



Module 4

Topic 4.1: Reflective Practice as Learning

Introduction

Here we will look at what we have covered in the previous Modules as a quick recap. We are also reflecting back on the different Modules and how they have enabled us to develop our practice. Holding the course together is our online learning website. The website is a complete portal holding all the materials, videos, handouts, quizzes and also serves as place to engage with the materials and assignments.

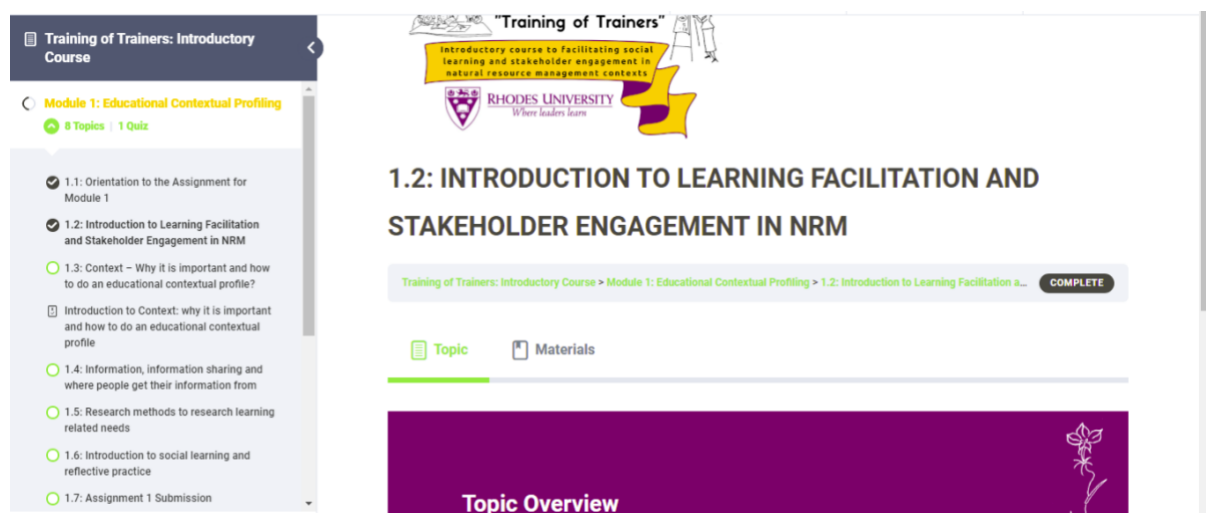


Figure 1: The course website

Module recap

Recap of Module 1: Contextual Profiling

“Learning takes place when we gain new knowledge, new understandings, new insights, and/or new skills. Learning also takes place when we unlearn certain things that used to be true, or helpful, or that we thought were true or helpful, but were actually not. We learn from our own experience, from books, or research, or nature, from the older generations and from each other.”

Module 1 helped us to understand our context from social, economic, biophysical and political perspectives. We needed to look at the issue through these different lenses in order to fully appreciate the scope of the issue as well as begin to see where the solutions might arise.

The Power of Context

Context is the surrounding environment or situation which influences the NRM or learning process we are focused on, it is ever-changing.

- Understanding the context can help us to better understand what is happening in NRM or learning activities, and why things happen the way they do.
- Context = a CONTAINER or SITUATION (useful metaphors).

Other ways of talking about context: “a particular bounded place and space” “surrounding environment”, “situation”, “focal system” or “system of interest”.

In **Module 1** we also looked at how we learn and the different theories that led to these ways of learning and teaching.

How do we learn?



Activity 4.1.1: How do you learn?

1. Thinking back at this section of the course can you now identify the way that you learn? How?
2. Was there a range of difference in how your participants learnt during your learning process?
3. How did you reflectively respond to these matters of learning during and after implementation of your learning process?

The Assignments:

The assignments were built on a tiered system which aims to develop deeper understanding into your contextual issue and creating and evaluating a learning process. These were sequential and built upon the previous assignments to provide depth and more engagement with stakeholders.

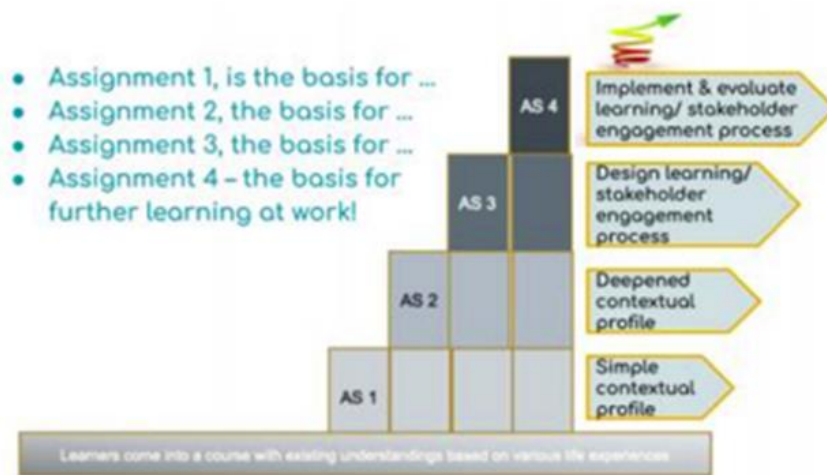


Fig.2: Graphic showing how the assignment for each module builds upon one another.

Module 2: Stakeholder Engagement

This module provided a baseline understanding of the “four Ps” of stakeholder engagement, namely the PURPOSE, PROCESSES, PRINCIPLES and PRACTICALITIES of stakeholder engagement in the context of learning processes for Natural Resources Management.

PURPOSE: Why are we exploring stakeholder engagement on this course? Sometimes we (course participants) work with (other) scientists, managers, developers or government officials in a process that engages stakeholders and we need to support them in that; and sometimes stakeholder engagement is the precursor for a deeper learning process that we will be facilitating. For both these reasons, we need to know the basics of stakeholder engagement.

PROCESSES: How we do stakeholder engagement. What are some of the different processes, methods and tools that can be used for stakeholder engagement in natural resource management contexts?

PRINCIPLES: Regardless of the methods or processes we use, there are some key principles of stakeholder engagement (that, therefore, apply to all of the above). In this topic, we discussed the principles of respect, reciprocity, truthfulness and transparency and reflexivity where they are evident, what challenges relate to them and how we can overcome them.

PRACTICALITIES: What are the practical considerations that we should take note of when designing and implementing a stakeholder engagement process? In this topic we discussed

considerations such as the role of the facilitator, knowing your participants, responding to group dynamics, the set-up of the room, building trust, enabling full participation, designing suitable activities, managing energy levels and closing the process.

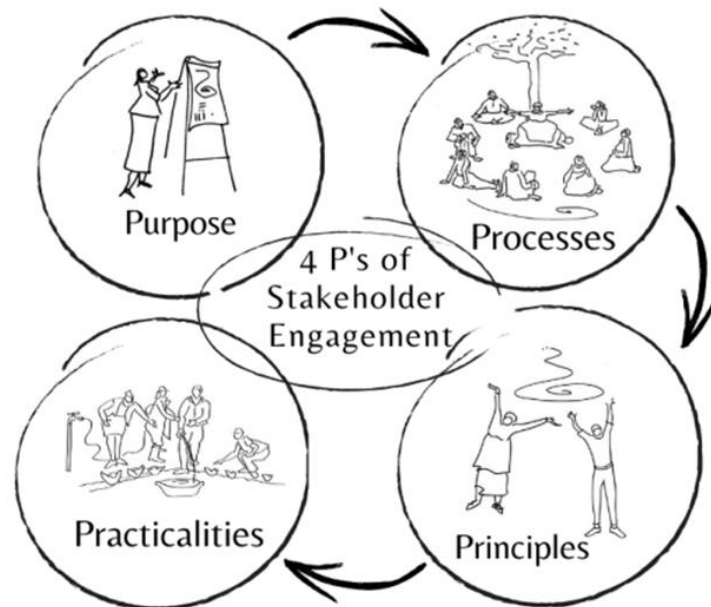


Figure 3: The 4 Ps of Stakeholder engagement

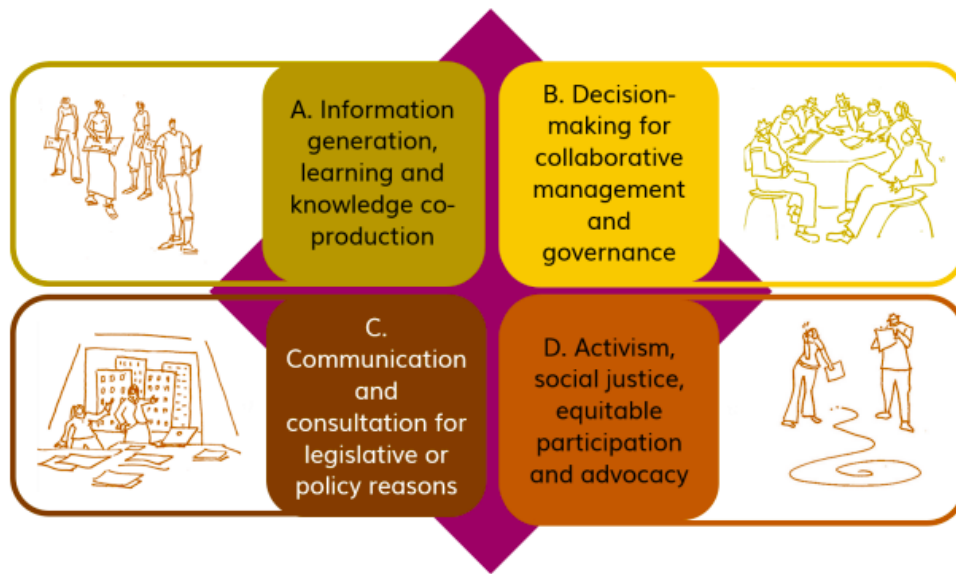


Figure 4: Four purposes of stakeholder engagement in natural resource management

Activity 4.1.2: Reflecting on the purposes of stakeholder engagement from your own experiences.

Think about your own experiences in stakeholder engagement where you were facilitating (as part of your assignment).

Look at the diagram of the four purposes of stakeholder engagement above: which of these four purposes aligned with your event. Is it very clearly one of the purposes, or a combination of more than one? Looking back reflexively on what you have learnt, would you change your designed process? If so how?



Module 3: Introduction to Social learning

The purpose of Module 3 was to provide you with an introduction to learning theory, methods and processes to enable you to design activities for learning and implementation of programmes in a Natural Resource Management context.

This Module comprised of four topics and aimed to build on what you learnt in Module 1 (and some of Module 2) on social learning by providing more depth into social learning and other types of learning theory, their importance and how these theories are applied in different contexts.

We also learnt to think about five different metaphors (rich descriptors) for learning:

- Learning as acquisition (see Sfard, 1998)
- Learning as participation (see Sfard, 1998)
- Learning as connection (see Lave and Wenger,)
- Learning as co-creation (see Paavola and Hakkarainen, 2005)
- Learning as transformation (see Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2020)

We looked at how social learning doesn't always fall into neat processes or boxes, but how some activities might be helpful when trying to design or monitor social learning. It is always good to explore these different metaphors and the methods associated to them in order to develop a robust and responsive learning process.

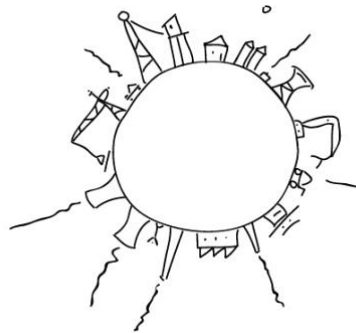


Figure 5: Elements of the social learning process

We also did an overview of practical methods to support the facilitation of a social learning process. In Topic 3.1, we covered a broad overview of learning theories, and in 3.2, the focus was on the social learning methods and processes best suited for facilitating

transformative or change-oriented learning in the natural resource management (NRM) context.

Social learning processes are often emergent and can seldom be pre-determined, which makes it difficult to plan them completely beforehand. Furthermore, NRM and broader environmental issues are also becoming more complex as we move into a future of uncertainty, and dealing with such complexity requires a combination of different methods and processes.



Box 2: Facilitating social learning requires:

Recognizing:

- That social learning is multi-faceted and multi-directional
- That social learning takes place all the time, in all activities
- That much social learning is subconscious (people are often not aware of learning or sharing knowledge)
- That social learning is inherently a participatory and reflexive process
- That social learning can lead in directions not envisaged
- The on-going seeking of equality between participants in a social learning process
- That social learning should lead to strengthened individual and collective agency
- That social learning is also a process of co-learning, and being willing to move out of one's own comfort

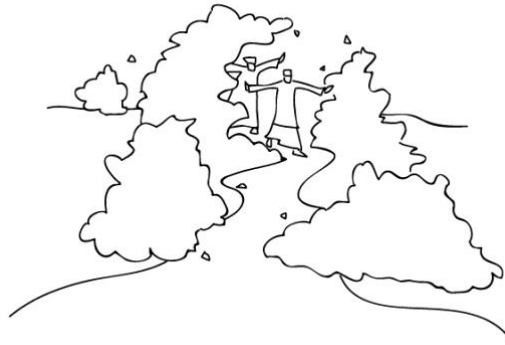
Being:

- Both responsive and guiding
- Willing to learn and change, and be open and receptive to critique and negotiation
- Honest about own views, understandings, strengths, and limitations
- Accepting of others' views, understandings, strengths, and limitations
- Realistic in expectations
- Imaginative in a way that opens up alternatives for the future

Providing:

- Learning, technical and emotional support
- A coherent framework and supportive context for learning
- Own skills, knowledge and experience
- Opportunities for individual and collective growth
- A space in which participants feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and where there are no rights and wrongs

In Topic 3.3 you learnt more about designing learning activities that are more responsive to context. To do this a number of questions are necessary to consider: What information do you need to design activities? Who are the people involved in the learning? What are their needs, interests and challenges? What do these people already know about this topic? (Influenced by experience, education, media, etc); what new knowledge do participants seem to need?



Activity 4.1.3: Creating a responsive learning process

Looking back at your contextual profile and taking into consideration some of the scenarios and concerns addressed above, how would you go about ensuring that you are creating an inclusive and responsive learning process that suits the context you are working with? Use the questions below to guide your thinking:

- How does your learning process respond to the complex social, environmental and economic issues present within your chosen issue as outlined in your contextual profile?
- How are you working with cultural or social values and beliefs within your chosen context in your learning process?
- How does your learning process address the socio-ecological issues at local level while not neglecting the global context?
- Does your learning process take into account different cultural, religious and national beliefs?

Topic 3.4 provided you with a collection of five different learning process case studies that showcased different ways in which learning processes have been designed and implemented. The purpose of the topic was to provide practical examples of how the theory and methods you have been learning about in Topics 3,1, 3,2 and 3,3 have been and can be employed in practice.



Most of these case studies were of long term learning processes that required careful planning and implementation of many smaller learning activities over several months. The case studies provided examples of how other people have planned and run learning processes in natural resource management contexts.

Activity 4.1.4: Reflecting on the case studies:

- Which case study did you find the most interesting? Why?
- Which case study closely resembles your learning process? Why? In what ways does it differ?
- One of the ways of sharing your work beyond this course is to write up your learning process as a case study. You should try to make interesting and informative that anyone can read. Try to think of it as article for a newspaper or a blog online.
- Looking back at the activity below. Reflect on how it was useful to compare two case studies.

ACTIVITY:

Analyse the design of any two case studies and note how they might inform the design of your learning process (see Assignment 3)



Listen to each of the case studies. Select two case studies that resonate with you and using the template of questions provided below, analyse the design elements of the case study. Note the design elements that might be useful in informing the design of your learning process. Discuss your analysis within a study buddy and your tutor group.

1. What was the learning activity?
2. Who mediated it, for whom?
3. What was the purpose?
4. What was the context in which it took place?
5. What did the learners already know?
6. What did they need to learn?
7. What method(s) were followed/how was learning facilitated, and why?
8. What resources were used?
9. What did you learn about the useful methods and processes / the facilitation of learning, from the case study that might be useful in the design of your learning process?

Conclusion:

This course was designed with the goal of helping you to become a better NRM facilitator and trainer, who is reflexive and responsive to your community and organisational needs. We covered a range of topics from educational contextual profiling, stakeholder engagement, working with information, research methods, social learning and reflexive praxis, to types of learning theories and methods and processes that support social learning. It is by no means an exhaustive collection of resources and we hope that this has sparked your interest to dive deeper into these theories and topics should you so choose. The additional readings are always a great place to start.

Activity 4.1.5: Reflections of a reflexive practitioner

Looking back now at your journey being on this course, please reflect on the following questions below. You can write the answers down in your learning journal or discuss it with a friend or peer.

1. In what ways do you find you have become a more reflective practitioner?
2. What are the key things that you have learnt from this course that allows you to become a more reflexive in your work?
3. How do you ensure that you are responsive to the needs of your participants in your learning process?

