Problem Scenario

What is a Problem Scenario?

At the start and end of a Learning Sprint, you might encounter a **Problem Scenario**

The **Problem Scenario** is a narrative, or story, that is rooted in real-world ('authentic') experience that directly relates to the aims and objectives of the Learning Sprint.

A **Problem Scenario** presents you with some tricky *challenges* that anchor a particular *project* in an authentic setting.

The *project* very often involves the creation of something that currently does not exist.

The *challenges* very often are multiple and pose 'wicked' questions (link). See https://www.liberatingstructures.com/4-wicked-questions/

What's the Big Problem here?

In a typical **Problem Scenario** you will find that there are several *problems.* Each will present you with *challenges* as you attempt to complete the *project* described in the Scenario.

The best way to figure this out is to read and re-read the **Problem Scenario** while you continually ask yourself the question:

What are the problems to be solved here?

Make sure you clearly identify all of the 'problems' and that you put in the *scholarly* research they require to creatively

tackle them.

At the end of a Learning Sprint, you may be asked to produce some possible “answers” or creative responses **to the thorny questions posed in the scenario**.

You may draw on anything that you’ve encountered in the course if it helps you to develop a critical and reflective response.

Reflecting on Problems

How might you approach a Reflective Analysis of your response to a Problem Scenario?

There’s no one ‘right’ way to do this. Ideally, it would benefit you try out a few different methods of Reflective Analysis and figure out what works best for you.

One Reflective Analysis method that *might* work for you is called:

Goals, objectives and reflective habits (link)

What were your goals and objectives here? To take this approach, you might want to think through what you have examined and done in relation to the ***aims* of the Learning Sprint**, and/or the **Course Learning Outcomes** and use this to structure the way you present your findings:

Focus on what’s most important in the Sprint / Course goals and objectives.

You can then follow IAD’s advice on how to develop some good habits that will help you to *reflect on these goals and objectives*

https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/goals-objectives-habits

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Another Reflective Analysis method that might work for you is called:

Reflecting on experience (link)

Here you will be thinking primarily about *your learning experience* as part of **Reflection for an assignment**

This “often requires a particular language and structure.” https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience

IAD offer six different models that you could play with here

https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience (link)

- Look throught the six models
- Choose the one that you like best
- Use that model to structure your Reflective Analysis

Do This, (not *that*)

Whichever method of Reflective Analysis you choose to pursue, please make sure that you critically *address the Problem Scenario*.

Do not simply list what you did during the Learning Sprint.

More of *This*?

> *Want to know more about the Problem Scenario approach to learning?*
>
> *Want to read an example of a Reflective Analysis of Problem*

> *Based Learning?*
>
> Read on….

Problem Based Learning (PBL)

PBL Literature Intro

Start with these two texts:

> Savin-Baden, M., (2014) **Problem-based learning: New constellations for the 21stCentury**. ***Journal of Excellence in College Teaching 25*** (3/4) 197-219. (direct ***download***)
>
> Kek, M. & Huijser, H. (2015). ***21st century skills: problem based learning and the University of the Future*** Paper Third 21st Century Academic Forum Conference, Harvard, Boston, USA.

Both texts are argument mapped here in Miro:

https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOGyBBkw=/?moveToWidget=3458764520608077382&cot=14

Savin-Baden, M., (2014) gives a good overview problem based learning (PBL) and how it is blended with Networked Learning (NL).

Kek, M. & Huijser, H. (2015) is mainly a taxonomy that draws on another taxonomy (modes of knowledge). It establishes nine constellations as a means of mapping out different forms of PBL.

The PBL landscape sketched out in Kek, M. & Huijser, H. resembles different levels of provision we have in formal education in Scotland (e.g. FE and HE), so it should be a familiar picture to anyone familiar with the Scottish system.

It also sketches out forms of PBL we may seek to avoid and gives us some idea why. So it's useful as a diagnostic tool.

Reflective Analysis of this PBL literature

This course, Contemporary Art & Open Learning tries to *avoid* applying the (very open) Collaborative Inquiry model to identify and deal with 'problems' that are too clearly defined in such terms. The idea that education is some kind of 'training' to solve 'problems' reeks of utilitarianism and instrumentalism. However, I realise that there are lots of *forms* of PBL and that many of them are metacognitive – aware of this particular issue (e.g. Constellations 6, 8 and 9).

Many of the PBL models I've encountered *as a student* have simply generated lots of solutioneering and rapid prototyping masquarading as critical thinking. I can see that they were really more forms of *project-based* learning (masquarading as problem-based?) The kinds of PBL I have in mind here tended to be a misrepresentation of so-called 'design thinking'. Design thinking is really more concerned with critical thinking through collaborative forms of making and being, so, on generating 'new social forms' (akin to Constellation 9) than on 'solutioneering'.

In art, the idea of attempting to identify and then 'solve' a problem does exist (e.g. modernist painting, according to some artists and critics, attempted to 'solve' figure-ground 'problems') but it's seen as a ridiculous way of describing what's going on, even in the delimited terms of 'composition'. Bit like using a hammer to open an envelope.

The importance of fit comes up here again for PBL and *art* – how do we use PBL in a way that works with (and against) a discipline's propositional knowledge? This is the epistemological issue of 'modes of knowledge' that Kek, M. & Huijser, H. (2015: 201) raise well and that seems to be encapsulated in some of the Constellations.

Aside: when I hear the word ‘problem’ in relation to artistic learning, I think of this:

> So many people…have their problems
> I’m not interested…in their problems
> I guess I’ve…experienced some problems
> But now I’ve…made some decisions
> Takes a lot of time to push away the nonsense
> Take my compassion…Push it as far as it goes
> My interest level’s dropping, my interest level is dropping
> I’ve heard all I want to, I don’t want to hear any more
>
> David Byrne ‘No Compassion’ *Talking Heads 77* (1977)

‘Problems’ in, say, composition, tend to be concocted wholly within the discipline, so they are *propositional*. In art we can choose to engage with these forms of propositional knowledge (and perhaps become famed for doing so) or to ignore them and create work within an entirely different set of parameters. If we ignore them, they become other people’s self-generated problems. But it’s hard to see that this is what they were all along…

But now I’ve…made some decisions
Takes a lot of time to push away the nonsense
