Dream of an Online Conflict Dojo

Designing and developing a web-based conflict capability building resource

by

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"Conflict is the gadfly of thought. It stirs us to observation and memory. It instigates to invention. It shocks us out of sheep-like passivity and sets us at noting and contriving."

John Dewey

This contextual essay relates the journey and learning from a creative/educational

project that explored the feasibility and challenges of creating a web-based conflict

capability building resource with specific reference to contributions from

Processwork

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Section 1   Introduction

"The real voyage of discovery consists, not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."
- Marcel Proust

This essay will narrate the story and challenges of designing and creating a web-based conflict resource for those who wish to develop their capability to handle conflict more effectively for a variety of different purposes. In particular, this submission for the MACFOC requirements will focus on the development of Processwork skills and practices for non-processsworkers using a web-based resource and explore how selected elements of Processwork can be learned at a distance by using an e-learning web-based format. This is part of a larger and longer term project to create a comprehensive web-based resource and is intended as an experiment and initial feasibility testing for the larger project, the design of which is outlined below, but the ultimate development of the resource is outside the scope of this MACFOC project.

Why conflict capability building on the web? To start with, E-learning is one of the fastest growing methods of facilitating learning and interactive web-based resources for building conflict capability are not currently available. While there are many resources available on the web, one would have to know the diverse approaches to conflict and spend considerable time in tracking them down. Even then, they are mostly text based rather than interactive. I include links to a new moderated E-learning course, Australian Flexible Learning Framework , from the Conflict Resolution Network of Australia, in the reference section as an example of what is commercially available. However, the potential for developing conflict capability on the web is relatively unexplored at present and there are so many valuable resources,

currently being taught experientially in workshop settings, which could be made more widely and easily to those who need them in this way.

There are many paper based publications that introduce Processwork theory, concepts, practices and exercises to develop conflict capability which are of immense benefit. Some like Goodbread and Reiss have the word conflict in the title; others like three of Arnold Mindell's publications have conflict in the subtitle; while many others contain valuable Processwork contributions that are highly relevant when working with conflict. Clearly many valuable resources and there will be many outside the Processwork community who are able to use many of the published books on Processwork as self-development materials. However, since many of these publications are not overtly about dealing with conflict, the wider public may be less aware of their potential value in this regard. In addition, there is substantive conflict capability among practitioners and teachers within the Processwork community and the value of this resource for has yet to be tapped, especially through the electronic medium.

As far as I can ascertain, there are even fewer resources available in electronic form and for conflict work in particular. Exceptions being Conor McKenna's (2010) E-book and occasional resources (mostly text-based), manuscripts and resources available on Processwork Institute and the personal websites of PWI staff, and the websites of Deep Democracy Institute and of Worldwork 2008 in London. Arnold and Amy Mindell's own website provides an increasing range of resources, text-based, artistic, multi-media that are now offer such web-based support to those wishing to learn about processwork. Generally however, learning about Processwork

applications to conflict tends to take place in short experiential workshops while more in-depth study programs, such as MACFOC or Diploma programmes, take several years and considerable expense to complete. There is a need for a resource that gathers together relevant concepts and practices, which makes as much as possible of the Processwork toolkit, as applied to conflict, available to those who have the desire to use this resource, but may not have the time, finance or inclination to study Processwork in-depth. In my work as a conflict coach, facilitator and educator I have introduced Processwork concepts and practices to non-Processworkers in a variety of settings where they have been greatly valued. An E-learning capability building resource, such as I propose to create, will offer an opportunity and a means of scaling up access to these valuable, concepts, tools and resources for improving the way we deal with conflict.

My motivation for the project comes from my personal and professional experiences. In my personal life and relationships, some of the most challenging and painful experiences in my life have entailed my inability to deal with conflict whether intrapersonal, interpersonal or in family or organisational settings. Little of my early and formal education prepared me to deal effectively and constructively with such conflicts, though I clearly needed it. Later in life, I have had the privilege of learning from many outstanding educators and practitioners in the field of conflict work, not the least of whom are many in the Processwork community, and I would like to share as much of that learning as possible with people who have not had such privilege but who may benefit from the kind of support that I have received, but at less time and cost to themselves.

Likewise, in my professional roles as facilitator, coach and organisational consultant, I continually encounter many people who have great difficulty in dealing with conflict in their work and social interactions. The costs of such conflict, whether in terms of human suffering, broken relationships and communities, lost business opportunities, organisational inefficiencies, costly court cases or even deaths, weigh heavily on the people involved and highlight the need to develop conflict capability in many settings. The resources required are substantial and not always easy to come by when needed. Many professionals who provide support are not themselves conflict specialists and these, as well as the people directly involved in these conflicts, have need of such a resource as the Conflict Dojo. I have provided this in limited form for the past several years through my monthly free Healthy Conflict E-Newsletter articles – back issues of which are available on my www.breakthrough.ie website.

The work undertaken for my final MACFOC project anticipates many of the challenges of completing the larger project in the sense that it required the study and integration of three key disciplines - learning and development, educational technology and Processwork as applied to the building of conflict capability. As such it breaks new territory for the learning of Processwork and its applications and though I have a strong background in education and learning, the project took me on a steep learning curve in relation to both educational technology and Processwork.

What follows relates the story and learning from the project and it might usefully be read alongside another related MACFOC final project by Jeni Vine in which I collaborated. Her (2011) project is entitled "Surreal And Not So Real: Describing the process of Creating Video Clips for an E-Learning Resource on Working

Constructively with Conflict" which overlaps with my project, enhances it and demonstrates the parallel evolution and complementarity of both our projects. In our collaboration we explored the use of multi-media in the development of conflict capability relating to Processwork applications and I elaborate on this work later in this essay.

The scope and complexity of my project means that, at this stage, just a small part of the resource has been created. To appreciate the value of what has been achieved in course of this project, it will need to be experienced in the context of the fully developed and operational web-based resource which is some way off yet. However, it will be possible to demonstrate some of the operational resource that has been created within the web-based environment at our final presentations and therefore demonstrate some of the potential for learning conflict capability, a la Processwork, on the web that we have created in the course of our work on both projects.

It is important to emphasise at this point that while the finished product, as such, has not been completed, the key learning has been in the exploratory journey and this will continue through many more iterations of action-inquiry before the project is fully operational. It is difficult to record the depth and breadth of the creative and reflective process in which I have engaged over the past couple of years, but my hope is that the chapters which follow will give the reader some insight into the journey I have taken and provide some initial mapping the ground for others Processworkers who might be considering the use of e-learning approaches for the dissemination of Processwork.

Section 2   Introduction and background to the Conflict Dojo

"Impossible! For a plain country bumpkin and a prince to join in marriage,
Impossible! For a round, yellow pumpkin to become a golden carriage,
Impossible!
The world is full of zanies and fools
who don't believe in sensible rules.
They don't believe what sensible people say.
It's because those daffy dewey-eyed dopes
Keep building up their dewey-eyed hopes,
Impossible things keep happening every day."

- *Cinderella's Fairy God Mother*

This section will give an overview of the vision and background to the project including the needs and the thinking that led to its inception. It is envisaged that the project to achieve the vision of a comprehensive capability building resource will take a number of years to complete post MACFOC and will include several other approaches to working with conflict as well as processwork. The current focus is on activities and resources which can support the development of Processwork practices as applied to conflict, including metaskills, skills and concepts and will eventually be part of the completed web-based resource.

What is the Conflict Dojo?
The Conflict Dojo, as envisaged, will be an interactive, multi-media, virtual learning environment based on the web for developing awareness, understanding, attitudes and skills needed for the effective handling of conflict in a variety of every day social and work settings. It is designed to provide a range of multimedia resources on a flexible database that can be used through a variety of different access points and learning pathways. The resource will be highly interactive, learner centred and user friendly.

Beginnings: need, concept and motivation

The Conflict Dojo began life as an outline for a self-help book on learning and growing through conflict, incorporating significant elements of Processwork. In my former life as a university academic and teacher, I designed and co-authored a Personal Management Handbook (1988) which has been translated into several languages and sold successfully around the world. I thought I could produce a similar self-help book to support the development of conflict capability. The project became too large and complex to complete in the timeframe of my final project for MACFOC and early requests to the Process community to provide exercises to include in the book met with little response. I was disappointed and though not quite ready to give up on the idea, I knew I would have to try something different.

Around this time I was also engaged in producing a newcomer's guide to Worldwork, as part of my internship, for Worldwork seminars in Israel and Palestine and the idea began to form of creating a more substantial resource, which could be accessed online by those with whom we were working, for use in the intervening periods between the Worldwork seminars there. This seminar resource was eventually produced as a short 20 page document - an introductory guide for newcomers to Worldwork which drew together and expanded upon pieces of work published elsewhere.

A third driver emerged from my work on strategy and conflict capability development with the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM). Irish Travellers are an indigenous ethnic minority in Ireland. ITM is an umbrella organisation for 80 or so member organisations spread geographically throughout Ireland who work specifically with Travellers. They face major challenges in providing learning and training opportunities to such a geographically dispersed and diverse membership at a time

when the need is acute and great and funding is declining rapidly due to the economic downturn and fiscal crisis in Ireland.

I began to explore the possibility of responding to the needs of ITM by creating a learning opportunity for ITM members through a web-based format and quickly realised that that building such a resource proposed enormous challenges including access to the web, technological and software development, pedagogical and e-learning capability not to mention the challenges of funding its development.

Researching the challenge of funding the development of a web-based resource led to a key breakthrough that began to shape the evolution of the project. There was no way that a small project to provide a conflict capability building resource for a small population of Irish Travellers (approximately 30,000) was going to attract the level of funding needed to build the resource so it became a non-starter as far as I was concerned. However a fellow MACFOC student, Rho Sandberg, asked "what if you were to build a global resource rather than just confining it to Irish Travellers? What is you were to build the resource that would have appeal to a much wider audience engaged in conflict work?"

I then set about testing interest in a web based conflict capability resource informally with ITM and a range of NGOs and other organisations public and private, national and international. It was immediately clear that such a project might attract funding from larger philanthropic foundations or form the basis of a not-for-profit self-sustaining business. The response I got was positive. They wanted to know more.

I set about designing the resource I wanted to create and began a rapid learning curve about e-learning and web-based technologies which would greatly influence the evolving delivery model. I quickly became excited about the potential of the internet and the new technologies I was discovering to expand and realise the dream of such a web-based resource. While it is yet to be established what can be achieved by such a resource, it is clear to me at the time of writing that the potential for developing conflict capability on the web is far greater than I imagined at the outset.

Yet, despite my growing confidence in the potential of web-based technology to deliver a high quality and worthwhile learning experience, there were many questions and challenges posed which needed to be answered. Will people use such a resource if it becomes available? Will users be able to access the technology to use it? What are the limitations of this method of learning about conflict? Can it be successfully used to develop the competency needed to handle conflict effectively? What aspects of Processwork or other methods can and cannot be taught/ learned using a web-based resource? How will learning in a web-based environment transfer to everyday social or workplace settings? How can I create a resource that will sustain interest and motivation of the learner? I realised that many of these questions could only be answered by creating the resource and testing it in practice. Worst scenario – I fail, but I would learn a lot in the process.

Having seen how widespread the need for conflict capability building is in the contexts of organisational, community development, families, schools and the Irish Peace Process, which I have helped facilitate for many years, I was personally convinced of the need for the resource. It was also clear to me how few people who

needed it have access to high quality resources and learning opportunities to develop such capability and I was and am excited by the possibility of being able to provide it.

The ambitious scope and global scalability of the resource would mean that conflict capability, and applications of Processwork in particular, could be far more accessible at affordable cost to those who need it most and also to those who might not find it so easy to access high quality teachers in their part of the world. I began to believe the Conflict Dojo held a real possibility that the needs of the three groups mentioned above could be substantially met were the project to be successful. However, it is clear from early soundings that interest in the resource extends far beyond these groups.

The scale of the task also became clearer as I developed the concept and design for the Conflict Dojo and I realised I would not be able to achieve it on my own. I needed help – a lot of help! Two broad possibilities seemed to crystalize in terms of developing the project. I could try to do it commercially and seek loans, venture capital and develop it as a business proposition or I could go down the social entrepreneur / not-for-profit route and seek philanthropic funding.

In terms of values, I am committed to establishing the widest possible access to the material I create and so am more interested in social enterprise where the benefit appears in the form of added social value rather than the accumulation of financial profit. I had previously written a free monthly E-newsletter entitled Healthy Conflict for five years including some 50 articles on different approaches to conflict which will be part of Conflict Dojo resource. My preference therefore is to create an open

educational resource with minimal financial cost to the user but it would also need to pay the bills and ensure it could be sustainable once created. I realised I could not devote the time needed to develop the Conflict Dojo without support.

To this end I chose to go down the social entrepreneur route and seek funding from philanthropic organisations that support this kind of activity. I put together a proposal for funding and though I have recently found this was unsuccessful, preparing it has helped me gain greater focus on the project and I am currently writing some new applications for funding. Such funding will allow me to spend more of my time developing the Conflict Dojo and provide a basis on which I can attract further funding to hire other developers to work on the project.

I should say at this point that I had been working in the field of conflict work for over 20 years as mediator, coach and facilitator. Prior to that, I had been both a teacher and an educator of teachers in the area of experiential learning and curriculum design. I therefore brought substantial pedagogical knowledge and experience as well as years of research and practice in the field of education, human relations training and conflict resolution to bear on the project. My participation in the MACFOC programme and this project enabled me formulate and draw together and enhance almost 20 years of interest and learning in applying Processwork to working with conflict.

Section 3   Evolution and Design the Conflict Dojo

"Every conflict we face in life is rich with positive and negative potential. It can be a source of inspiration, enlightenment, learning, transformation, and growth– or rage, fear, shame, entrapment, and resistance. The choice is not up to our opponents, but to us, and our willingness to face and work through them."
– Kenneth Cloke and Joan Goldsmith

Here I will provide an overview of the design of the "Conflict Dojo" web based resource together with a rationale for the various elements that will eventually be realized post MACFOC.

Early versions of the Conflict Dojo resource were very simple; comprising a series of related web pages to be connected by hyperlinks. Each page was designed as an exercise to be done by the user with the aid of an online guide who would provide instructions and answer some advice on the challenges and pitfalls that might be encountered in the form of FAQs (frequently asked questions). An audio version of each exercise would also be provided that could be played by the learner to make it easier for the learner to complete the exercise without having to simultaneously read text. My exploration of the technology, of what it would take to operate a scalable version of the resource on the web and of the sophistication and quality of what could be delivered via the web opened my imagination and vision of the kinds of learning that are possible via this medium.

For example, discovery early in my technology research of the PREZI presentation system enabled me to conceive, extend and re-present the evolving paper-based design in a more holistic manner and also to present and get feedback from others to the evolving design over the internet from my office. This form of presentation freed

me from the more limited, linear presentation format of the more popular Powerpoint presentation and could also incorporate that form within it. More importantly, it facilitated a more holistic conceptualisation required for a web based resource and helped illustrate the potential for interconnectivity between the different parts of the resource.

PREZI is in many ways like a large mind-mapping system with greater potential for representing interrelationship between the different parts and functions of the design than one would normally be able to portray in the typical mind-mapping presentation. Another feature – that it can also be controlled by the learner and not just the presenter, allowing the learner to be more in charge – opened up new possibilities for interactive e-learning processes. Added to this was the facility to present what was on my computer to several people simultaneously and allow them to manipulate the learning material/process and dialogue with the aid of Skype. So the ability to combine different technologies highlighted the richness and quality that could be delivered over the internet. On-going inquiry into this and other forms of e-learning/ web 2 technologies made me aware of the continual and rapid expansion of what is possible on the web. My dreams of what was possible and what I wanted for the Conflict Dojo evolved as I attempted, in parallel, to turn my knowledge of conflict and Processwork into powerful web-based learning experiences.

In researching what is already out there on the web by way of conflict capability building resources, I discovered many sites which offered repositories of text based and published materials which supported the development of conflict capability. However, there was little that I could find on the web which had dynamic interactive

components that would engage the learner, guide them through materials in a self-directed way, and allow them to interact with each other. In short, I wanted something that would provide many of the advantages of learning in a classroom based environment but without the equivalent costs or demand on resources. I knew I was asking a lot but I began to believe it could be done.

The continuing interplay between what was achievable via the technology, what kinds of pedagogical and learning design could be created through this medium and what kinds of learning demands Processwork approaches to conflict would place on the learner, formed the creative and educational tensions that have become the heart of this project and inquiry.

Conflict Dojo: Elements of design
The following is an overview of the various elements of the Conflict Dojo design as currently envisaged and is similar to the guided tour of the site that will be given by the Site Guide (see below) on the web resource. It also exists in the form of a PREZI presentation which has the capacity to portray the whole and the interconnections more effectively and will be part of my final project presentation.

Conflict Dojo: Elements of web-based resource
As the design evolved it included many different parts. Most of these are listed below in linear form and give some sense of the different types of content envisaged for the Conflict Dojo although it does not convey the dynamic interrelationships between them that will be key to its operation and use.

Welcome to the Conflict Dojo (opening web page) – contains a brief introduction to the purpose and nature of the Conflict Dojo and instructions on how to log in or use if new including a 1-2 minute audio/ visual presentation of what it is about.

Conflict Dojo guides: There will be several different types of guide including instructor, coach, facilitator, mediator, consultant, seer and a learner role. Each guide will be introduced in the form of distinctive icons together with an outline of their function in supporting a specific type of learning process. Guides appear or are called by users as part of the various learning processes and pathways.

Site guide – on entering the Conflict Dojo the Site Guide will provide a guided tour of the resources available within it and how it works. The Site Guide will offer a number of options for getting started options to learn about each of these in more detail before you start. You can skip this as you become more familiar with site resources and how to use them.

The Site Guide will also offer a short guide to the various pathways and their respective contributions, e.g. to

1. deepen understanding of conflict and its dynamics in individuals, relationships, in groups, communities and organisations.

2. provide tools to address specific challenges and problems related to conflict

3. develop specific clusters of practices - skills, concepts and attitudes - to enhance ability to deal with conflict.

4. provide a series graded and sequenced programmes and study modules for developing one's conflict capability

5. offer an introduction to different approaches for dealing with conflict.

6. support communities of practice in developing their individual and collective conflict capability

The resource will eventually support, individualised learning, peer group pathways as well as taught classes.

Key sections of the Conflict Dojo virtual learning environment

- **Learning principles, processes and templates:** This section will give the user a greater understanding of the pedagogical principles and the e-learning process which underpin and guide the user to make best use of site resources. These include individual and group based processes, learning sequences principles and processes embedded in learning activities, tasks and projects.

- **Awareness and levels of reality:** Most experiential models and methods for working with conflict are grounded in awareness albeit that some models lay more emphasis on awareness and others less. Some models prioritise one type of awareness over another e.g. sensory, emotional, analytical, intuitive, proprioceptive, sentient, and so on. Special attention will therefore be given here to the development of different types of awareness and different channels of awareness which will be needed to maximise the benefit of the activities and learning processes which appear in the Conflict Dojo.

  Included here will be some initial exploration of different levels of reality/ experience from a Processwork perspective, including the assumptions which underpin them, which have proved to be of great benefit when dealing with

conflict. These will be further extended and expanded in the various activities and learning processes throughout the resource.

- **New user assessment:** This is an aid to newcomers to the Conflict Dojo who may require help to describe or name their needs and interests and relate them to the various resources available on the site. It will take the form of a series of self-assessment questions, the responses to which will give new users some recommendations for next steps and pathways in using the site.

- **Personal learning environment** – secure access to own learning space and portfolio, and will include learning styles questionnaires, reflective journal, learning log, action inquiry/ reflective practice templates, activity planners, feedback and evaluation forms, personal learning repository, etc.

- **Goals assessment:** this is a second level assessment which helps users to clarify their goals in using the site. Again it will take the form of a self-assessment questionnaire to assess the desired outcomes and priorities of the user and on the basis of responses will guide users to pathways most likely to help them achieve their chosen goals. In broad terms the key pathways will be a) relief of suffering b) problem-solving/ resolution c) capability building d) relationship development e) prevention and risk management f) growth and transformation. Of course, many of these aspects of conflict work are interlinked and these links will be acknowledged and facilitated through hyperlinks between recommended pathways.

- **Capability assessments:** These are a more in-depth series of formative self-assessment, questions based on key assumptions as to what makes for effective handling of conflict. They will have both a function of raising awareness of what it may take to handle conflict well and a basis for guidance toward particular developmental or capability building exercises. Usually the exercises or learning sequences will also have some form of summative assessment to provide users with further feedback on completion of the learning tasks and sequences.

- **Challenges problems and symptoms:** This section provides a way into using the site based on the challenge, problem or symptom related to conflict that is being experienced by the user. The user will be asked to select from a series of frequently asked questions or presenting problems in relation to conflict and their selection will suggest the use of specific practices or tools to apply, particular development exercises or study pathways to help them address their difficulty. These will include problems such as escalating conflict, impasse, non-communication, being bullied or attacked, communication or relationship breakdown, working with a disturber, misuse of power, anger or fearfulness, violence and so on. Different levels of guidance will be given ranging from tips and suggestions to try out, reading that may be of interest, or particular learning pathways and practices that may be of benefit that can be accessed both within and without the resource.

- **Conflict Gym**: This is the hub of the Conflict Dojo in which you will build the "muscle" needed to handle conflict effectively. It encourages a kind of

behavioural gymnastics and also addresses other building blocks of effective conflict work such as awareness and perception, attitude, beliefs, assumptions, and so on. These capabilities are presented as practices which, when mastered, tend to enhance the way people deal with conflict. Like any gymnasium there will be different practice "rooms" with exercise routines and reflective, processes dedicated to building up different clusters of muscles, so that when you find yourself in tricky conflict situations, you will have already built the strength and flexibility needed to meet the challenges posed. These practice rooms will address aspects such as enhancing awareness, understanding, skills, attitudes, strategies and so on. They include for example, practices focused on side-taking, working with accusations, double signals, escalation and de-escalation, role taking, and so on. Different tracks or formats will allow these capability expanding practices to be developed, either individually or as part of a peer learning group or expert lead formal class group.

- **Concepts and theory repository**: Many of the learning sequences will introduce new concepts in a variety of interesting ways using discussion forums, synchronous and asynchronous chat rooms, demonstrations, audio and video clips, etc. Many of these learning sequences and activities will be linked to this section – the repository. Here you will find glossaries and text based explanations of concepts, models, theory and strategies at varying levels of depth and connected by hyperlink to exercises (on learner activation) and to learning sequences at the level of depth and complexity appropriate to the learning programme or requested by the user. This will in turn be linked to

library and web-links for those who wish to pursue a more in-depth study of a particular topic.

- **Graded programmes:** The assumption here is that people will be at different developmental stages or readiness for different levels of conflictual complexity when they come to use the Conflict Dojo. It is also assumed that some people will desire a more programmatic approach to learning about conflict and developing their capability depending on their learning preferences and style.

The intention therefore is to structure the resources available on the website in to a series of graded programmes that facilitate the development of conflict capability. For example some of these will focus on developing awareness and understanding; some will provide a basic grounding in basic communication theory and practice while others will focus on more advanced and complex sets of competencies and strategies. Each programme will focus on a particular goal; will make explicit some of the key assumptions upon which it is based and will have both initial and final assessment processes to guide choices and provide feedback on learning.

It is also assumed that it may not be possible to learn some competencies in relation to conflict and Processwork through this medium and that these will become clearer once the Conflict Dojo is operational and the feedback mechanisms help us to evaluate it. The emphasis here will be to test some of

the limits of what the medium can offer though formal evaluation will eventually need to be undertaken in time to test the value of the resource.

- **Relationship and communication development:** Much of conflict work is about relationship but not all relationship work is about conflict. However, the assumption here is that if we do not have some understanding of what it means to be in relationship and the awareness, skills and attitudes needed to maintain or enhance good relations we will have difficulty when it comes to dealing with the complexities of relationship dynamics during conflict. Special attention is therefore given to relationship and communication here and will explore some basic assumptions of relationship; present activities that help us communicate more effectively and recommend strategies that help us deal with some of the more complex patterns and challenges of being in relationship and communicating.

- **Innerwork:** While it may come as a surprise to some, the success of a great deal of conflict work depends as much on the innerwork that the individual or the group do on themselves as it does on their abilities to communicate and relate. A wide range of innerwork processes and methods will be presented here which enhance individuals and groups ability to handle the complex conflicts which they encounter, whether internally or in relation to other individuals and groups. While these processes will also appear as part of various programmes and learning sequences on the site, they will be singled out here for special attention as generic processes that can assist the user to

prepare for, learn from or even eliminate the need for some kinds of conflict - especially when interpersonal or group work is difficult or not an option.

- **Conflict Analysis and inquiry:** While many of the learning sequences and activities are experiential in nature and entail exploration of feeling and sentient dimensions of the conflict, some analysis and action inquiry type of process is usually implicit or explicit. This section focuses on the different assumptions, theories of conflict and their accompanying ways of analysing, interpreting and making sense of the conflict at hand - more working on the conflict than in it so to speak. The way we understand and think about a conflict tends to shape our ways of "seeing" and interpreting what we see as reality or fact and its significance.

  Many people I work with are unaware that they are using mindsets and beliefs to make sense of and interpret reality or that these "lenses" colour their perception. These "mind-sets" we hold shape our own and others' behaviour, can restrict or limit our perception and so generate conflict, and often need to be explored before we can develop more optimal or less destructive ways of handling our conflicts. Space will afforded here to exploring different mindsets, interpretative frameworks/ theories of conflict and how we apply them in contention and conflict.

- **Peer learning communities - support at a distance:** The website will facilitate and encourage the use of resources by peer coaching, support groups, buddy systems, learning sets. It will be capable of hosting formal online class

groups as required, as well as offering synchronous and asynchronous discussion forums, chat rooms, wikis and other e-learning structures. It is expected that the Conflict Dojo will support the development of communities of practice such as programme, community or organisational groupings or link in to existing ones as appropriate.

The ability of the web resource to support such collaborative learning is seen as an important part of capability development and essential for those who like to learn in a social environment, which is now more possible at a distance thanks to advances in the technology. Guidance is provided (c.f. section on Learning Principles and Processes) on initiating, coordinating and facilitating peer learning communities in relation to use of Conflict Dojo resources.

- **Applications to context/ practice:** It is assumed that some people will have greater interest in the application of conflict work in some areas or contexts more than others. These might include interpersonal relations and communication, family work, community groups, teams and organisations, politics, peace building and so on. The database of resources on the site will be made available to these special interest groups in ways that make them easier to access while linking them to other relevant areas of practice when appropriate.

The intention here is to support the application of diverse concepts and strategies to particular fields of practice and to enrich it through interconnection with other areas and encourage cross-fertilisation of ideas and

practices. It is hoped that this will also lead to updating of practice contributions to the Conflictpedia wiki facility which will be part of the site. It will also be possible to browse and use the site resources simply on the basis of a tagged database for those who know the field and what they are looking for.

- **Strategies for working with conflict:** There are a wide variety of strategies available for working with conflict and I have trained in the use of many of these. Many of these will be used in preparing the various sections and learning activities of the Conflict Dojo. Here it is intended to provide an overview of the different strategies, their underpinning assumptions, theory and some of the key practices to which they have given rise. These will include, dialogue, restorative justice, alternative dispute resolution, appreciative inquiry, nonviolent communication, peace-building, human rights, diplomacy, economic development, arbitration, collaborative soliciting, integrated conflict management systems. etc. Each will provide links to the existing sites and communities of practice which specialise in those particular strategies. Worldwork overview and Processwork applications will be given particular attention here for the purposes of this pilot.

- **Online library/repository** – For the most part this will include (with permissions) published educational resources, articles and online conflict resources, online publications, bibliographies, book reviews, electronic publications, etc. It is expected that this library will be expanded by users in the course of time to provide a more comprehensive and annotated resource as

well as linking to numerous commercially available resources for further study as desired by users.

- **Web-links to existing open educational resources:** There are substantial resources available on the internet - both open source and commercial materials, which can support the development of conflict capability in its various forms – outstanding resources if you know how to access them. This part of the Conflict Dojo will provide annotated access to relevant sites, professional networking, communities of practice, etc. based on research which I have carried out over several years. This will make it easier to access available resources, in particular open educational resources, and it is expected that users will contribute to and expand this resource as more users engage with it from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

- **Conflictpedia** – wiki type resource on conflict to be compiled by site users. Along the lines of Wikipedia except focused on conflict work it is hoped to develop a wide ranging understanding of the field of conflict work as it is practiced, and advances in theoretical perspectives. While Wikipedia provides some useful coverage of conflict related issues which can be accessed from the site it does not currently offer the more extended and more in-depth coverage that can be provided here. While the emphasis here is primarily on the development of capability and applications to conflict it may indicate avenues for and links/ references to current and leading edge research in the field.

- **Conflict Clinic:** It is assumed that the Conflict Dojo will take some considerable time to evolve to its desired level of user-friendliness so some kind of online support will be needed. For example, assumptions are that a) not all aspects of conflict can be developed through this web based resource, b) that some issues regarding the use of the site have not been addressed in the design and programming of the learning processes, and c) that despite guidance given, users simply may not know how to access the resources they need. This kind of problem will be addressed in different ways – through feedback and refinement of the resource, as an on-line asynchronous help desk and in the form of a conflict clinic and a regular skype meeting to support online users, e.g. for an hour a week/ month as needed. (Additional expert led support in the form of conflict coaching, live online classes, online mediation etc. will be provided and charged for separately as required)

- **Emergency Room:** The emergency room will provide specific resources that will provide advice and guidance for times of crisis and scenarios where health and safety are paramount - a kind of first aid guide and emergency kit. These will include focus on containment and de-escalation strategies, suggestions for dealing with abuse, bullying, different kinds of violence, how to access local resources and support, etc. The intention here is to activate local support even though it may start as a non-local service. It is anticipated that different local communities and groups will provide local backup in highly conflicted areas or where domestic or community violence are significant issues. This may include telephone helplines run by local volunteers, support groups or community workers familiar with the context and use of the Conflict Dojo

resources and applications. In the longer term it is expected this resource will be used in conjunction with local practice groups, restorative circles, and or support or development agencies working in the field, many of which are already up and running.

- **Ethics and Values (issues of resource usage):** There are many different approaches to working with conflict and each has its underlying values and ethics which drive its vision and guide its use. Likewise different cultures hold different assumptions and stances toward conflict which shape the dominant way conflict is approached within that culture. Sometimes, these underpinning values and ethics are made explicit and sometimes they are less clear; sometimes, conflict arises out of these different values, approaches and cultural styles of communication. This part of the Conflict Dojo explores some of the issues and values related to major ways of working with conflict, cross cultural issues and, in particular, those concerning the issues and challenges posed by use of the Conflict Dojo in supporting problem-solving and building conflict capability. Conflict skills and strategies, as much as any other, can be used in inappropriate, unhelpful or naive ways and this section aims to create some discussion and consideration of the issues arising in relation to the use of Conflict Dojo resources and the values implicit in the definitions and practices related to working with conflict.

- **Collaborative spaces for social networking and communities of practice,** use of forums, chat-rooms, etc. This section is designed as an open-space for dialogue and collaboration between the different communities of practice and

proponents of diverse approaches to conflict. It will also explore the potential of communication technologies in promoting this dialogue. Many methods and strategies tend to operate in silos, are often competitive and often find it difficult to engage in meaningful dialogue. The opportunity for mutual learning, collaborative inquiry, and cross-fertilisation remains largely untapped as the field is rapidly evolving. This part of the Conflict Dojo – a kind of world of conflict café - seeks to promote such dialogue.

- **Site evaluation:** While it is not a separate section within the Conflict Dojo, feedback and evaluative mechanisms will be built in at all levels to support the on-going development of the resource as a whole and also of the individual elements within it. This is seen as an essential process to maintain quality of the resource and to enable it to evolve to meet the changing needs of existing users as well as the needs of new user populations and diverse cultures.

Section 4   Processwork on the web: Challenges and approach

> *"Process Work is a wide spectrum approach to working with human problems, based on awareness of signals and events occurring in the moment. Process workers attempt to follow inner experiences and outer situations. "Process-oriented" is the attitude that the solutions to problems can be found in the process, that is, the flow of events and signals."*
>
> - Arnold Mindell

This section will summarise the aspects of Processwork which are being developed in the part of the resource being developed for my final project. This will discuss the rationale for the focus on these aspects of Processwork and provide some examples of the materials developed in a paper-based format in the Appendices. It must be remembered that these are examples of working documents that will not appear in the form they appear here when offered in the operating online environment.

Enabling people to learn applications of Processwork to conflict through the use of technology is a major departure from how it is usually learned within the Processwork community and therefore presents many new challenges. So much of processwork practice exists in the awareness, wisdom and skills and metaskills of highly trained and experienced practitioners and so remains elusive despite the substantial number publications which are available. As a relative newcomer to Processwork, though not to conflict studies, my grasp of the approach and method, despite many years of study and practice feels limited by comparison.

The complexity of Processwork practice as demonstrated by senior practitioners seems, at first sight, beyond deconstructing, though this is what is needed to present it to new learners through the medium of learning technologies. Nonetheless the process of designing and developing the Conflict Dojo, in itself, contributes greatly to my learning of Processwork applications to conflict, even if the desired outcomes in terms of a functioning web resource are not, or even cannot be eventually or fully achieved. I questioned whether I knew enough to be able to represent or facilitate such learning for others. I was supported by PWI staff in the view that nobody else in the Processwork community was attempting it and that more experienced expertise and support would be available when needed.

Some are of the view that teaching Processwork on the web cannot be done and that may yet prove to be the case. However, the enhanced accessibility which a web based resource could provide Processwork, compared with the constraints of current methods of dissemination in terms of scale, could mean that many who could potentially benefit from applications of Processwork to conflict would now be able to do so in the near future. The attempt seems worthwhile even if daunting at this early stage of development. It is clear even at this stage, that many aspects and applications of Processwork to conflict will be amenable to learning through this medium and some not. Most likely, both online and face to face approaches will be blended in complementary ways.

I have long been of the view that Processwork is a comparatively advanced method of working with conflict, from a practitioner point of view. I believe if I can manage to come to grips with the challenges of learning Processwork applications to conflict

through a web-based medium, it would provide a solid platform for supporting the learning of less complex methods that will also be part of the completed design. The focus on Processwork would therefore present me at the outset with the most complex challenges from the point of view of learning design and e-learning technology.

Awareness as the starting point

The challenge at the outset was where to begin with such a large task – even just in relation to Processwork applications to conflict, never mind the many other approaches for which I have developed materials over the years. I decided to focus on awareness as Processwork, together with most other approaches to conflict, have in common a shared emphasis on awareness. That said, different methods emphasise different aspects of awareness depending on their assumptions and theory of conflict. Awareness is central to the Processwork paradigm; indeed Arnold Mindell suggests that it is awareness that facilitates progress and resolution of conflict. Ways of cultivating awareness, therefore, seemed like an appropriate starting place and I began by developing a series of exercises drawn from my own experiences of learning about awareness and being taught Processwork, as well as from published and workshop materials.

In an as-yet-to-be-formed, web-based environment, I was immediately confronted with the twin challenges of broadening attention to expand awareness and of addressing the awareness and insights which arose out of the use of such practices. In the initial stages, would I focus on the expansion of the person's capability to follow process or signals or on supporting the learner to integrate or process experiences which emerged out of their use? Would users have the patience to expand and widen

their attention or would they lose interest before appreciating the benefits? Would the emphasis on capability building take users too far away from their interest in addressing their conflicts? How could I strike an appropriate balance in the design of the learning experiences?

A Processwork capability building approach

Processwork offers quite a sophisticated framework for promoting awareness which draws upon and extends several other approaches ranging from meditation, gestalt, Jungian psychology, shamanism, Taoism, communication theory and neuro-linguistic programming to mention but a few. However, its approach to the cultivation and use of awareness in working with conflict is far from simple though it can appear beguilingly so in class presentations. The practical challenges of designing learning experiences around awareness for a web-based resource took me on a very steep learning curve over several months. While my own learning experiences were invaluable and informed what I was creating, the emerging learning designs were going to be quite different from those I had experienced in classes and seminars.

Part of the challenge was that Processwork is grounded in a community which has its roots in training therapists and conducting therapy, often lasting 5-7 years, and it is easy to lose sight of the complexity, assumptions, mindsets and tacit knowledge which underpin these practices as well as the time it takes to learn them. The challenge was how to deconstruct or unpack these complex skills and competencies without losing their potency or distorting or misrepresenting what they are about. Then the challenge becomes how to present these through the new web-based medium in a way that enables people who have not experienced Processwork training directly,

to learn them. The question I faced was how much Processwork did people have to know before they could apply these practices to conflict? Could they really be learned without in-depth training in Processwork? I realised the answer to question would have to await the realisation of a functional resource but I would have to proceed for the moment on the assumption that it could and explore how it could be achieved.

Problem focus - an alternative approach

Yet another approach which will be required as part of the design, is a problem-based method. It is envisaged that most people using the Conflict Dojo will know more about their own conflict problems than they do about Processwork and so that may be a better base from which to approach their learning. In this approach, the emphasis is more on the person and the challenges of dealing with conflicts that confront them than on Processwork. Processwork could enhance what they already do but, as a body of practice, it falls into the background as one of many methods that could be applied to help people solve their problems.

However people are very different, have different kinds of strengths and vulnerabilities and different levels of awareness when it comes to conflict or any other kinds of problems. Defining typical problems that people encounter when dealing with conflict could at best be a starting point, as problem definition is so dependent on the method or the way the person construes the world. Indeed, defining conflict as a problem is already an assumption and directs you toward a particular approach as opposed to assumptions which define conflict as an opportunity or an abnormality.

That aside, in the absence of a skilled practitioner to raise awareness or interpret, as occurs in a live face to face situation, a problem definition approach would need to establish in advance, implicit if not explicit assumptions, a shared language/ interpretative framework and flexible assessment tools to identify learning needs, when using a technological medium. Alternatively, one must try to develop these capabilities in the learner. In the completed version of the Conflict Dojo, there will need to be provision both for those who need an answer there and then to their conflict problem, but have not developed their perceptive and interpretative capability sufficiently, and for those who have. This will be reflected in different levels of the Programme section, keeping in mind that this is one of degree, and it also relates to the complexity of the Conflict problem they face.

These issues will be particularly relevant for learning about Processwork. The resource will need to establish certain assumptions about the state of readiness of the learner/ user. While Processwork generally does not differentiate explicitly between different levels of learner ability or readiness in their open conflict capability building courses, this approach will not work for an online resource except perhaps in an online class. Different levels will be needed in a web-based resource otherwise the resource may be experienced as too low or high level and thereby lose the attention of the user.

When creating Processwork learning experiences live in a workshop setting, the presence of the expert facilitator, practitioner or master brings a level of awareness, wisdom, insight and interpretative competence that can be mustered quickly, on an "as needed" basis, without this having to be made explicit or programmed in advance.

No such luxury is available in a web-based environment. So questions arise as to A) how much of this wisdom and competence is needed by the learner? B) whether is it possible to programme this expert practitioner wisdom and competence into the learning sequences and activities? C) whether it is possible to separate out different levels of this capability and, sequentially or in parallel, facilitate their development through the web based environment?

Out of these questions emerged the idea that different kinds of Guides would be needed that could be activated by the learner in relation to their perceived need or indeed curiosity about what a different way of looking at or approaching the conflict might entail. E.g. there will be a need for a guide who can just operate in a more prescriptive manner offering tips and solutions that might be useful to deal with typical problems. There will need to be a guide who will coach people to apply tried and tested problem-solving steps and formulas without going into the theory and assumptions behind them. Yet another kind of guide might take the learner through conflict analysis processes that would not necessarily have an experiential practice. Or a different type of guide might accompany the learner through an inquiry process where it is assumed the answers are unknown and where the learner is happy to engage in a self-development through conflict process or wants to develop a broader level of capability.

The choice of guide would be in the hands of the learner based on interest and motivation, although some goals would be embedded in particular learning sequences or Programmes. However, this was going to be difficult to provide in the pilot version as it required the existence of a database, hyperlinks and coherent approach

for each of the differing guide types which is a major piece of work and would only be possible when the Conflict Dojo is at a more advanced stage of development.

An alternative to the use of guides was used given current technical capability and the stage of development of web functionality. The idea is that a range of different Processwork tools as applied to conflict would be created in summary form and the user invited to choose one or more of these tools to apply to their own conflict stories. This approach is based on the assumption that many users will have a sufficient level of development to implement the tools as presented in summary form and additional guidance to concepts and practices can be provided through hyperlinks for those who need it. Rather than trying to define case studies in advance, which runs the risk of losing the motivation of the learner to address their own problems, each tool would have some guidance as to when the tool might be used to best advantage leaving the user to select the ones that best fit their situation. Appendix 3 shows some of the preparatory work done to develop this model of learning.

Multiple access points

When considering learning design, it became clear that different approaches would need to be integrated; neither problem-focus nor a Processwork capability building approach would work without the other. The Conflict Dojo was going to need multiple ways of accessing whatever material that would be developed for it and that it would need distinctive guides to highlight the type of learning processes which we were trying to activate. This insight led to in-depth discussions with Dr. Stephan Weibelzahl, Director of the National E-Learning Laboratories in Dublin, regarding the

learning experiences that I wished to create, based on my experiences of learning and teaching Processwork and several other methods to dealing with conflict.

Dr. Weibelzahl has developed and operates sophisticated monitoring methods for researching and evaluating e-learning live in computer/web-based environments. Dr. Weibelzahl was excited by the initial design of the Conflict Dojo and about testing it in action with a view to enhancing the learning experience and its effectiveness in achieving the desired capability. Ultimately, the resource will need in-depth laboratory environment evaluation of the extent to which the learning processes being used are achieving their intended results. It is intended that this will take place once sufficient of the resource is operational though while it is still in development.

I had discussions with several E-learning practitioners and experts, chief among whom were Professor Susannah Quinsee, Head of E-learning at City University London and Brian Mulligan, Head of E-learning at Sligo Technical College in Ireland and Elmar Jung, a software engineer, all of whom have supported, challenged and expanded my thinking. I also conducted extensive research regarding the types of learning activities that were possible and available using different web-based methodologies which are beyond enumerating for this contextual essay.

The task became one of defining learning processes and creating learning activities that would be capable of delivering the outcomes needed in the web-based environment and which would also achieve the transferability of these skills to live situations of conflict – transferability of learning has always been a major challenge for trainers and educators. With these and other challenges in mind I began to narrow

down the range of technology that would be suitable and began defining the functionality that would be required for the task.

Other values also influenced the choice of technology, namely the requirements of scalability, accessibility and ability to support interactive and group based activity as part of the resource. While there is a wide variety of education and training software available, many of those already available are commercial and cost a significant amount for users and providers to use them. The commitment to providing low cost access to the Conflict Dojo, the desire to create a resource which would be scalable for use on a global level in the longer term, and the need to ensure significant levels of learner control and interactivity, based on best learning and pedagogical best practice, together narrowed down the range of choices which would fit these combined criteria.

While consideration was given to the development of a customised platform and database to provide the required technological architecture and functionality for the Conflict Dojo, this option was dropped at an early stage because costs and timescale were prohibitive. Using open-source software seemed the obvious option and the search for suitable existing software eventually narrowed to LAMS and Moodle.

LAMS and Moodle are two major open-source platforms, already widely used in educational institutions, which meet most of the required database and technical requirements, could be integrated together and could be customised and enhanced by the addition of a variety of other open-source applications to support a range of enriched, multimedia learning processes. In this essay, and for the purposes of my

MACFOC project, I will focus more on the creation of learning sequences using LAMS as it better highlights the interplay between learning process and challenges.

Processwork and conflict: focus of content

While the formats and ways of creating engaging learning experiences online were a major part of the challenge. I also needed to explore what would be the most relevant and "learnable" skills and practices from Processwork that would form the core of the materials I would try to create for the project.

Processwork offers different ways of working with conflict. Broadly speaking -

1. You work on a conflict with someone else where you raise the conflict with the other person and use a range of skills and strategies to work it through. In this case you are both the facilitator of the conflict and a participant in it

2. You do personal work on yourself, often described as innerwork, in relation to the conflict for example, to prepare for an engagement with another with whom you are in conflict, working it through alone e.g. where the other cannot or will not engage, to learn and grow from it, relieve your suffering, explore options, burn wood, and so on.

3. You work on a conflict or relationship with someone while using a neutral third party as facilitator who may guide you or remind you to use a range of the skills and options available.

4. Working on conflict in a group process or in large group situations for example with a community group, a team or an organisation - usually with a facilitator though not necessarily so.

For the purposes of this final project, I focused primarily on numbers 1 and 2. which are aimed at developing individual capability in dealing with conflict. The training of third party and large group facilitators is beyond the scope of this project but it is conceivable that this resource may be of benefit in the early stages of their learning to be facilitators. I have placed considerable emphasis on the development of a range of "participant facilitator" (see Appendix 3) capabilities as it is assumed that the facilitator role is essential in working with conflict and this role more often than not has to be borne by the parties to the conflict in addition to their role as a party to it. So, many of the skills, metaskills and strategies required by the trained conflict facilitator are also needed by individuals working on their own relationship conflicts. These capabilities, of course, will be of value to them too when participating in facilitated sessions for working on conflict whether in relationship, group or community settings, though skill sets and the level of competence expected of the trained facilitator may differ.

Here my primary focus has been on developing the capability of the individual to work on their own conflict whether internal or interpersonal. The focus has been on the concepts, skills, metaskills and strategies for dealing with 2 party conflict and on various forms of innerwork which can be used to enhance understanding and capability though these will also be of benefit also when in other kinds of conflict. Aspects Processwork for which have been developing learning materials and activities for the purpose of this project include:

- Awareness – widening attention, perceptual positions, multiple stories, mindsets, channels,

- Core communication skills

- Problem focus: Tools + Problem definition approaches

- Capability focus – development of various Processwork practices

- Working on yourself alone - innerwork

- Relationship building and repair focus

- Participant facilitation related to one's own conflicts

- Basic strategies of Processwork regarding conflict

- Cultivating metaskills

This preparation has included the gathering, adapting and creation of theory, exercises and practice development formats from the range of teaching and published material from within the Processwork community, supported and enhanced by contributions from other paper based and electronic sources which I felt would be of benefit. Given that the resource will be a web-based electronic format it is difficult to give an impression here of what the content will look like in the dynamic operational environment in which it will eventually appear. However to give a flavour of some of the content I have included some working documents in the appendices as examples of some of the content that will be built into the online version. Remember these are working documents and the challenge will be to create dynamic interactive forms of learning supported by multimedia content and formats which I am unable to convey in this contextual essay. Many of these learning sequences have already been created and demonstrated as part of my final project presentation in the LAMS environment and I continue to experiment to improve the quality of these learning activities as well as creating new ones.

Appendix 1 and 2 give examples of the kind of learning activities/ guidance that will be offered to users working alone or with a helper. These examples tend to assume that a greater degree of support is needed than, for example, the format presented in Appendix 3 which is more focused on the application of Processwork tools to self-defined conflict problems and difficulties. Here, the assumption is that the user will be capable of applying the tools with minimum guidance but that they will be able to access the more in-depth guidance quickly through hyperlinks to resources such as that illustrated in Appendix 1 and 2 should they find they need more support.

Other forms of support with conflict problem applications will provide descriptions of typical problems that one encounters and will provide more prescriptive guidance for the user to address these problems in order to meet the needs of a different kind of user – perhaps one who does not feel as confident in choosing methods themselves as outlined in Appendix 3. The idea is to provide different ways of accessing the data base for different kinds of user with different kinds of need or at different stages of understanding of conflict or readiness to use the online resources provided.

The exploration of how best to create and present learning activities that explain and illustrate how Processwork tools and concepts can be applied to conflict is at the heart of the design and creation of the Online Conflict Dojo dream and would take a whole book on its own to convey even our experimentation to date. This is beyond the scope of this contextual essay but it is hoped that the working documents of materials included in the appendices give a small flavour of what has already been created as part of this project while recognising that it is not possible to experience them here as I hope you will eventually be able to do in the operational online environment.

Section 5 Design and testing of learning formats

> *"In many cases of "e-learning transformation," teaching and learning*
>
> *approaches have often simply been re-hosted, not re-defined"*
>
> -   Hannafin & Land, 1997

This section will outline the story and discuss the different options and learning processes used to support the development of conflict capability on the web. It will include initial findings from testing the learning design with small numbers of learners and identify challenges and recommendations for future development of the web resource.

Design of the resource, development of exercises and learning formats and the continuing inquiry into the potential of new (to me) and emerging e-learning technologies all continued in parallel and as time, personal resources and other work and family commitments permitted. It might have been easier if I had approached these in a more linear fashion from concept to design to implementation but the reality was much more fluid. There was considerable interdependence between advances in one area and its impact on my thinking and implementation in another area. Discoveries in technology and e-learning research opened new learning possibilities, my study of processwork and other conflict methods threw up learning and pedagogical challenges that made unforeseen demands on what would be required of the technology and both were influenced by the evolving dream and design of the Conflict Dojo.

Though the finished product will be an educational one, the making of it has certainly been a creative one. Numerous conversations with Processwork Institute staff, fellow students, colleagues, programming engineers, web designers, information technology experts, e-learning academics and researchers, e-learning managers and designers in higher education and potential users, all contributed to the cooking and the creative stew.

I wrote numerous documents containing versions of the resource, practice exercises, technological requirements, possible avenues for development at various times which were discarded, revised, rewritten in the process of distilling and refining the vision, ideas and plans that would eventually be implemented. At times, parts were created and implemented that had little planning or forethought but which felt intuitively right. So the story of the creation and evolution of Conflict Dojo was, and continues to be, a combination of the linear and non-linear, dreaming and pragmatism, planned action and fortuitous discovery, thoughtful consideration and opportunism. The following more linear presenting of the creation of some learning sequences belies the learning and creative processes that gave rise to them, or indeed, feedback on further iterations to come as the sequences go online.

Developing process awareness

The early sequences I designed focused on the development of awareness. I compiled some of the more common exercises typically used in Processwork in the form of a set of practices, which I wanted to enable people to develop. I gave these – practice development sequences (see Appendix 1 for examples) to some friends to try - some who had some knowledge and others who had a little knowledge of Processwork.

For those with no experience, the task proved extremely challenging while for those with some experience of Processwork or other methods it was less so. What I quickly realised was that in a web-based environment, I could not assume the level of competence around witnessing and signal tracking which appears to be assumed in the live setting, where early observation, feedback and intervention by a skilled practitioner were possible. I needed to start at a more basic level and went back to my gestalt and NLP training which are of course part of the roots of Processwork in any case. I began to design learning sequences on more basic awareness skills and practices.

I now had a more detailed vision of the learning processes, activities and structures I wanted to use and was confident that the web-based functionality needed to deliver them existed. However, I realised that testing learning sequences and activities, without having sufficient technical functionality, or the multi-media resource needed to enrich them, in place that would allow the complex cross referencing/ hyper-linking and without the online guides available to support learners, was going to be a bit meaningless. Being able to come to some meaningful conclusion about its effectiveness or otherwise within the scope of the pilot as planned was not going to be possible within the timeframe of my final project.

I was therefore left with a dilemma about how much testing I could really complete given that I had stated I hoped to do just this as part of the pilot for the MACFOC. I decided to press ahead and create as much of the resource as possible even if it could not be tested as planned. At least I could give a better sense of what was possible by

final project evaluation time and demonstrate the substantial progress which had been made. I would attempt to create meaningful learning activities and sequences that would demonstrate the potential of the tools provided, knowing that this would be vastly improved once hyperlinks and guides were in place.

Within these constraints I set about creating a set of exercises that could stand alone to develop process awareness and signal awareness in particular. Some examples of these are given in Appendix 2.

The multimedia dimension: Collaboration with Jeni Vine

In parallel with the creation of these initial learning sequences, Jeni Vine and I saw the potential value in linking our final projects to mutual advantage. Jeni, a social documentary maker of some considerable experience, was setting out to demonstrate how film could be used to support the development of Processwork capability. We had a number of discussions about how our projects might support each other without losing the integrity of either. As a multi-media educational resource the Conflict Dojo could provide a framework within which Jeni's creative film work could be contextualised and supported while her film sequences could provide a rich and dynamic visual material to enhance and support the learning processes which I was attempting to create. A resource that I would be unable to produce within the short timeframe of the MACFOC, nor did I have the media skills required.

The collaboration has contributed greatly to both our projects and mutually stretched our understanding of what is possible as well as of the challenges of using film sequences in the context of a web-based conflict capability building resource.

Continuing conversations and sharing of our learning and creations helped us to focus and align our development work and focus on specific aspects of Processwork practice and theory around which we would create learning activities and sequences. The collaboration compelled us to study how both the educational and the technical requirements of using film sequences to support of the learning of Processwork applications to conflict. These are too extensive to record here but are outlined in greater detail in Jeni's contextual essay and will be available to view as part of our final presentations.

In particular this collaboration helped me realise what a rich learning experience we could create in a web-based environment and the extraordinary learning processes new technology developments and use of film as a tool were making possible. For example, it helped us realise how use of visual and auditory material could be used to enhance awareness and signal awareness in ways that were less possible in the live workshop context. We could isolate different channels and experiment with the effect and impact of heightening awareness and amplifying specific channels or depriving the learner of other channels in a way that could not be done with the same ease in a workshop situation. In short, we could use the media to focus attention as well as to encourage development of awareness in different channels.

From a learning perspective, explorations on the use of film with Jeni helped both of us gain an understanding of a central issue in the learning of Processwork applications to conflict, namely, how to support the development of learners' capability to follow the process. Many of the learning sequences I had created early on entailed theory inputs, exercises, reflective practices and questions to direct attention. As the virtual

teacher, I had to trust that these learning sequences would give rise to experiences in the learner. However, without the feedback I would have in a live environment, I have no access to where the attention of the learner is, i.e. to what the actual sensory grounded signals, experiences and insights that are occurring in the learner are, where the edges are, and so on. So I have to trust that the learner has grasped the observation and discrimination capabilities suggested in the instructions and directions given in the learning sequences. Early testing helped me realise that this was not always the case and I would have to be clearer about my assumptions about the learner's existing ability and the support I would need to provide.

The introduction of film clips provided significant and valuable resources to assist the learner in learning how to follow sensory grounded process, tracking signals, picking up atmospheres, personal reactions, focusing on specific channels, amplifying and forbidding signals and so on. Now the learner had something to experience that did not just depend on what the learner created in response to the exercises and sequences, nor did it depend entirely on the capacity of the learner to self-observe and record their experiences which is a significant capability in itself. Now we could invite the learner to apply their observation and discrimination skills, learned in earlier learning sequences aimed at widening their attention, to a live or simulated experience and test their awareness and ability to track various processes by comparing it to those of peer learners, through learning forums and chat rooms, or with those of Processwork experts, through question and answer sequences or multiple choice assessment activities.

I have not gone into depth here regarding our exploration or describing the diverse ways we discovered we could use the film clips which Jeni has created as part of the learning resource, both because it is too extensive to record here and because Jeni has covered many aspects of our exploration in her own presentation and contextual essay which I thoroughly recommend you read. Therefore they do not need to be repeated here. However, this is not to minimise its importance as this exploration helped us address the most central challenge of how to help the learner to develop the capability to follow process at a distance and in an e-learning environment. The collaboration with Jeni has helped us make enormous strides in understanding and tackling key aspects of this fundamental challenge in developing Processwork capability as applied to conflict. Jeni will demonstrate some of these multi-media components at final project presentations.

Nor do I wish to discount or undervalue the experiences and learning which my initial exercises and introductions were capable of generating. These were still valuable but, relatively speaking, they assumed rather more observational skill, awareness, ability to discriminate and learn from experiences than I felt I could assume from people with little or no experience of Processwork or other such awareness based methods. I felt we needed to build more of this capability first and in this regard the film clips and their contextualisation within a learning framework are invaluable. As my exploration of the technologies available progressed, I discovered that learners would be able to easily use web-cam and audio record facilities to make and store recordings of themselves and their conflict interactions in order to study them and apply the enhanced attention and discrimination capabilities developed through use of these

film clips. So the challenge became - how could we pull all these amazing possibilities together and make them operational and accessible online?

Discovering LAMS

Around this time also, I discovered the open-source, learning technology resource called LAMS, short for Learning Activity Management System, and began to explore how it could be used for the Conflict Dojo. LAMS was to provide me not only with a ready-made, open-source data base system but also with much of the functionality I needed to stage significant parts of the Conflict Dojo on the web. It also took me to the cutting edge of E-learning Technology and the embedding of pedagogical and learning principles within learning activities. In their own words -

> "LAMS is a revolutionary new tool for designing, managing and delivering online collaborative learning activities. It provides teachers with a highly intuitive visual authoring environment for creating sequences of learning activities. These activities can include a range of individual tasks, small group work and whole class activities based on both content and collaboration."

> http://www.lamsinternational.com/

Many of the developments in E-Learning adopt a teacher-focused rather than student-focused perspective in the process of translating teaching practices into new forms. They involve designing and presenting materials using new technology rather than utilizing knowledge of how students' experience learning through the technologies. (Boud and Prosser 2002) In many cases of "e-learning transformation," teaching and learning approaches have often simply been re-hosted, not re-defined (Hannafin &

Land, 1997). The creation and development of LAMS set out to address these and other shortcomings in E-learning process.

The design of learning technology can be used to personalize learning or depersonalize it.   E-learning processes, if they are going to be successful in enabling the learning of Processwork applications to conflict are going to need to maximise the use of peoples' personal and collective experience and not just be content or technology driven. Like the experience of learning in a class or seminar, the ability to unfold the richness of their experience would be the key to their learning. LAMS seems like it has the potential to support such learning but research on how people learn in a web-based e-learning environment is still, relatively speaking, in its infancy.

The LAMS Activity Planner is a resource in LAMS which provides a bank of learning designs or templates which have sound learning and pedagogical principles built in to them.   However, the learning sequences available at present are predominantly for use with young people at second level. This meant that I needed to customise the learning designs and use of the tools for particular audiences or groups of user – young, old, commercial, community, managers, etc.   It reaffirmed yet again, the need to have an underlying resource on a database which could be used in a wide variety of different ways. In effect, it meant that I was going to have to build on the existing templates bank and create new types of learning sequences and activities to support the learning of Processwork applications to conflict.

My earlier learning sequences on the development of "practices" now had to be rewritten and began to take on a more dynamic form as I learned about LAMS and

became more competent at designing learning sequences using the tools available within it. This was also the first time that I was able to write and compose learning sequences in the equivalent of a web-based environment albeit in one based on my own computer, which I had constructed in part as a server such as one might access on the web. I was now able to create and experiment with a web-based resource that I could test out locally with friends and acquaintances. I was informed that it would be easy to transfer to and host on my Breakthrough web site in time but that it was best to play with the environment off-line to begin with. While it did not have the full functionality of the eventual resource, the testing of the learning sequences became more meaningful.

Re-designing LAMS templates and activities in this new format lead to new learning about the creation of learning sequences and also helped me realise the kind of assumptions I was implicitly making about my learners, their interests and the level and capability I was expecting of them. This took place in parallel with the explorations of how to use multimedia resources and film clips created by Jeni Vine as outlined above. The experience was as humbling as it was informative and gave me a strong reminder of the need to simplify and contain the learning activities if not the learning that might arise from them. It also helped me realise the value of diversity in the learning process and the importance of the multi-media resource as a way of creating more engaging learning activities to sustain learner motivation and interest.

Creating specific learning activities and sequences

It is difficult to convey the impact of working through a learning sequence in LAMS in this contextual essay so, to a significant extent, one needs to experience these in action. Several of these will be available to test on-line prior to final exams and will be demonstrated in my presentation. At this point they are only accessible on my personal computer and home network. I continue to develop and test these formats, hopefully improving as we go. The testing is informal at this point and far from the rigorous testing that will eventually be required but nonetheless sufficient for a process of continual improvement to be maintained.

Section 6   Development of the Conflict Dojo – summary of progress so far and some reflections.

> *"Begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in."*
> – Alan Alda

Here I will summarise the work that has been completed by submission date in developing the Conflict Dojo, what has been learned from carrying out this work and what conclusions can be drawn from this project, both for the design and creation of web-based resources for developing conflict capability and in relation to learning Processwork applications through use of a web-based resource.

The following is a summary of what has been achieved to date.

- Design of Conflict Dojo as outlined above in linear form.

- Prezi presentation which outlines the different components of the Conflict Dojo and what/how these will contribute to the conflict capability building resource.

- Research as to the most suitable technological platforms, architecture and applications which are suitable for enabling self-directed and collaborative learning and the development of conflict capability. This includes consultations with a wide range of professionals practicing and researching in the field, with those who support e-learning in different settings and with software and web designers to discuss the most suitable options, challenges and methods for developing the resource.

- Development of a range of specific learning sequences in a variety of different forms to support the learning of specific Processwork, concepts and practices and their application to conflict, such as sequences on awareness, learning activities on the development of the practices of side-taking, working with accusations, innerwork, role-taking, and others are currently being developed.

- Particular attention has been given to the development of learning sequences and activities in LAMS because of the advantages accruing from using that system. Some of the learning sequences designed for other forms of access were re-written to be accessible within the LAMS format

- Small scale action-research to test the various forms of exercises and learning sequences and use of feedback to understand the challenges of distance learning formats and to improve learning designs.

- Research into what is currently available by way of open educational resources for conflict capability building. I have gathered together a database of a wide variety of open educational resources that can be made freely available through the Conflict Dojo for the development of conflict capability using a variety of different approaches.

- Accumulation of a wide range of urls. to enable quick access to relevant sources and resources on the web which reflect a variety of approaches to conflict capability building and application of those methods within their communities of practice. This is done with a view to encouraging awareness and cross fertilisation between approaches and practices in conflict capability building.

- Writing of numerous articles, Powerpoint presentations and learning resources to be made available as part of the conflict capability building repository

which will be available on the database and accessible through a variety of pathways as per Conflict Dojo design

- Establishment of basic online database and technical architecture to enable access to learning resources and repository. (This is only partially developed and not available for public access as yet)

- Samples of film clips and illustrations of how they can be used to support learning of specific Processwork applications to conflict. This is elaborated on further in Jeni Vine's contextual essay and presentation for the MACFOC.

- Podcast recordings which provide audio backup for written exercises, theory input on particular concepts and practices, and audio recordings of conflict dialogue for analysis.

- Animated dialogues to illustrate particular types of constructive and problematic conflict dynamics and interactions. (currently being developed)

- This contextual essay providing an overview of the design and highlighting of some of the key issues and challenges relating to the design and development of the Conflict Dojo to date.

- Annotated bibliography of published resources on Processwork and other applications to conflict including similar hard copy resources featuring other approaches to developing conflict capability

- Applications for funding to develop the Conflict Dojo on the basis of national social entrepreneur competition sponsored by a major philanthropic funder. Regrettably, my application was not successful but I received positive feedback on the project. I am now in the process of preparing a second application to another philanthropic funder of technology and education projects and hope I will be more successful this time as it is not a competition.

What conclusions can be drawn at this stage of development? Few perhaps - about its efficacy in developing conflict capability, given that the web based environment is not sufficiently developed to test it. However, the main learning has been through, and about, the creative process which focused on the design of learning sequences to develop conflict capability, research and experimentation with E-learning technology, creation of multi-media resources and associated learning processes, and how Processwork tools can be used to deal with conflict problems in the web-based environment.

One of the limitations of this report is the lack of detail it provides about the creation and experimentation with different learning sequences, multimedia formats, and technological methods. Though this detailed documentation may have added to the legacy of the project for the Processwork community, it would have taken a vast amount of time given the scale of the project and the requirements of this essay.

However, this limitation serves to remind me yet again of one of the more fundamental, but as yet unarticulated, pedagogical and learning principles that underpin the creation of this resource. I.e. the resource is crucially about enabling people to "learn to learn" about conflict and how to engage in it in a way that benefits all parties to it. The Conflict Dojo is not just, or even primarily, about prescribing a set of tips, solutions, behaviours, ways of thinking about conflict that have been proved to work, though it will suggest and recommend many these as part of the resource.

I take the view that there is little value in just preparing a cookbook of recipes for conflict success. The ability to deal with conflict depends on participants' awareness and what they do emotionally, mentally and behaviourally, how they process and interpret their experiences and how they learn and adapt in the moment. It depends on their ability to reflect and become aware in the midst of action (conflict) and to act in the midst of unfolding awareness and reflection. The Conflict Dojo is therefore ultimately aimed at developing peoples' capability to study and learn about conflict for themselves and to apply this awareness and learning in the moment, as well as pre and post conflict. Learning-to-learn how to conflict in a way that adds value to all is therefore the higher-order capability which the Conflict Dojo aims to develop. The aim is to develop autonomy and interdependence in processing awareness and generating enlightened action rather than dependence on a resource accessible though it may be.

To date I have probably spent insufficient time focussing on actual problems as distinct from the development of Processwork practices and their application to conflict. To some extent, I have addressed this by focusing on an element I have entitled The Rough Guide which is a brief summary of the Processwork tools together with guidance on where it is best used. The advantage being that it provides swift guidance to address conflict problems but assumes a level of capability that some may not possess.

It has become increasingly clear that the ability of the resource to help people address the problems they face will the key factor which will determine the value of the Conflict Dojo. I realise that I need to focus more on the different types of problems

that users are likely to encounter as many users will engage with the resource in the first instance through this access point. As Lesli Mones, my project supervisor, reminded me it is the problems of dealing with conflict that this resource is ultimately about and not the teaching of Processwork. I lost track of this a little and now need to refocus my efforts on helping non-processworkers to gain the benefits of the Processwork toolkit rather than prioritising the development of Processwork capability on which I had been concentrating.

In hindsight, I would also have focused on the technology much earlier than I did had I realised that it would make such a difference to the approach I would take to creating learning experiences. In the early stages, I decided, for the purposes of the Conflict Dojo, that it would be helpful if I viewed Processwork as essentially a set of practices informed by a conceptual framework, which needed to be developed and applied to conflict. I therefore focused more on the development of practices than on the problems which they were meant to address. I assumed that the way to develop these practices was going to be somewhat similar to how I had done it in a self-help book The Personal Management Handbook (Sphere 1988) which I had co-authored.

However, as I learned more about the technology and what could be achieved by using it, I began to understand the meaning of the early criticism of E-learning quoted above, which still appear to be substantially true today.

> *Many of the developments in E-Learing adopt a teacher-focused rather than student-focused perspective in the process of translating teaching practices into new forms. They involve designing and presenting materials using new technology rather than utilizing knowledge of how students' experience*

learning through the technologies. (Boud and Prosser 2002) In many cases of

"e-learning transformation," teaching and learning approaches have often

simply been re-hosted, not re-defined (Hannafin & Land, 1997).

I belatedly realised I was engaged in a process of "re-definition" and not just simply "re-hosting". This entailed a major shift in the way I thought about what I was doing. It challenged me to be truly creative and not just to re-host or reproduce what I had learned about Processwork in a different format. I had to become more learner focused and try and understand what the experience of the learner might be like when using a web based environment before ever being able to test it in action. On the upside, I got lots of practice in role switching, and dreaming into different roles and reactions in order to deepen my sense of the learner experience and this has become a key part of my process of creating the learning experiences.

As I have begun to consider what the learner experience in a web-based environment would be like, I realise that I can use concepts from Processwork to inform the learning structure of sequences that I create and not just their content. For example, the use of structural analysis, paying attention to primary and secondary processes, where the edges are or are likely to be, and helping the learner to stay focused on these edges by using different teaching and learning devices available in my expanding technological repertoire. This realisation is particularly helpful when approaching from the problem-based focus but this realisation has come toward the end of the pilot to make a substantial contribution to what has been created to date.

Section 7   Contributions to the field and limitations

> "*It is possible to conceive conflict as not necessarily a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities, but a normal process by which socially valuable differences register themselves for the enrichment of all concerned*".
> - Mary Parker Follett

Here I summarise my learning from the design and development of the Conflict Dojo, and how it might contribute to the development of online resources for helping people to enhance their understanding of conflict, address their conflict problems and build their capability in dealing with conflict, with particular reference to making Processwork skills and concepts widely available to non-processworkers.

Since the Conflict Dojo is not fully operational yet, it is only possible to speak of the potential contribution to the field. As more of the content and the interlinking of the different parts of the design become enabled and accessible on the web, it will become more possible to get a better sense of its contribution to the field and to the learning of applications of Processwork in particular.

At present, learning of Processwork applications to conflict occurs mainly in the context of experiential seminars, training workshops, one to one sessions and Worldwork events whether in communities, organisations or open forums facilitated by trained facilitators. While there are increasing numbers of trained facilitators who have the expertise and are actively engaged in developing conflict capabilities in such environments, the numbers, though growing, are still relatively small. The numbers of the public who are able to access Processwork conflict capability training is therefore limited at present. The Conflict Dojo has the potential to reach far greater

numbers of practitioners and individuals in a wide range of development and conflict related scenarios, professions, and learning environments who will benefit from the resource. Given that Processwork applications will be a significant part of the Conflict Dojo, it will be able to introduce it to a great number who might not otherwise be able to access this approach to working with conflict. Direct benefit to Processwork may accrue as some will wish to further their studies in the various Processwork institutes and through using referenced literature and resources.

The Conflict Dojo can help widen access as current Processwork conflict capability building is the relatively localised and expensive for these workshops and training opportunities, which often means that many who might benefit greatly from learning such concepts, practices and metaskills, find it almost impossible to attend. And one-off workshops will not suffice to develop the kinds of capabilities Processwork can offer in relation to dealing with conflict. Applications of Processwork to conflict take time to learn, perhaps more so than most other methods of working with conflict as reflected in the complexity of the method and the time it takes to train practitioners. It is expected that the resource will be available at a far lower, minimal cost or free basis to those new to those grappling with conflict but may also help attract a wider audience for existing and more advanced Processwork learning opportunities.

The Conflict Dojo, when operational and assuming it becomes an open educational resource, as I hope, will be available as a resource and aid to those developing their conflict capability within the Processwork community. The resource will create easier access to Processwork tools for conflict work for newcomers to Processwork, for those in the early stages of studying such methods and for those who may just

want to extend their existing repertoire. It will also provide easy access to concepts, methods and practices from other approaches to conflict which will compliment and contextualise the Processwork contribution in this area – an unmet need which has become so apparent to me within the community, even among those who are studying conflict facilitation in depth within this programme.

The Conflict Dojo resource also shares benefits with many other E-learning formats in that it can be delivered in a manner and in a timely fashion to suit the learner and at a cost which is more bearable, perhaps minimal, if development funding can be generated as I expect. Increasingly organisations are looking for good quality e-learning resources for their employees that can be accessed at workers desk, at flexible times and using self-directed and group based formats. While the initial focus is self-directed, individualised learning, the Conflict Dojo will also be capable of delivering blended forms of learning, including expert led, facilitated workshops at a distance that offer many of the benefits of the interactive experiential workshops and seminars with large numbers of participants. Travel costs, geography, and perhaps eventually, language will no longer pose barriers to those who seek these development opportunities.

Scalability of the Conflict Dojo resource is probably one of its major assets. The numbers of people who can benefit from this resource will not be limited by the availability of experts and trainers. The expertise and wisdom of such trainers will be embedded in the form and quality of the materials, activities and support systems articulated within the design of the resource and the learning sequences. The potential impact of the Conflict Dojo, which can be accessed from anywhere in the world by

thousands of people at a given time, will provide access to Processwork applications to conflict on a scale beyond what is possible given present levels of resource and expertise.

Of course not all potential users will be capable or motivated enough to use these resources in a self-directed fashion or perhaps even as part of a self-directed peer-learning group. Where needed, it will be possible to provide varying levels of online support or provide online classes to help people make best use of the resource. Though this would incur varying degrees of cost, it would still be vastly more economical way of supporting learning and development of such capability.

Learning from the project

In the light of experience would I do it again? The answer is a clear yes but differently - hindsight is wisdom, I guess. While I enjoyed the dreaming and the creative phase of the design – little did I realise what a difficult challenge I was setting myself, arising out of the complexity of the vision I set out. I created a broad vision of a web-based resource that I believed would be comprehensive, user friendly and accessible. The responses I got to the design were highly encouraging and appreciative and helped refine and add some aspects that I had not initially considered while I let go of others. It was clear to me from the outset that I would not be able to complete such a large project in the timescale so I chose to focus on part of it, i.e. on the Processwork aspects. Even this was to prove far too onerous and I had to scale back my ambitions even farther.

In retrospect, I had a significant degree of naiveté in estimating what I could achieve within the timeframe of the project.   The challenges of understanding what needed to be learned, creating learning materials and resources, adapting them for online learning, identifying appropriate technology, learning to use that technology for design purposes, creating multimedia resources to support the learning, testing out the learning activities and sequences and arranging to have them hosted on the web was simply far greater than I had ever envisaged at the outset. Perhaps I should have taken the advice of my project supervisor - that my project was done and all I needed to do was write it up - when I had completed the design stage. I did not, and as a result took on rather more than I could deliver. This may become one of the most important learnings of the project. However, I don't want to discount the dreaming. Perhaps, without this naiveté, I might not even have progressed this far in what I believe is still a worthwhile endeavour. As quoted earlier at the beginning of Section 2, I have a soft spot for Cinderella's Fairy Godmother!

> *"..The world is full of zanies and fools*
> *who don't believe in sensible rules.*
> *They don't believe what sensible people say.*
> *It's because those daffy dewey-eyed dopes*
> *Keep building up their dewey-eyed hopes,*
> *Impossible things keep happening every day."*

Nonetheless, I am disappointed that I was unable to make as much progress in creating an operating resource on the web as I would have liked. While I was focused on and making some considerable progress with the creation of learning materials and activities and collaborating in the creation of some multimedia resources with Jeni Vine, it took far more time than I had anticipated. The more I understood Processwork applications to conflict the more challenging the task of portraying them in a lively engaging format on the web seemed to become. They were too long, too

short, too flat – my inner critic had a field day! However, as I struggled with designs that were incomplete or not of sufficient quality, I began to gain a better understanding of what was needed and how to do it.

Perhaps this is just what anybody creating online learning activities will need to go through if they are to produce quality learning experiences. It may also explain why there are so few of them available as it just seemed to eat up enormous amounts of time. The alternative was to hire professionals more familiar with the e-learning methodology to work alongside me but this was not an option because of cost though I suspect I would not have learned as much. However for those who have the option and can afford it, it is clearly the way to go.

The creation of customised multi-media resources is a huge task, requiring considerable time, diverse skills and is likely to be very costly, if my experiences of the amount of work involved with Jeni Vine are anything to go by. My contributions were relatively small and on the technology and pedagogical side but the collaboration gave me an insight into the complexity of creating such a resource and of its centrality in the development of the capability we wished to develop. In retrospect I might have made more use of available multi-media creations and set these in the context of learning sequences and activities, but for the purposes of learning how to do it, being involved in creating one from scratch has been an invaluable learning experience. I am left in no doubt that this is a costly business but I have gained some understanding from the collaboration as to this cost might be minimised. It has also underlined for me the need for high quality material and learning sequences to keep the learned engaged.

I underestimated how complex my design was in terms of technical functionality. It was a bit of a chicken and egg situation – I was not sufficiently in command of what was possible in using the technology and did not have enough of the technological environment established to make full use of what I did know in the early stages while I was developing my understanding of the concepts and practices underpinning the capability I wished to develop. Ultimately my lack of expertise with the technology and my failure to appreciate the technical requirements of LAMS, in terms of server requirements, prevented me from being able to credibly demonstrate the extent of what I had achieved through the design and development of the Conflict Dojo to date in a way that I would have liked. In hindsight, I would have made better progress if I had prioritised understanding the technology earlier and would recommend this to anyone else considering the development of Processwork on the web.

When I did eventually settle on the LAMS technology, and while it offered to provide much of the functionality I needed, it took considerable time to learn how to operate the system, appreciate the potential it offered and design learning sequences and activities within that environment. While I have become reasonable competent at operating the authoring technology, I believe I have still a long way to go before I can produce the dynamic learning experiences which I know are possible using this resource. The learning continues and there are many more technical possibilities which I have yet to utilise, not the least of which is its social learning and networking capability. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of choosing and becoming competent in use of such teaching and learning technologies from the outset as it

fundamentally changed the way I designed learning experiences and makes testing far easier once online.

A recurring worry I have is that I am not a "real processworker" and that I will in some way corrupt the methods, represent them either partially or inadequately in the course of developing the online resource. When developing learning materials, I often find I am only capable of helping learners focus on one part of Processwork capability at a time, exploring how they can use that particular concept, tool or practice to improve the way they deal with conflict. I worried that the individuals who learn may only have a limited part of the Processwork repertoire/ toolkit and that they may be disappointed that the particular tools and how they apply them may not benefit them in the way they need or I would like. I found this inhibiting and realised I had become far too critical of myself and what I was producing to the point that I was more focused on getting the Processwork "right" than on the conflict problems I was seeking to address.

Eventually I had to let go, risk getting it "wrong" and be partial in terms of the picture of Processwork applications I was giving. I had to reassure myself that they will eventually figure out how to get what they need even if I cannot provide enough guidance. My focus is again more on what will add value to those who are using the resource - does it help them to address their conflicts in a better way, even a little? To that extent I have become far less ambitious and somewhat humbler in my aspirations for the resource. This has made the complex simple and less burdensome in a way I had not expected and I feel a considerable sense of relief as a result. In retrospect, I

might have made far more use of the expert help that was available as I worked on various designs.

A far wider testing and evaluation of the Conflict Dojo lies ahead as it becomes sufficiently developed to test online. A web-based survey of student perceptions of barriers to online learning conducted by Muilenberg and Berge (quoted in Tyler 2006) reported that the following 8 factors, out of a total of 43, were considered the most significant barriers to eLearning and affected attrition:

1. Technical problems
2. Cost of and access to the Internet
3. Time and support for studies
4. Personal motivation
5. Technical skills
6. Academic skills
7. Social interactions
8. Administrative/instructor

I have only begun to think about these, though my own limited experiences of developing this resource has included learning the hard way about some of these challenges. Clearly, these highlight significant issues which need to be addressed in considering how the resource is accessed regardless of the quality of the design, development and delivery of the resource which will be my primary concern for some time to come.

Notwithstanding the limitations outlined above there seems significant evidence to suggest that E-learning significantly reduces learning time, increases knowledge retention, and makes updating of knowledge and advances in practice far easier

(Kapp).   I remain convinced, despite the challenges, that the Conflict Dojo can make

a valuable contribution to developing conflict capability a la Processwork and look

forward to being able to demonstrating this with a fully operational online resource.

Section 8   References, resources and acknowledgements

"This vision (of transformation) must eventually succeed, because self-awareness, group awareness, and processing conflict are much more thrilling than war and far more creative than peace."

- Arnold Mindell

Here I list the main references and web-based resources which have informed and been used in the development of the Conflict Dojo including those who have contributed to and assisted in its creation.

Before doing so, I need to acknowledge and appreciate the wonderful teachers and other people who have supported my learning and growing capability in Processwork and E-learning. To Tom Lane, Elmar Jung, Susannah Quinsee, Stephen Weibelzahl and Brian Mulligan who have supported and guided my explorations and use of E-learning technologies, I am indebted to you for your assistance. To fellow students on MACFOC, too many to mention by name, but especially my peer group Rho, Zed and Corinna, thank you for your patience and support. My deep gratitude too, to MACFOC teachers one and all who taught me so much about Processwork practice as applied to conflict, but especially for those metaskills I did not even realise I was being taught until they began to be appreciated by others in my work and relationships.   To Julie Diamond and Stephen Schuitevoerder for your extraordinary ability to deconstruct and illuminate Processwork practices, which has been of particular value to me in developing the Conflict Dojo, I am indebted to you.   To my Study committee, Gary Reiss, Emetchi, and Stephen Schuitevoerder, whose diverse

styles have contained, guided, cooked and stretched me throughout the program, while at the same time supporting me in taking up challenges right at the edge of my capabilities and desire to strengthen my Processwork practice, I feel privileged to have travelled this journey in your gracious company.   To Lesli Mones, my final project supervisor, for your appreciation, encouragement and belief in the project, even though the final destination and realisation of the project is still some way off. And finally, to Arnold Mindell, who has inspired me to regularly travel half way round the world for the past three years to come to this outstanding MACFOC program; whose teaching and facilitation alongside Amy have enabled me to explore the field of conflict, in the words of Marcel Proust, "with new eyes", and on whose work and publications I have relied so much for my own learning and in the creation of this Conflict Dojo pilot. To all, thank you. I am deeply grateful.

To you dear reader, I can only hope that what I have shared here excites you about the potential of online learning for Processwork conflict capability building and illuminated some of the challenges you may encounter. Any part of this document may be used for non-commercial educational purposes if appropriately attributed and with written permission of the author. Thank you for reading and I welcome contact from anyone who may have further interest in the project.

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Side-Taking

> *"The quality of our lives depends not on whether or not we have conflicts, but on how we respond to them."*
> – Tom Crum

Description of practice

One of the core skills in working with conflict is the ability to take sides. This means being aware of the different sides in the conflict, noticing which side we attached to or identified with and being able to awarely and fluidly switch sides in order to fully understand, represent and facilitate dialogue between them.

Relevance - rationale for side-taking

People in conflict often take up positions or stances on an issue or problem e.g. this is my view, what I think, what I feel or want. These positions are part of the conflict process and often momentary or temporary but they can also become polarised or stuck in opposition. Conflict reaches an impasse or becomes intractable when people get stuck in positions. This practice helps people regain fluidity (the ability to represent all positions) that increases awareness, mutual understanding and progresses the conflict process in a constructive manner.

Most of us take sides during a conflict – usually our own – and we tend to get polarised and stuck on our own side, have difficulty appreciating or taking the opposing viewpoint or viewing the conflict from a neutral position. Being able to move fluidly between 1st. position (own side) 2nd position (opposing side) and 3rd position (neutral observer perspective) greatly enhances the likelihood of a positive or constructive outcome in the process of conflict. The attitudes or <u>meta-skills</u> with which one takes these positions are also critically important and will be addressed elsewhere XXXX.

Learning outcomes
  ➢ Enhanced awareness and deeper understanding of opposing perspectives
  ➢ Appreciation of the challenges and benefits of taking the neutral position
  ➢ Ability to notice unintentional switching and to benefit from intentional and fluid switching between sides or positions.

Practice exercise - make some notes as you complete each part of the exercise

** press here for audio version of exercise
*** press here for video demonstration of exercise

1. Choose a conflict that you are having with another person
2. Take your own side (position 1) and express it as fully as you can as if you were speaking to the other side. Continue until you have said all that you feel like saying from your side. You may get to a point where you feel uncomfortable in Position 1 or begin to judge yourself there in which case you are already moving out of Position 1. (Notice the judge or critical voice but do not go into it for now we will come back to it later. It may help to continue from this inner judgemental voice for a moment and see if you recognise it or where it is coming from e.g. who might judge you so?). Then go back to position 1 and continue to stand for it until you feel you have fully represented it.
3. Now take the other side (position 2) and imagine you are speaking for that side – respond to position 1 and present their side of the conflict. It is important that you notice when you are no longer taking position 2. i.e. when/ if you <u>switch sides</u> unawarely. You may notice you are being critical or judgemental of position 2 – see if you recognise who might be making such a judgement – is it position 1 or another voice perhaps an imagined observer or figure from your past or present? If it is Position 1, you may not have represented your own side sufficiently, so continue Position 1 until you feel complete and have said all you need to say. Then return to position 2 again and watch for switching until you are able to represent position 2 fully
4. Now allow the dialogue to unfold interactively between sides 1 & 2 switching sides as needed to respond, advocate or inquire all the while deepening the feeling for and insight into both sides until this feels complete, reach a temporary resolution (common ground or agreement), you begin to feel neutral or hit an impasse (conversation recycles and repeats itself.
5. If an impasse - step back from these positions so to speak, or if you are already feeling neutral, speak from the neutral observer (3rd position) and raise awareness of this perspective of the nature of the dynamic between positions 1 and 2, the relationship between them, the nature of their one-sidedness, their common ground, differences, possibilities and so on.
6. Now return to positions 1 and 2 and explore how the awareness generated from the neutral or opposing positions impacts or opens possibilities that could benefit these positions or change the dynamic between them for the better.
7. Having explored positions 1,2,3, in this manner what insights have been gained or learning emerged that changed you or could assist you in having a better conversation with the other party.

Reflective questions

> ➢ Which side did you find most challenging to occupy and represent?
> ➢ What did you notice/ what happened when you tried to represent each position?
> ➢ Did you notice a tendency to switch or did you switch positions without intending to do so?
> ➢ What was it about the position that made it difficult for you to represent it?
> ➢ What would have made it easier for you to occupy or represent the position that was more challenging for you?
> ➢ What did you learn about your own sense of identity and what disturbs it or triggers you?
> ➢ How would you describe the energy of each position?
> ➢ Did you gain insight into the positive energy and intentions of the other party of the other party?
> ➢ What helped you reach and maintain a neutral position?
> ➢ What changed as a result of the exercise – in yourself or in your experience of relatedness to the other party?
> ➢ What are the key points you need to remember make your conflicts more constructive?

Action-inquiry

Make a plan about how you would use these insights and what you will do differently to achieve a better outcome in your future interactions in light of this learning. Implement and test these plans, monitor and see what works and adapt as needed.

Tips and comments

> ➢ **Different people find different positions easier than others – all are needed.**
> Without going into explanations for it, some people seem more able to adopt Position 1 with ease while others appear to be able to take the side of others (Position 2) more easily than they can take their own side (Position 1). Others seem to find it easier to take the neutral observer (position 3) than to take sides (Positions 1 and 2). Benefits accrue from all three positions and all three are necessary to create sustainable outcomes when working with conflict.

> ➢ **It is more difficult to take the other side until you first represent the one you are most identified with fully.**
> The challenge here is to be able to fully take and communicate one's own side, to be able to identify with, experience and represent the other side, e.g. in a way that communicates the experience and perspective of that side - what is right and valuable about it and what its needs and interests are.

> ➢ **Being neutral for long periods is almost impossible.**

It is difficult to be neutral for long, especially when you are involved in the conflict – it takes practice. The challenge is to be able to find a place in oneself that feels neutral - where there is little or no emotion/ reaction to either position (such affect is usually associated with identification with Position 1 or 2, i.e. being one-sided or <u>polarised)</u>. To begin with just noticing when you achieve it and when you loose it is of great benefit.

Further on Tips

➢ Key to this practice is the enactment of the 4th position – that of the <u>meta-communicator</u> (internal witness) that notices which positions are identifying with and which positions you are not. (see related practices)

➢ When you try to take your own side fully you may experience hesitation, discomfort or be critical of yourself – you could be said to have come to an <u>edge</u> - the limits of the identity you feel comfortable with. These inner voices/ <u>edge figures</u> may seem like they are against your taking Position 1 fully and will be explored in a later exercise. (see identity awareness, edgework, rank awareness, working with the internal critic)

Related practices

Identity
Edgework
Developing the meta communicator
Role-taking
Switching Roles
Meta skills

Related reading

Mindell, Arnold (1992) The Leader as Martial Artist: Techniques and Strategies for Resolving Conflict and Creating Community, San Francisco: Harper Collins
Mindell, Arnold (1995) Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity, Portland: Lao Tse Press

Awareness practices
Awareness is the foundation stone of most learning and developmental processes.
The quality of our learning and indeed our engagement will be shaped significantly by
the depth, breath and quality of the information we gather as well as how we process
and use it. Mindell goes so far as to suggest that it is awareness itself that actually
facilitates the conflict.

Conflict capability is grounded in multilevel awareness so this group of practices or
their equivalent is essential both for effective conflict work and learning how. This
group of practices help expand our attention and awareness both of internal and
external events, of different levels of reality and of the awareness process itself.

Channels

> *"The real voyage of discovery consists, not in seeking new landscapes, but in
> having new eyes."*
> -   Marcel Proust

Description of practice
This practice helps us realise how limited our ordinary, everyday awareness is and
enables us to widen our attention and expand our awareness. While engaging in this
practice many are truly surprised at how much is going on inside and around them of
which they were unaware. The first practice therefore is following, directing and
widening our attention through the use of multiple awareness channels.

Relevance - rationale for noticing

Many events go on inside and around us every day that escape our notice. This is
even truer during conflict when, despite a heightened state of alertness, the focus of
our attention narrows to respond to the perceived threat. Before we even begin to
address the more difficult challenges of staying aware during conflict, we need to
understand the nuts and bolts of attention – connecting to the channels through which
we notice and gather information, how we become aware and how we block out or
marginalize awareness.

Later exercises will then show how you can use your attention and awareness in a
variety of productive and mutually beneficial ways to work on conflicts.   Noticing is
the beginning of learning and change - just a little practice generates swift and
significant awareness though you may not understand how significant it is to begin
with – that comes later – but see …xxx… once you have completed the exercise if
you can't wait.

Learning outcomes
   ➤ Enhanced understanding of awareness processes

- ➢ Widening of your attention and an enhanced capacity to expand your awareness
- ➢ Enhanced self-awareness – e.g. of your own awareness processes and field of awareness

Practice exercise - make some notes as you complete each part of the exercise

** press here for audio version of exercise
*** press here for video demonstration of exercise

(To build this capability, we slow down the process of attending so we can notice more – of course this is not always possible in the midst of conflict - but widening attention in this way will make us better at it when it is called for.)

A. **Noticing the flow of attention** – self and environment – cultivating the witness/ observer, non-attachment - neutrality – not doing, differentiating the flow of experience, directing and following attention, fixation and flow, inviting in distractions and disturbances and marginalizing or excluding them.
   - ➢ This practice is to develop your ability to track/ witness / observe the flow of your awareness – what attracts your attention, what repels, what comforts what disturbs and so on, without trying to control it. For the moment just follow where it leads and how it flows.
   - ➢ Click here **** for audio directions for this exercise
   - ➢ Find a comfortable place to sit; take a few deep breaths and breathe out; notice where your attention goes – follow but do not try to control it. Your attention is like a searchlight – what you focus on becomes clearer – becomes foreground while other aspects fade into background or out of awareness.
   - ➢ Where does your attention go - inward to your internal world or outward to your environment? If outward - what catches your attention – perhaps sounds, sights, movement, touch?   If inward – where do does your attention flow? Perhaps to bodily experiences, feelings, emotions or to your mental activities - memories, internal dialogue or images, fantasy, thoughts of past, present or future? Again just notice the flow of attention.
   - ➢ Does your attention flit quickly from one thought or feeling to another or does it focus on one aspect and dwell on it for longer? What does it attend to what does it avoid or move on from quickly? What reactions, responses or changes in comfort levels do you notice in relation to what is attended to?
   - ➢ Do you notice any patterns or tendencies in where your attention goes and where it does not flow? E.g. tend to focus more internally than externally, switch quickly from some topics, dwell longer on past experiences, get disturbed by or avoid certain memories, and so on.
   - ➢ What form does your awareness take – what channel does it occupy? E.g. is it auditory, visual, proprioceptive, kinaesthetic, olfactory, gustatory, or a combination? Is one form (sometimes called access modes) dominant? What channels are unoccupied? Make a note of your observations in your journal.

- ➢ Repeat the exercise, but this time, try being more directive with your attention. Choose what you want to focus your attention on, notice what you select, avoid, which channels you choose to use, how easy or difficult it is to maintain your chosen focus or channel, what are your preferred, avoided channels, or comfort zones, what is unfamiliar?
- ➢ How has the experience of directing your attention been different to that of following your attention? What have you learned from following and directing your attention and how might you use these insights to increase your levels of awareness during conflict?
- ➢ See **** for a discussion and applications to conflict

8. Choose a conflict that you are having with another person
The purpose of this exercise is to build awareness of channels and to ground awareness in sensory, feeling and sentient experience.
- ➢ Remember a time when you were in conflict and those aspects which stand out to begin with. Where was it, when, how did it start and progress, Retell it as if it were happening at this moment in time.
- ➢ What is it that makes them stand out?
- ➢ Notice which channels are occupied and which unoccupied – i.e. which have information coming through and which not – auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, relationship and world channels and so on.
- ➢ Notice what you are attracted to and what you are disturbed by
- ➢ Notice what in you is disturbed by or in conflict with the other
- ➢ Notice any tendencies you may have to react and follow where it takes you noticing any change of channel
- ➢ Notice if there is anything against this reaction
- ➢ How would you describe or frame what is happening?

9. Notice the part of you that is noticing

Reflective questions

- ➢ Which ………..

Action-inquiry
Make a plan about how you would use these insights and what you will do differently to achieve a better outcome in your future interactions in light of this learning. Implement and test these plans, monitor and see what works and adapt as needed.

Tips and comments
Dif……..

Related practices

Awareness – Johari window
Channels -Tracking and unfolding signals
Developing the meta-communicator
Roles
Role switching
Levels of reality
Deep democracy

Related reading

Stevens, John O. (1971) Awareness, Real People Press, Utah, USA
O'Connor, J., Seymour, J. (1999) Introducing NLP Neuro-Linguistic Programming, UK. Thorsons
Watzlawic, P. et al (1967) Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies and Paradoxes, Norton and Company
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Mindell, Arnold. (1991) *Working on Yourself Alone; Inner Dream Body Work*. Penguin Arkana

*Processwork Practices: The Rough Guide to Conflict Work **

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Introduction to the Rough Guide

Arnold Mindell, on whose work much of what follows is based, suggests that war is an un-facilitated conflict. Many of our conflicts are undeclared "wars", i.e. there are conflicts but they are not admitted or kept hidden, which makes it difficult to facilitate them. Our conflicts are often more like guerrilla warfare than full frontal confrontation – skirmishing, attacking vulnerable points, wounding, disappearing before there is a counter attack, and so on. We have a natural and understandable tendency to avoid conflict but experience and research tells us that conscious and skilful engagement is a better way of dealing with conflict than guerrilla warfare or full-blown power struggles. Preferably, we need to show up and engage with opposing parties with whom we are in conflict in a constructive manner.

To enable constructive engagement to happen, our conflicts need a facilitator lest they escalate or become other forms of intractable, chronic or destructive power struggles or energy sapping into "wars of attrition" (click here for an overview of conflict dynamics). Sometimes, we will be lucky enough to have the assistance of a mutually acceptable facilitator to help us process a conflict but more often than not we have to do it for ourselves, and perhaps for the person with whom we are in conflict too, if they are unable to do so.

Facilitating a conflict to mutually acceptable outcomes, especially when you are also a party to the conflict, is a challenging task requiring considerable awareness and skill. Many of us only realise we do not have the required capability when we find ourselves in the midst of a destructive conflict that we cannot resolve or free ourselves from. You may feel that it is too late, at this point, to learn practices that would help you deal with the conflict in ways that benefit you and other parties but now is as good a time as any to get started. If you choose to do so, then this guide is designed with you in mind, i.e. you know the problem to some extent but you do not know how to make sense of it nor are you it aware of the skills you need to learn and apply to resolve, prevent it in the future and learn from it.

The following is a rough guide to practices, drawn from Processwork, that can be of benefit in processing, resolving and learning from conflicts. They will help you facilitate the achievement of positive outcomes to a conflict for all concerned. The listing below is by no means comprehensive and some practices are simplified for the purposes of non-expert application. It is intended as a quick aid to addressing problems that are often encountered when people are caught up in conflict. Complex conflicts may need a combination of these practices to achieve positive outcomes and these will need to be built up over time or you may need the assistance of an expert practitioner. However, you will be able to make significant progress in dealing with conflict by learning and applying these practices on your own or with the support of a friend.

For more in-depth study of these practices, concepts and the theory behind them follow the links or go to graded programmes link XXXX.

Each of the practices listed include
    A. an overview of the kinds of problem or situation for which it is most useful
    B. a brief summary of the practice
    C. a rationale for using it and the value it can add

Using the practices to work on your conflict
To begin with it is best to write an overview of the conflict problem on which you are working or share with a friend if you wish to have some support to work it through. Familiarise yourself with the basics of the Processwork approach. Then review the practices and choose which of the practices you think will be of most benefit by reviewing the "W*hen to use"* sections. It is probably best to choose one practice to begin with and apply it to the problem you are dealing with. Then if this does not move you forward sufficiently or you need further help choose another and apply it. If you need a more in-depth explanation of the practice or more guidance in putting the practice into action, follow the links.

Each of the practices listed below are numbered and divided into three sections:
Section A includes the fundamental elements of Processworks strategy and practice in relation to working with conflict.
Section B elaborates and adds to the fundamental elements by outlining key practices, when to use them and the benefits that can accrue from using them.
Section C includes some farther on practices that can be used to extend your toolkit and address more complex conflicts.

How to use sections: We suggest you start by familiarising yourself with Section A which frames the Processwork approach to conflict within which the practices which follow can be utilised. Follow the links for further explanation of concepts and underlying theory. This section acts as a general guide to core practice, especially if you are new to this method.
Within the range of options outlined in Section A, are many practices which are further elaborated in Section B. You might use Section B, therefore, to choose which practices you wish to use with the specific problem you are working on, as these contain the basic skills and may generate positive outcomes for least effort. The when to use heading provides some guidance as to which practice might be of particular benefit but each practice may be of benefit at other times too. Remember these are for guidance for good practice and usage rather than hard and fast rules. You will be in the best position to decide what is best based on you judgement, skill, and the feedback you are getting.
We suggest you use those practices in Section C when you have tried or even better, gained some mastery in using those in the earlier sections but this is not a hard and fast rule by any means.

Section A : Basics of awareness, strategy and participant facilitation

1. **Preparing for and raising an issue where there is actual or potential conflict**

   When to use: When you wish to raise a contentious issue, when you have a difficult conversation in the offing, when you are worried about the potential consequences of an interaction, when you need a strategy to deal with a conflict, when you feel polarised or that your one-sidedness may escalate or make things worse.

   Practice: The following steps adapted from Mindell provide a basic strategy for preparing, addressing, resolving and learning from a conflict:

   1) **Notice discomfort** – Who hurt you, who are you against, who do you dislike, who disturbs you, how does this impact/affect you? Etc.

   2) **Determine malignancy** - Is it important enough to go further? E.g. is it going round and round in your head, do you have revenge or retaliation fantasies, do you think it is silly, do you find yourself gossiping about the person? Etc.

   3) **Have the courage to bring something up** – Consider what fears have you about raising the issue, what outcome would make it worth raising, how could you raise it in a way that would gain a constructive response?

   4) **Ask for permission to raise what may be a contentious issue** - As a way of acknowledging the relationship and personal choice and indicating you would like to address the conflict in a collaborative way.

   5) **Stand up for your side** - Take your own side and express it fully – this may take a number of exchanges rather than a long monologue that leaves no room for response. Where possible, you may need/ choose to pace your expression of your own depending on what the other party is able to receive at a given moment. However, it is important to express your side fully until you feel complete in what you want to say.

   6) **Switch sides** - when taking your side, notice any discomfort with taking your side (some people keep going even though they are not happy with it), perhaps a feeling of being too one sided or feeling a desire to acknowledge or represent the other side. If so then notice the inclination and switch – you can always return to complete your side again later if you need to.

   7) **Take the other side** - Represent it as fully as you can while checking for feedback from the other party as to whether you are representing their side in a way they value. They may add to or refine your way of representing their side helping you to gain a greater appreciation of it.

8) **Listen and respond** – Create space for and encourage the other party to express their side while you listen and deepen your appreciation of their side, to their feedback and perspective, to their experience of your side and its impact on them. Be curious and inquire into what is puzzling to you and what is needed and valued from their perspective.

9) **Take a neutral position** – Step out of the conflict as if you were a neutral third party or a "fly on the wall". Express what you observe are the different perspectives eing expressed, the differences between them, the common ground they share, and what might be useful options or perspectives for the parties to explore.

10) **Leave the conflict/ drop it** – Let go of the conflict if you feel complete or you have made sufficient progress, or if you need a break to digest what you have heard and decide what you wish to do next. You may decide to drop it altogether if you feel it is no longer worth continuing.

11) **Review what you have learned** – Consider what you learned that helps you deal with the conflict, what worked well in the way you engaged and what you could do better in future, what you learned about yourself and the other and where you might need to grow to achieve your potential and have a more fulfilling life.

While all the above steps are useful and important the order in which they appear is recommended but not essential and some steps will need to be repeated and the order may be changed as needed to achieve positive outcomes.

Rationale: Too often we find ourselves in the midst of a conflict where important issues are at stake and we have not considered how best to approach it. We may become polarised, reactive, and unable to gain perspective, appreciate the other side or even express our own side fully – all of which are needed to achieve positive outcomes when dealing with conflict. Having a broad strategy for dealing with conflict such as that outlined above which contains these critical elements can help us navigate the complexities of conflict interactions and remind us to use these key elements. Other practices can then be added to this basic strategy as needed.

2. **Awareness**

When to use: All the time during conflict, but especially when an alternative to a power struggle, capitulation or avoidance is needed to deal with conflict, when there is a need for more information, when there is a lack of transparency, when there are signals or information in the field that may be helpful in moving the conflict on toward a positive outcome, when certain information is being marginalised or when the meaning of signals is unknown.

Practice: Notice the signals in the field of interaction intended and unintended, this may include internal reactions, observations of what is happening, the impact of communication and behaviour on one another, differences and points of common need or interest, escalations and de-escalations, temporary resolutions, marginalised information, hotspots and so on. Attend to all the different information channels – e.g. auditory, visual, feeling, movement, relationship and world channels, and amplify to expand and deepen awareness. Bring this information to awareness in a way that helps the processing of the conflict (see meta-skills in this regard)

Rationale: The key element of strategy in a Processwork approach to conflict is to follow the process i.e. the signals which carry information into our awareness. Many conflicts arise from lack of awareness of oneself, our opponents and the context or field in which the conflict is occurring. This may include lack of information about perceptions, feelings, needs, interests, values and priorities of all parties. We may not even realise what information is missing that would help and we often overlook, ignore or marginalise awareness of the signals that could access information that would be of benefit in dealing with the conflict. Lack of information can lead to misunderstanding, poor communication and unwarranted leaps to false conclusions which may confuse or escalate a conflict. The assumption in Processwork is that the solution already exists in the system and we can discover it by following and unfolding the process. The challenge is to bring what is farther away from or repressed in our awareness into relationship with what is closer and more central to render it more familiar, accessible and useable.
Awareness is the foundation stone of most learning and developmental processes. The quality of our learning and indeed our engagement will be shaped significantly by the depth, breath and quality of the information we gather as well as how we process and use it. Mindell goes so far as to suggest that it is awareness itself that actually facilitates the conflict.
Conflict capability is grounded in multilevel awareness so this group of practices or their equivalent is essential both for effective conflict work and learning how to do it or indeed how one learns to learn how to conflict. These practices help expand our attention and awareness both of internal and external events, of different levels of reality and of the awareness process itself.

3. **Contributing to field awareness**

When to use: When there is not enough information in the system, when all relevant information is not shared, when key information is being marginalised, ignored or is unknown, when there are edges or resistance to expressing or receiving/ accepting certain types of information that may be helpful in addressing or completing the conflict process. (see also Participant Facilitator practices outlined below)

Practice: The following are a broad range of ways of contributing to awareness during conflict whether it be interpersonal, group or community based. Many of these are elaborated in the practice descriptions: -

a) Report on atmosphere and notice hot-spots and cool-spots
b) Framing – draw attention to polarisation and diversity in the moment in a descriptive, non-evaluative way.
c) Raise awareness of rank differences, their use and impact on parties/relationship/ field
d) Highlight other information that would assist awareness and the process of interaction
e) Meta-communicate – report on your internal process (feelings and thoughts) and observations in the moment as they are happening.
f) Attend and hold space open for others – invite and listen to those who are marginalized, who find difficulty being heard.
g) Share preferences in sorting- the topics you would like to see addressed, that energise you/ other parties
h) Self-disclose - speak personally of your experience as you feel able/ moved to. Share observations, feelings, needs, intuitions, learning
i) Hold silent attention as feels appropriate, allow feelings and dreaming time to emerge.
j) Be aware of marginalizing and what gets marginalized both in yourself and in others/ group and how this happens.
k) Notice and respond to feedback to your own and other's contributions
l) Notice where you and other parties/the group feel stuck – unable to proceed
m) Dream into the viewpoint or role of another who is unable to speak to help them find their voice.
n) Ask for help as needed

Rationale: Conflict occurs in a system or field of interaction in which there are different forces at play. Conflict initiates the process of awareness and is often described as the field getting to know itself. It is assumed that the solution is already in the field and in the process of the field getting to know itself, the solution to the conflict will be discovered. Shared awareness helps facilitate this discovery and positive outcomes to conflict but we need to be careful about how we bring in this awareness as selective or insensitive use of information can exacerbate a conflict. In addition, personal experience is not

just viewed as only personal, it is also a channel for the relationship and the group/ field, so sharing it is a potentially important contribution in helping to discover the solution to the conflict. Mindell suggests that awareness itself can be the facilitator of the conflict process but it is we who generate it. We need to do it in a way that enlightens rather than diminishes or oppresses (see metaskills in this regard).

4. Participant facilitator

When to use: Ideally all the time during difficult conversations, but especially when parties are polarised and nobody seems able or willing to take the neutral position or provide a supportive container for the interaction, when a neutral third party is needed but not available, when conflict is being avoided and there is a need to initiate constructive engagement, when conflict is escalating and nobody is noticing or raising awareness of the potential consequences to interests, goals, relationships, etc..

Practice: The following are a range of useful interventions which any party to a conflict can make which will help facilitate progress in dealing with a conflict even when not in an appointed facilitator role. The assumption is that all parties to a conflict are participant facilitators if they choose to. Interventions are not about taking over or controlling process or outcomes which may be resisted or rejected by other parties to the conflict. It is about facilitating awareness and as such is best framed as a collaborative and shared task from the outset. Many of the interventions are elaborated upon and explained in the later sections of this guide.

a. Initiating contact and proposing collaborative engagement
b. Raising issues in a way both sides can engage with in dialogue
c. Framing what is going on as you see it and inviting other parties to do the same
d. Role identification, taking, unfolding and supporting
e. Role switching and taking the neutral position
f. Meta communicating reporting what you are noticing in yourself, others and the field in the moment as you notice it.
g. Recognising and staying with hotspots, slowing down and deepening exploration of the underlying issues
h. Recognising and highlighting moments of de-escalation, temporary agreement and resolution.
i. Using your meta skills to help others switch sides and find the neutral position as needed
j. Going over edges – taking the side/role that is difficult for you to experience/ represent.
k. Notice flirts, unusual experiences, dreams
l. Eldership -expand your capacity in taking the observer or neutral position to being able to take/ care for all sides.
m. Support to others who may need it to take their side, the other side or a neutral position
n. Be sensitive to and raise awareness of shifts between levels e.g. between personal sharing and contributing from a role.
o. Notice and raise awareness of different reality levels and switches between them, both intentional and unintentional, also conflicts of conflicts between levels as they appear.

Rationale: Popular assumptions are that when antagonists are unable to resolve a conflict themselves, a neutral third party or mediator is needed or would be helpful. However such a third party is not always available or skilful enough so we make do and sort it ourselves or avoid it as the case may be. In sorting out our own conflicts we enact the facilitator role to some extent if at times unawarely, unintentionally and with whatever level of skill we possess. However this self-help or participant facilitator role remains relatively unacknowledged, untapped and undeveloped. We therefore need to affirm the role as a valid one, clarify how the person who picks up the role could improve the way they do it and guide people in developing the skills. In this way we can greatly increase the resource available for dealing constructively with conflict and diminish the demand for external third party expertise.

5. **Meta-skills**

When to use: When the manner of communication or the attitude of the parties is a problem, when the quality rather than the content of the communication is contentious, when there is lack of awareness around the impact of rank and power; when attitudes such as humour, openness to learning, compassion and eldership are needed to address the conflict.

Practice: Adopt/ maintain a stance of openness to learning, e.g. beginners mind; treating conflict as a teacher; of openness to what is unfolding or emerging in the process of the conflict – guest house attitude; of deep democracy – commitment to include all voices and levels of awareness; of eldership – treating all sides as our children, with compassion and love; of Processmind - contact with the deepest part of ourselves from which spaciousness and eldership becomes possible.

Rationale: Metaskills are feeling attitudes that enhance the quality of communication, interaction and learning. These include attitudes of openness, non-attachment, compassion, fluidity, tenacity, sensitivity and so on and appear as the quality behind or manner in which a skill is used. For example the manner in which you say something – blunt, compassionate, playful, humorous, authoritative, gentle, and so on, can greatly influence its impact and effectiveness. Often, the way that you communicate something can be far more important than the content so we need to be as conscious of our metaskills as we are of our skills.

6. Meta-communicating

When to use: When levels of trust between parties need to be raised, when one or other party thinks that theirs is the only story or the only correct one, when there are low levels of mutual understanding, when different ways of interpreting events are a problem, when intentions are unclear or misconstrued, when assumptions need to be exposed or made explicit, when greater transparency is needed.

Practice: Witness what is happening internally and externally and provide a running commentary on what you are noticing and how you are making sense of it, Report on what you are noticing from moment to moment as it is happening, while you are experiencing it but at the same time keeping just enough of your attention outside of what you are experiencing so you can report on it. This may include report on your observing, feeling, reacting, thinking, desiring, intuiting, inclinations, and so on. Encourage other parties, to comment on, correct, refine or add or respond to as they see fit and invite them to meta-communicate themselves.

Rationale: The Meta-communicator is the self-reflective capacity to witness, organise and report on one's own experiences. This practice creates a slight distance between observation and action and helps you become more conscious of the difference between the story you tell about your experience and the event itself. Far more is going on in a conflict situation that we are able to experience or report on so the Meta-communicator – a kind of internal monitor - organises, selects and reports on our experience of the event. By meta-communicating we both disclose what we are noticing in the moment and share how we are experiencing and making sense of the world.
As we become aware of our own way of narrating the story, selecting/ prioritising what we report and making sense of our experience, we become increasingly aware that there are other ways of telling the story of the conflict and perspectives from which to frame what is happening in the moment. There is more than one story as we are likely to be informed when we meta-communicate in front of other parties.

Such reporting and the subsequent dialogue that takes place, helps us be aware of the bias of our story, of our assumptions and of aspects of the story that are partial or missing. Because diverging stories are a major source of conflict, Meta-communication in the midst of conflict is of enormous benefit as it slows down the interaction, builds shared awareness of differing stories or perspectives and provides a basis for exploration of assumptions, incongruence or partiality of respective stories.

7. Listening

When to use: Most of the time, but especially when the other is expressing themselves, when you think you already know what they are going to say, when you notice you are more concerned with preparing your response than with what the other is saying, When you feel like interrupting because you disagree or believe they are "wrong", when you have a resistance to hear what the other party has to say, when the other party is unable to listen or is shy about speaking.

Practice: Assume that you do not fully understand all you need to know about yourself, the other, the conflict or the context and being willing to inquire; reflect back your understanding of what is said and invite further disclosure by giving undivided attention rather than attending to your reply; listen without resistance – notice what you have an edge against. Ask - what am I unable to hear? What might be at stake or at risk if I do hear it? Allow yourself to be moved or changed by what you hear.

Rationale: When in conflict we tend listen through the lenses of our biases and projections, through our ambitions, desire, fears, anxieties, through hearing only what you want to hear, hearing only what will be satisfactory, what will gratify, what will give comfort, or be to our advantage. In doing so, we tend to hear only our own voices and not the unique story of the other. We are locked in our own mindsets and find it difficult to hear any information that disconfirms or challenges our viewpoint.

What we all desire as human beings is to understand and be understood. The best way to understand each other is to listen. It is often through the quality of our listening (not the wisdom of our words) that we are able to effect the most profound changes in the people around us   Deep listening, compassionate listening is not listening with the purpose of analyzing or even uncovering what has happened in the past or finding the flaws in what the other is saying. You listen first of all in order to give the other person relief, a chance to speak out, to feel that someone finally understands him or her. Listening gives the other person the chance to speak out and suffer less.

Much destructive conflict arises when people stick rigidly to fixed positions and will not change. To truly listen is to risk being changed forever and you need to be open to be vulnerable to being influenced and changed by what you hear if conflict is to be resolved or transformed.

8. Channels of awareness

When to use: When we want to widen our attention and expand out awareness, we want to deepen our experience and understanding of something, when we reach an impasse, when we hesitate or have difficulty in completing what we wish to say, when we come to an edge – e.g. get confused or go blank.

Practice: Notice which channel you are in – how do you experience the problem? E.g. visual, auditory, proprioceptive, kinaesthetic, relationship, or world channels; attend to the sensory information and amplify or signals in that channel, notice channels which are not occupied for unintended signals and amplify, switch channel and notice what happens, forbid or amplify signals. Watch your own and other's energy for where attractions, disturbers or dreaming take you out of your usual awareness. Look out for tensions, incomplete statements, strong feeling, hesitations, physical reactions and surprising movements and the use of third parties.

Rationale: Attention to and use of channels can help us to get to know ourselves and others better and improve communication. Some channels, usually auditory and visual are more associated with our primary identity, others with what happens to us or id outside our identity i.e secondary. In other words some contain readily accessible information and are said to be occupied and others do not. Intended communication is said to be in an occupied channel while unintended communication happens in an unoccupied channel. Noticing which channels are occupied and unoccupied are important as unoccupied channels help us track unintended information which can be a source of confusion during conflict and also help us get to know ourselves better.
Often non-verbal or even aspects of verbal communication do not go along with what the person is sharing, i.e. we give double signals. It can be helpful when this information is brought into awareness skilfully and respectfully but remember the person is usually unaware of it and may be shocked or surprised at its discovery. Being curious about what is happening in multiple channels can help us raise awareness of unintended and confusing signals and communicate them more directly (see also working with edges). Use of multiple channels can also be helpful when anchoring insights and integrating learning.

SECTION B : Key Practices

9. Taking sides

When to use: When in the midst of a conflict or preparing to have a difficult conversation or reflecting on a conflict which has escalated or when trying to repair a communication or relationship breakdown, when the conflict has become too polarised, when parties have become attached to fixed positions and dialogue has reached an impasse, when there is a need for greater mutual understanding or to get some perspective on what is happening between the parties.

Practice: notice which side you are identified with, inflamed by, stuck in, ready to move from, noticing when you switch sides/roles, when neutral, and so on. Take your own side fully, take the other side and represent it fully, and also take the neutral position and describe what is happening between the parties in ways that each side would feel appreciated; switch between sides to allow the dialogue unfold – changing positions, withdrawing or deescalating as you feel complete. For more click here……..

Rationale: Taking sides is probably the most basic skill for dealing with any conflict. When we feel we have fully expressed our own side it is more likely that we will feel able to listen to and represent the other side. Some find taking the neutral position less difficult while others find representing their own or the opposing side more difficult. The better we are able to represent all three fully the more likely we are to be able to work constructively with conflict as it arises.

10. **Rank, power and privilege**

When to use: When there is difficulty in saying something or completing what needs to be said, when there is fear of retaliation or consequences of speaking out, when there is misuse or abuse of power, when there is lack of awareness of the impact of power and privilege, when there is irritation with someone but there is not a clear sense of why people are having such negative reactions.

Practice: Find ways of raising awareness of rank differences and addressing them in a way that relieves the tension, enhances relationships and communication, and creates opportunities to learn about and make better use of rank power and privilege. Ask what kinds of rank do you have, how does it impact your relationship and communication, how might you use it in a way that benefits each other and the relationship?

Rationale: Rank is a way of identifying or acknowledging hierarchy and is closely related to power and privilege, i.e. where a given person, role or community stands relative to others. High ranking may be associated with position, power, authority and privilege. Rank is often a source of conflict especially when people use their high rank unawarely or oppressively. Rank can be spiritual, psychological, social, contextual, professional, intellectual, emotional to name but a few of the bases for rank, power and the privileges that accompany it.

People generally tend to be more aware of when they feel lower in rank or lack of power, "downed", or at a disadvantage than when they have rank, power and the privileges that go with that rank. When we have advantages, earned, or not, we forget what it is like to be without and we may even begin to feel a sense of entitlement to the privileges that tend to accompany their rank, which can be deeply irritating to others who do not enjoy the same powers. Such unaware or unacknowledged rank and misuse or abuse of rank is a major source of conflict and it usually takes those with lower rank to awaken those with higher rank unless they are intentionally more conscious about their rank and its impact. Failure to do so often triggers retaliation and revenge from those with less rank and create or prolong a conflict..

11. Hot-spot - escalation

When to use: When the atmosphere is tense, when there is attack, offense, put-down, crossing a line, escalation of a conflict as reflected in an increase in emotional intensity or silence, when there is blaming, personal abuse, stereotyping, or escalation, when there are threats, power-plays, or threatened walk-outs.

Practice: Notice and acknowledge hot-spots, slow down the interaction so it is easier to pick up the various signals and respond to them, they are an opportunity to go deeper into the feelings of each side of the conflict, clarify the issue and what lines have been crossed, make space for all voices to be heard, combine with other practices such as making and responding to accusations and metaskills such as eldership.

Rationale: Escalation can happen when people under estimate or over estimate their own power. A hot spot is an intense emotional moment in which there is a clash between individuals or a whole group when someone crosses a line, when something forbidden or provocative occurs that causes turbulence or causes everyone to become silent or frozen. When we hit a hot-spot, interactions tend to speed up but they can also be the doorway to deepening the process if we slow down and engage rather than blowing up and having a communication or relationship breakdown. When hot-spots are not focused on they become the source of future escalations.

12. **A Cool-spot – de-escalation**

When to use: When there is a stepping back, a pause in intensity, a concession, a movement towards the other, a moment of temporary resolution, etc., that could help build trust or aid progress, when progress has been made but is in danger of being missed and so needs to be highlighted and appreciated, to help parties consolidate the value of the engagement and rekindle hope when only limited progress can be made at a given time.

Practice: Notice when the conflict deescalates, when people move closer together, appreciate or make concessions, and acknowledge moments of temporary resolution, draw to attention areas of common ground that may have been missed, point out opportunities of mutual interest and of meeting shared needs, support de-escalation by communicating when you experience a shift in awareness and position, appreciate something about your opponent, admit or partially admit an accusation, make a concession, and so on.

Rationale: A cool-spot occurs when things de-escalate and cool down, that is when the intensity of the conflict lowers, people become less involved or something is temporarily resolved. Other aspects of the conflict are yet to come, but the cool spot itself needs to be acknowledged or the conflict continues to recycle. Every step forward adds up and gives renewed hope and motivation that progress can be made. Each step can prevent further escalation and can also be a moment to change levels and work with other dimensions of the conflict.

13. **Seeking common ground**

When to use: When there appears to be little in common, when needs or interests, seem incompatible, when sides are polarised with little hope of reconnecting, when people have forgotten what connects them or why they came together in the first place, when people marginalise shared values, what is already working or agreed, when focussing on differences does not help.

Practice: Identify shared purpose, values, or vision, articulate the dream or myth that draws you together and makes it worthwhile working through the conflict, identify high and low dream and what happens around these, consider why parties want to work on the conflict, clarify what is important for each and how realisation of needs or interests might be supported and achieved. Draw attention to and explore how the conflict is experienced on different levels of reality (see deep democracy in this regard).

Rationale: When people are in conflict, the tendency is to perceive/frame the other side as the polar opposite of one's own position or identity. The other is deemed "bad" or "wrong" or incompatible with one's own position, which is usually characterised as "good or at least better than", "right" and in some way superior. This mutual negative attribution of differences usually marginalises common ground, shared values or dreams and can get in the way of resolving or working through a conflict. Focusing on the differences only serves to amplify the divide and the problems this creates.
By conducting an appreciative inquiry into what is working well, what has drawn you together, what has helped you through past turbulence and difficulties, you can help reconnect with the dream, the shared vision and values and the likely disappointment and loss of connection with these, and perhaps reconnection to them. From this state of connection to common ground it is usually easier to address the differences and difficulties which have arisen and to co-create a desirable future.

14. Giving and receiving feedback

When to use: When, you are unhappy with or want to appreciate something about each other, when you or others appear to be unaware of non-verbal signals or messages; when parties appear to be unaware of the impact of their behaviour, style of communication or attitudes; when there is a breakdown in communication or relationship; when lack of awareness around use of rank is a problem; when there are double messages or signals which are not clearly understood.

Practice: Ask for feedback or for permission to give it, say why it is relevant to the present situation, describe the behaviour or attitude that is creating difficulty and give an example, describe its impact on you or the situation as you experience it, say what you would prefer as an alternative, listen openly to their response. Likewise give positive and specific feedback, in a similar way, in relation to what you appreciate about their attitudes and behaviour and its positive effect on you or the relationship/ situation.

Rationale: Sometimes we assume that others know, or should know, what they believe is in the public arena, or that others know what in fact nobody knows, especially when trust between parties is low. Besides information that is in the public arena and information that is unknown to any party, each party has information that could be relevant and beneficial in resolving or learning from conflict. For example, you know some things about yourself that others do not know (hidden) and others can observe things about you of which you have little or no awareness (blind-spot). Self-disclosure is required for the former and mutual feedback is needed for the latter. We need constructive feedback to get to know ourselves, we cannot become fully aware on our own. For feedback to be effective, we need to be open to being influenced and changed by it rather than receiving it defensively. Likewise it needs to be given sensitively as a gift rather than used as a weapon with which to down or whack the other party (See metaskills in this regard).

15. Roles

When to use: When you are attacked or accused of something, when you feel trapped, polarised or victimised, when you feel dreamed up or in a role you did not choose or are surprised to find yourself occupying, When there are expectations of you that you did not know about or agree to, when you feel that there are other people or forces influencing the situation or group dynamic that need to be identified to progress the conflict.

Practice: Notice the roles occupied by yourself and others and also the unoccupied (see also ghost roles) roles; help raise awareness of and deepen understanding of them; unfold the essence of each role, and encourage interaction between the roles to enhance awareness and resolve tensions and understand their impact. (see also role switching)

Rationale: Since roles can be occupied by anyone, encouraging each party to be aware of the roles or polarities they are occupying/ identifying with at any given time helps clarify, understand and improve the relationship dynamics in the situation. Roles are the term ascribed to these emergent flows of energy or time-spirits and are often experienced as positions or views which we identify with or differentiate ourselves from others - for example victim, defender, oppressor, bully, helper, observer, etc. They may be experienced as formal, informal, momentary or longer term, but the individual is always more than any role they may occupy at a given time and they can occupy more than one role. Role awareness and ability to switch roles is valuable in working with conflict.

16. Role switching

When to use: When you become polarised or stuck in a position or role, when you feel you have fully expressed a role and feel uncomfortable or the inclination to shift position, when it is too painful to stay in the role, when you are dreamed up in a role or want to deepen your understanding of it and how you came to be in it. When you want to find out more about a particular role or why you react to it, in order to become more fully aware of the field or context of the conflict.

Practice: Notice and meta-communicate which role you are in from moment to moment and when you begin to switch roles. Notice which roles are present and which are influencing the situation but not being represented. Identify the role or the polarisation and what other roles get constellated; unfold these by amplifying in different channels; represent these roles fully including the essence level of each role to aid working through the conflict.

Rationale: roles belong to the dreamland or subjective level of reality. They may appear to be stable, i.e. belong to a particular person, e.g. a teacher or a learner in consensus reality, but at a deeper level, if we watch closely, we tend to switch roles – the learner can sometimes become teacher and the teacher a learner, even if briefly and temporarily. In conflict there is a natural tendency to switch roles and noticing when this happens can avoid considerable confusion and help us better understand the conflict and change how it is being enacted . We may notice that we identify with a particular role but at a given point we may feel pulled to represent another role or notice that we have unawarely switched roles. For example, someone who is in a learner role may begin to present what they know and so have temporarily taken up the teacher role. Likewise when the carer of others speaks of their own needs for care they have switched roles. The protector can unawarely become oppressor and so on.

17. Ghost roles

When to use: When there are influences in the context of the conflict on the individual, situation or relationship that are felt but not present or being acknowledged, when views or criticism are introduced in the guise of third parties, when there is an impasse for which no rational explanation can be found by the parties themselves,

Practice: -- Inquire into or guess as to what kind of presence might be influencing the situation based on available information, ask what is the "elephant in the room", what is undiscussable or taboo in the relationship or system, represent and express the thoughts, views, feelings and perspectives of the felt presence or ghost roles and allow others to contribute to filling out the role, interact with the role to unfold and get to know it and discover its essence.

Rationale: Conflicts can often be personalised and the factors in the context which give rise to it unknown marginalised or denied. Understanding the forces operating in the environment can bring considerable relief to the parties involved and relieve much tension. Bringing awareness to felt but unseen influences - ghost roles - is helpful and can be an important turning point in a conflict.

Ghost roles are positions that are spoken about and influential in the field but not occupied or represented by anybody in the group. For example, when people are fearful, or saying they are afraid of being attacked for their views, we may infer the presence of an attacker even if one does not appear to be obviously present. Some typical ghost roles are the "oppressive" person who is not in the room, the person who articulates the view we cannot represent ourselves, the "system", etc.

18. Responding to attack and accusation

When to use: When you experience a personal attack or put-down, when you feel blamed or are accused of something, when there is an indirect or third-party accusation or attack.

Practice: Draw out or clarify the accusation, defend if necessary, pickup/ admit the part that is true, apologise and commit to change as appropriate, find out what is right or of value in this behaviour, communicate this value directly to the other through feedback, request or possibly counter accusation (see also making an accusation). Repeat all or part of this as necessary, get feedback and review progress together. For more click here……..

Rationale: A natural response to accusation and attack is to feel defensive or even threatened. Accusation tends to constellate a defender role, which may also be necessary, but if we get stuck in that role, in the accuser defender dynamic, it can be difficult to progress or resolve a conflict. By pleading guilty, even by admitting the 1 or 2% that is true or perhaps something like what you are accused of, you relieve the impasse. Yet an apology is often not enough we need to find out why the offending behaviour occurred in the first place or it will occur again. Therefore we need to find out what is right or of value in the offending behaviour and find a better way of communicating it.

19. Learning from attack and accusation

When to use: When you are disturbed by another person in some way or when they are disturbed by you, when you experience a personal attack or put-down, when you feel blamed or are accused of something, when there is an indirect or third-party accusation or attack, when you notice a recurring pattern or repeated accusation or attack, when you want to learn or grow through picking up the accusation or disturbance.

Practice: Clarify what you are accused of or what disturbs you about the other person, See how you are mirroring the other side by being so against those people – "You are wrong and I want to change you and make you right"

Rationale: When we are disturbed by another they usually have a state or energy that we may need more of to communicate more effectively and live our lives to the full. When someone else is disturbed by us they usually have a message that we need to pick up and take action on or change in some way. Paradoxically, we often need more of what we are accused of rather than less of it. For example we might be accused of being aggressive and feel we should be less so when in fact our aggression may indicate that we feel unable to assert ourselves effectively and that we need, in fact, to be more assertive. This practice is to help us pick up these messages and states and integrate them into our way of being and relating.

SECTION C : Further on Practices

20. Working on your self

When to use: When you have reached an impasse or feel stuck/polarised in a position or role in a conflict, when you are afraid to raise a contentious issue, or when you feel hurt and are unable to move on or make progress in relation to a particular conflict, when you want to prepare for a difficult conversation or an anticipated conflict.

Practice: Working on a conflict alone or with a helper
1. Ask a partner or supporter to help you with process
2. Identify conflict or disturbing incident and tell story
3. Take your own side as fully as you can until you feel complete or begin to feel uncomfortable taking your own side, e.g. feel you have hurt or gone too far.
4. Take opponent's side as fully as you can - notice what it is like to take this side, where it comes easy an where difficult, switch channels (auditory, visual, kinaesthetic, etc.) to reflect those of your opponent.
5. Notice when you feel neutral – neither on one side or the other - and speak of what it is like to experience the conflict from this position, say what you observe - what new information is available from here which both sides need to know that will help them
6. Notice the step you are at – steps do not need to be done in the sequence shown – it is more important that you are fully congruent with that step.
7. Do the step and watch for a change in awareness, attitude, motivation, emotion, etc.
8. Can you switch sides/ roles? I.e. can you be flexible or are you stuck on one side or the other?
9. If not why not? E.g. is your own side unfinished – more to say?
10. If you are stuck ask your partner to help you fill the position you find difficult

   - There is not necessarily an outcome to be achieved here. It is an exercise in flexibility, awareness and understanding.
   - Some people keep going round and round the steps because they have an edge against a particular step. If so ask your partner to show you how.

   Alternatively, use one of the following exercises to work on yourself alone or with another. a) Working with the disturber b) Preparing for a conflict. c) Burning your own wood.

Rationale: Working on yourself enables you to be less prone to polarisation and become more fluid by expanding self-awareness and freedom, becoming less attached to the polarised parts of ourselves and gaining greater access to diverse parts of ourselves. There are many different ways of doing this including innerwork as described above, coaching, therapy, reflection, meditation, talking with friends and so on.

21. Eldership

When to use: When someone is in difficulty or being difficult and in need of appreciation and help to communicate and learn, when the container/ the relationship is not robust enough to contain the conflict and maintain constructive engagement, when there is a danger of communication and relationship breakdown, when multi-level awareness is needed to unfold the complexity of the conflict, when it is difficult to include and express all viewpoints, when there are biases, polarisation and edges that are difficult to transcend, when increased compassion and openness to all sides are needed - such as with seemingly incompatible interests or intractable conflict.

Practice: You are meant to be an elder who cares for the whole - see them as your children, they are your family, your friends; See them as the face of God - God showing itself in its complexity and trouble or as a piece of Nature showing itself; view them as examples of people who have difficulty changing, as someone who is suffering and in need of help. Remind yourself of times when you were stuck or stubborn or wouldn't change and remember what worked best for you. What helped you blossom and grow?

Rationale: In general we tend to repress and marginalise or reject what does not fit with our values without too much consideration of what gets marginalised. What is repressed or marginalised comes back to trouble us, disrupting and disturbing and undermining the functioning of our relationships. Eldership supports diversity and equality – the includion and hearing all voices.
Eldership is a universal meta-skill or feeling attitude coming from your deepest self and its direction. This meta-skill involves deep democracy and treating the world as your child, treating all parts and people in the conflict as equally important. This meta-skill arises from a place of unity and connection to your deepest self and the world and welcomes all aspects and levels of experience. It includes a sense of spaciousness and unconditional acceptance of what is. It is characterised by humour – the ability to laugh at oneself and the situation in which one finds oneself with compassion rather than ridicule.

22. Deep democracy

When to use: When there are voices or views that are being marginalised or excluded, when the facts of the situation (consensus reality) are being prioritised and the subjective feelings (non-consensus reality) an shared vision (essence) are being discounted, when marginalised voices have become troublesome, when people are finding it hard to speak or even turn up.

Practice: Welcome all voices and communication styles; allow space to explore and deepen awareness of all points of view and roles; invite all to express fully and to interact with one another. Include and unfold experiences of different levels of reality i.e. measurable facts, feelings and dreamlike experiences, sentient flirts and Processmind unity.

Rationale: Deep democracy is different from commonly held views of democracy which values majority rule. Deep democracy values equally deep states of consciousness, dreaming, subjective feelings, measurable reality, dominant and minority views. It honours all parts of the field - giving voice to the devalued, the disenfranchised, minorities of all kind - to all of nature and all its forms.
Deep democracy arises from one's deepest self and its directions and recognises the equal importance of **consensus reality** issues and concerns that are agreed and verifiable (facts, issues, problems, people); **non-consensus-reality** - subjective, or dream-like experience and feelings (dream figures, roles, atmospheres, ghost roles, and polarisation in relationships and groups, etc.) **essence** or common ground – the unitive level of reality that connects everyone.
In conflict we tend to value facts over subjective feelings and be concerned with what it truth and who is right. But most people will tell you that it is often the subtle or fleeting signals, the subjective feelings, the attitudes and mindsets that are not measurable which are the factors that exert the greater influence on the course of the conflict. We marginalise and ignore these at our peril and we need to attend to measurable reality too – we need to work with all levels. By splitting the field or our experience of it, by creating untenable boundaries and favouring one side or state while disavowing the other we create stuck-ness and polarisation and conflict. Connectedness and flow are the rewards of deep democracy in action.

23. Identity

When to use: When parties react, feel hurt or threatened but are not clear what has been hurt or injured, when some aspect of parties' identity has been attacked or put down, when what a party is identified with is restricting expression or listening, when there are double signals which are confusing communication, when there is a desire to expand and strengthen identity or expand self-awareness.

Practice: Identify what is experienced as disturbing or threatening, identify what is impacted, disturbed or threatened by this, explore if there is a figure, a role or memory that emerges, Inquire as to what it says about the person in their view that they do not like, and what line has been crossed? Ask – what is in danger, at risk, or at stake? What does this event say or imply about who or what I am – to me or to others? What is disturbing or hurtful about this and express the hurt and what you need. Identify and name the injured identity and where the edge of identity is, encourage the person to go over the edge and speak or switch to a less vulnerable or stronger identity even momentarily. (see also innerwork, edges and working with the disturber practices)

Rationale: This practice is essentially about increasing self-awareness, getting to know marginalised and vulnerable parts of ourselves, and strengthening our identity so we feel more empowered and suffer less during conflict.
Identity is the term we give to how we define who and what we are. We may identify psychologically with certain roles or sub-personalities, or socially with certain social categories of one kind or another e.g. national, ethnic, class, gender, sexual orientation, professional grouping, religion, different communication styles, and so on. In fact, we tend to have several ways of identifying ourselves and not all of these may be hurt or disturbed at a given time – it is usually the one we are identified with, or the one we feel vulnerable about that gets triggered in the moment. What is closer and more familiar in our awareness is said to be our primary identity and what is further away, less known or we experience as alien is said to be secondary
We mostly need to feel proud of or secure in of our primary identity and feel that it is respected to be effective, blossom and grow in life. If we feel vulnerable, shame or insecure in our identity for cultural or other reasons, we are vulnerable and potentially oversensitive to slight, criticism or attack which can create considerable difficulty for us in life and particularly in conflict. When vulnerable we tend to be prone to emotional shut-down or over reaction to protect or defend our identity – the fight, flight, freeze instinctual defensive responses to threat. We tend to disavow those aspects of our identity we feel shame or insecure about which become secondary but sometimes the reverse can be the case.
The boundaries to these identities, (see edges) are often highly significant and play an important role in working through conflict. Rigid boundaries create separateness and can be both painful and problematic in the field where there are no boundaries. Our pride and self-image can be hurt or disturbed easily where we feel vulnerable and, if we do not address the hurt or vulnerability, it can lead to the formation of rigid impenetrable boundaries. We need to

remember that we can also rely on our other identity so we need to be fluid in our identity, be able to mover and through these edges and not be locked in or restricted by them.

24. Edges

When to use: When someone speaks but cannot complete what they are saying, or even begin to say it, for personal reasons or perceived restrictions; when someone experiences unease or feels disturbed or threatened by some new information, when a person's identity is undermined or devalued, when a person fears the consequences of speaking or taking action, when a person goes blank or is troubled by something unknown in the course of communication.

Practice: find out what you would like to do but cannot, why it is hard to speak or what you experience as preventing you; amplify or forbid the signals in that channel, encourage the person to go over the edge and complete what they are saying; dream into what is on the other side of the edge of what they are identified with and guess/imagine what that voice might feel, think, be aware of and express it for them (with their permission) while checking for feedback as to whether they are resonating with the message. If not try something else or drop it and try another practice.

Rationale: Edges are the boundaries to our identity in the moment and are often experienced as communication barriers. They are maintained by beliefs and mindsets which can take the form of a critic or edge figure which is triggered if we or others transgress or threaten to transgress this boundary. While we need a sense of identity and boundaries to function effectively in the world, these boundaries can also restrict our perception, action and development. By becoming aware of these edges or boundaries and their accompanying beliefs as they appear in communication, we can learn how they help or inhibit and how to go over these edges and discover new or repressed parts of ourselves, thus enhancing our powers and quality of communication, relationship and effectiveness in dealing with conflict.

25. **Burning Wood** (healing past hurt)

When to use: When you have a strong reaction to your opponent or their role, when there is hurt, fear, or anger from part events that is provoking fight, flight, or freeze responses which limit our ability to engage constructively in conflict, when we find ourselves suffering from the trauma of past events, when we continue to have fantasies of revenge or retaliation, when we are afraid to take our own side and express what we would like to say, when we have difficulty hearing or representing the other side or having a sense of detachment in relation to past or current events.

Practice: There are many ways of healing past hurt such as therapy, meditation, artistic expression, etc. here is one type of innerwork. Who do you have a strong reaction to? What was your reaction and what or whom were you reacting to? Represent it in different channels. Where have you encountered this before? Perhaps a place where you were abused, belittled, made to feel ashamed or inferior. Tell the story including dreaming or fantasies about what happened and your reactions to it. Who witnessed this experience and what did they do if anything? How was power abused? You may find that much of your reaction is related to your past experience rather than your current situation. What would you do if you were to witness such a scene today? How do these insights change your relation to your opponent?

Rationale: Conflict processes can bring up strong emotions in us. These include fear, anger, shock and numbness. These can be related to our abuse issues from the past. They can also influence how we react in the present. It is useful to "burn your wood" around   Like dry wood in very hot weather, these issues tend to catch on fire and heat up with a lot of emotion in the areas where there has been hurt. This leads to greater awareness and the ability to be neutral when the fire of conflict gets hot. It is also helpful to get support from others in these areas.

26. Processmind

When to use: When sorting out a conflict in a rational way seems impossible, when a sense of spaciousness or super position is needed to appreciate and bring opposing energies or positions into a positive relationship with each other, when a connection with the deepest part of our being is needed to overcome division or polarisation. ---- connect with the deepest place in our body and through that to the spot on the earth which most resonates with it. By shape-shifting into the spot and its place in the universe we can gain new perspective and insights into how to approach a conflict.

Practice: Choose a conflict you are in currently or have been in that is unfinished; identify what it is in the other that you are against and make a movement and a quick visual representation together with a word that captures the essence of that energy; identify what in you is disturbed, hurt by, or against this energy, make a visual and movement representation of the essence of that energy in you, and a word that goes with it; find the deepest place in your body – where you feel most at home, then find an earth spot that resonated or reminds you of this feeling, notice the environment in as many channels as possible and then become this earth spot; let it guide you as to how best to enable your two energies to relate to one another; make some notes, a movement or an image that captures your insights and how to apply them in your conflict situation

Rationale: Our rational minds and every day identity is usually biased – meaning it favours some parts of our experience and marginalises or disavows others and so is not able to welcome and accept all aspects of ourselves equally. By accessing Processmind we go below the polarisation of everyday reality and dreaming to a place of unity, to what was there before the polarisation or conflict emerged. It is a sentient non-rational process that can help us quickly move beyond polarisation and move over our edges and get a glimpse of how seeming incompatible polar opposites are connected and how both are needed.
 The Processmind is connected to the deepest part of ourselves and is related to a particular earth-spot and direction. (the earth is a symbol of what connects us all – of a place of unity and spaciousness below all polarisation) Our Processmind is that part of each of us that is open to all parts of ourselves and the conflict field and can flow with the tensions that arise. As such it is closely connected with the practice of eldership.

27. Working with a disturber

When to use: When you have a strong reaction to another, when you feel an oppressive atmosphere, when you feel fearful or angry, when you feel a strong attraction or repulsion, when you are disturbed by an event or group.

Practice: Steps in working with the disturber
1. Identify the person or event which disturbs you
2. Describe what specifically about the person or event disturbs you? Feel its energy and make a hand movement that expresses this energy.
   Make a little sketch on paper of this energy and write any words that go with it. X is the disturbing energy.
3. Notice what in you is disturbed by this X energy? What part of you is against or reacting to it? Where in your body do you feel it? Describe this energy, find a hand movement that expresses this energy, make a little sketch and any words that capture its essence.
   This is the U energy.
4. Now find the deepest place in your body, where you feel at your strongest and most at home and feel its energy; find a place on the earth that corresponds to that feeling, notice what this place is like, see it, hear it, feel its energy and atmosphere; shapeshift and become this place and embody its energy.
5. Now look around this earth spot and notice how the X-energy and the U energy show up and appear as part of this earthspot.
6. Seek a rhythm that belongs to this place. Let your feet find it and let it move and dance you to its rhythm; allow the X and U energies to dance together to this rhythm and interact, take your time and let something new emerge from within the dance, let the dialogue unfold, allow the answer to rise in your body and note any images or words that accompany it. You'll feel and know when complete.
7. Note how these insights might help you with the disturbance which you set out to work on and what you might need to do to implement it.

Rationale: Mindell reminds us that conflict is a way of the field getting to know itself, so too it is a way of us getting to know ourselves. What disturbs us is also part of us, a disavowed part of ourselves.   By finding a place within us which enables us to relate what disturbs us and what is disturbed, we become better equipped to meet our opponents in conflict.

28. Conflict as a teacher

When to use: When there is lack of trust and a need to encourage or cultivate an openness to learning in a conflict situation, when there is a closed attitude of blame, righteousness, being locked in one's own story or inability to take on board new, dissonant or disturbing information.

Practice: See them as part of you and try to pick it up – a part you need more of

See them as part of you – something you may need to change about yourself (projection) are you just like them?

Rationale: --most conflicts can teach us something and to do this we need to be open to learning. This includes having a guesthouse attitude, acknowledging that there is more than one story, balancing advocacy and inquiry, unfolding signals that are less understood and so on. See also – pick up the message, pick up the state. See also picking up accusations.

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