your lists and respond to the following questions:

1. What did I discover about my assumptions, values and attitudes by engaging in this exercise?
2. What is my take away from this work?
3. If all these things “exist”, what does it mean for this learning event (content piece, group, situation, etc.)?

Option 2: What’s Different? What’s Similar?

In this exercise you will use a Venn Diagram with two three intersecting circles (depending upon how many comparisons you are going to make at one time). Make sure to make it large enough so that differences can be written in the right or the left side (top/bottom) of each circle respectively, leaving the very center for those items that are the same. Write one item into each of the non-intersecting section of each. See the example that follows if the directions are not clear.

Time yourself for just five minutes. The idea is to just take those first reactions/thoughts into the container you’ve created (the ven diagram). From there, decide:

What is the difference that will make the greatest difference?

Next: Examples for each of the above from one learning event design

Eco-focused business owners, similar to the Board and leadership of some not-for-profit organizations, can have conflicting attitudes about money and the need to “make money”. A significant portion of the LNRA has been completed. For both of the examples the content piece was “Wealth”.



Example for Option 1: What I Imagine

The challenge: Grappling with polarities within the group coming to this public learning event (the “Who”). My experience and interviews (part of the LNRA) indicate that some people in the group will be comfortable with the word “wealth”, and for others it may be charged or a turn-off. I am using “wealth” on purpose, because the extent to which each person has and develops healthy attitudes about money is directly related to their business sustainability.

The polarity: wealth is bad ---- wealth is good.

Wealth is bad	Wealth is good
Only greedy people are wealthy	Wealth is an attitude
One person or entity having too great of a share of wealth is bad	Wealth is a description of how much money and material goods a person or company has
There’s only 24 hours in a day, no one can work more than that	I have felt wealthy for a good chunk of my adult life
Wealth is a dirty word	Wealth is a reflection of investment-where and what I have put my money (and time) into
There has always been a bit of guilt along with my feelings about wealth, or when I feel like I have “more” than someone else	Wealth is also a reflection of how a business is structured. Are all earnings limited by the hours in a day that people can work, or by hourly rates, or, is it designed to reach the greatest number of people who will benefit from the products or services?

Results of exercise:

I see from my imaginings that if part of my purpose is to help folks create a sustainable and successful business, I need to continue to hold and make transparent these seeming polarities. By creating a container where “all” can be held, the opportunity for deciding what is most useful to the learner’s life/work is created!

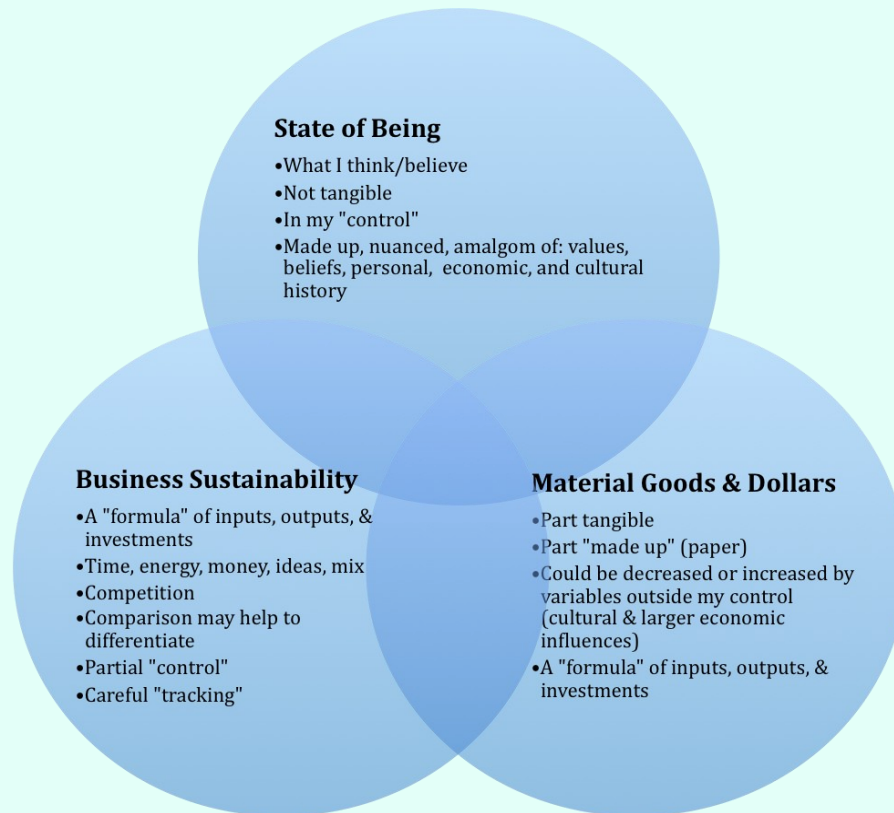
Practically, I see that in my marketing, if I use the word, “wealth” I will need to offset its “charge” in a way that acknowledge the need to unpack and reframe the way in which it is currently understood. In the course, I will create a Learning Task that provides a similar experience to what I just did.



Example for Option 2: What's Different? What's Similar?

The challenge: Grappling with one “What for” (ABO) and then the “How”. *What Learning Task actions will best fit for this ABO?*

Wealth



Note: The “data” that would be found in the over-lapping sections is not shown on the above example.

Results of exercise:

What I noticed first and foremost is that this exercise helped me to get clearer on where the connections were between three different ways the concept of “wealth” can be explored within. Although, not polarities, all are connected and influence each other.

What I came away with by doing this exercise is how “our” attitude about wealth is the only thing is the only thing we can control, and, that “attitude or mindset about wealth was inseparable from the experience of creating wealth, whether personal or in a business. I also internalized a greater respect for the “math” and the uncontrollable forces (at least at a single-person level) that weave in and out of each of the three areas.

YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT What are your next steps?

Perhaps you've taken a Dialogue Education™ class or two. You've learned a lot, and have a great arsenal of tools to improve your teaching and facilitation. You've made some immediate improvements in your training programs, but feel you could do more...

Ever wish you could have ongoing support from an experienced Dialogue Education™ practitioner?



You can! Global Learning Partners offers much more than basic and advanced Dialogue Education™ courses – we also offer consulting, coaching and mentoring services to support you as you implement all that you've learned into your own training programs.

This month, we'd like to introduce you to one of Global Learning Partners' Certified Dialogue Education™ Teachers and experienced coach, **Darlene Goetzman** (darlene@globalearning.com).

With Darlene's support, her coaching clients have:

- assessed and revamped their training programs to increase their effectiveness;
- deepened their own learning and sharpened their skills; and
- found themselves working more creatively and with more enjoyment in their designing and teaching.

Is coaching the right "next step" for you?

For a limited time, Darlene is offering one free month of coaching with the establishment of a six-month coaching agreement. To establish a coaching agreement, contact Joan Dempsey, GLP Programs Director: 888.432.2763, ext. 101 (toll-free). *Not sure if coaching will work for you?* Ask about a free trial coaching session with Darlene.

Darlene constantly challenged me to look within myself to find the answers I was searching for. I frequently reflect back on our work together. When I get "stuck" on a design, I pause and think, "What questions would Darlene ask me to gain insight on where I go from here?" More often than not this leads me forward in my design. Working with Darlene was one of the most beneficial and rewarding experiences of my career.

Leanne Eko
Nutrition Education Consultant