

Designing Tutorial Exercises: “Triggers”



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Why have you come here today? (taken from your comments)

- I am hoping to improve my current skills
- I want to have some guidance in course/module design
- I would really like to improve my teaching/communication/interaction skills with undergraduates (and getting a certificate for finishing this course would be a plus for my CV too)
- I want some ideas for getting students to engage with the materials and how best to structure assignments/exercises
- I have to be a lecturer when I finish my studies, so I would like to learn and practice the most effective skills
- I am interested in learning about triggers, since I haven't heard of this concept before

Learning Objectives : During this session, you will

- Gain more confidence in the facilitation of a tutorial
- Develop exercises in order to engage students actively, specifically with the concept known as a trigger
- Help your students to become more autonomous in their learning
- Develop better methods of reflection, specifically with the concept of creating a dialectic
- Move away from more traditional modes of lecturing and toward a process of enquiry-based learning

Outline of the session

- “Establishing a Dialectic”
- Icebreaker
- Enquiry-Based Learning, in brief
- Working with triggers
- Creating your own triggers
- Feedback



Establishing a dialectic

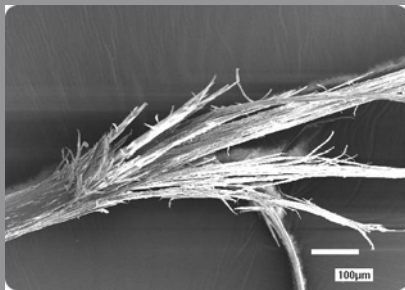
- There is some paper provided for you at the tables
- Please note the margins look a bit different than ordinary paper
- As you are working today, we will repeatedly ask you to reflect on what you are doing or have done. Until we say so, only write in the right-hand margin, leaving the large left-hand margin blank



NB: if you want to get certification, you will need to provide a portion of this notebook online

Ice Breaker: Identification

- Can you identify any of the images below?
- As you try, name what you think you see and discuss the effect of the images has on your way of seeing
- Write down your responses in the right-hand margin of your notebook

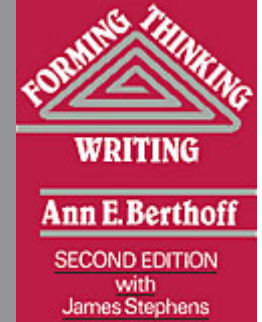


Ice Breaker: Identification

- Now share your responses with your table.
- Discuss what you all saw
 - Did you all see the same things?

Reflection

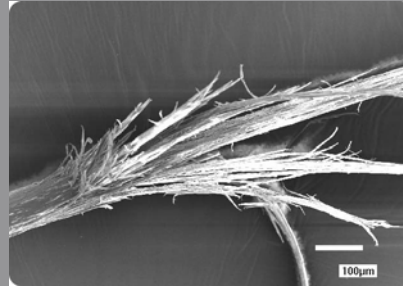
- As individuals, reflect not only on your own answers, but on the discussion that resulted from them, as well as the process you just experienced
- Were there any differences between what you and your partner saw? Did alternative identifications affect what you thought you saw? Explain
- Write these reflections in the left-hand margin of your “dialectical notebooks”.
 - Make sure you also comment back on what you originally wrote regarding the images
 - In addition, continually ask yourselves how you might use or adapt these exercises in your own tutorials



The Dialectical Notebook

- This process is meant to create a type of reflection about your creative and your reflective processes – *a dialectic*. It is meant to get you to delve deeper into the thinking process regarding both what you are doing and why you are doing it, by establishing a **thesis** or argument (the right-hand margin), positing the possibility of an alternative or contradiction to that proposition, an **antithesis** (the left-hand margin), and ultimately working toward creating a **synthesis** of the two into a new idea.
- Taken from Hegel's *Dialectics* and more recently from *Forming, Thinking, Writing* by Anne Bertoff and James Stephens

What do you see?



What do you see?



What do you see?



What do you see?



What do you see?



What do you see?



EBL offers the possibility of greater integration of different styles of learning:
Visual
Aural
Reading/Writing
Kinesthetic

or
VARK



Developing a Trigger



What is a trigger?

What sorts of things can be used as triggers?

Why is there a picture of a horse in this slide?

What is a trigger?

- In Enquiry-Based Learning, the presented stimulus [or trigger] provides the initial object for observation and analysis. This stimulus leads to the search for missing evidence, sources of knowledge, or ideas that are in turn tested for their validity and relevance. The initial scenario does not present us with an *a priori* truth from which we may deduce logical consequences. Rather it acts as the spur to a sequence of additional examinations. Out of these particulars we derive conclusions that, we hope, provide an appropriate response to the initial stimulus.

William Hutchings' "The Philosophical Bases of Enquiry Based Learning"

Creating a trigger

- Using a trigger is a good way to help students focus their attention and thereby facilitate deeper understanding

A trigger can be ...

- A prompt question
- An image
- A phrase
- A recording
- An exercise
- An experiment
- A case study
- A scenario



Generating a reflective response

- Think carefully about the two following triggers featured and discuss them by:
- Analysing the question, image, or scenario, specifically focusing on what they might be, what they might mean, and why they are featured
- Attempting to assign them some context that makes sense to you
- Write down your responses in the right-hand margin of your notebook

Some examples of triggers-1: The prompt question (with an image)

- Why has the artist, Rene Magritte, told us this is not a pipe, when it is clearly a pipe?



Trans: “This is not a pipe”

Some examples of triggers-2: The scenario

- You all have handouts detailing a “Thought Experiment” scenario
- Read over the piece and in the right-hand margins of your dialectical notebooks, consider the following questions
 - Would you plug into this machine? Why or Why not?
 - What would you be missing out on by plugging in? Explain.
 - Would a life plugged in be as worthwhile as an ordinary life with real experiences.

Facilitating Discussion

- Share your responses to the triggers with everyone in the group and discuss the relevant similarities and differences.
- Once completed, return to your notebooks and again reflect on the task just completed, only writing this time in the left-hand margin.
 - Comment as well back on what you originally wrote
- Share with everyone (volunteers)

What are some benefits to this type of activity?

- The trigger focuses the attention, but the initial writing of an answer gets students more involved and creative with the process of learning and exploring
- Having an answer already written down allows the quieter students a chance to speak without the pressure to come up with an idea “on the spot” and it prevents the more dominant students from taking over.
- Others?

Triggers

- Although relatively simple, these triggers are examples of what can be called “wicked problems” (as opposed to “tame problems”) – meaning that
 - The context of the problem *and* that of the person are both relevant
 - There is only a portion of the information available to begin generating an answer to the problem
 - There isn’t necessarily one, single, and correct answer

(Anna Hiley and J.A. Wilson)

Creating your own trigger

- Scenario: you need to develop a trigger for your own discipline-based course. A template has been provided for your work.
- Things to consider:
 - What content will the triggers relate to or emphasise?
 - What form will the trigger take? (i.e., an image, a phrase, etc.)
 - Will the trigger be used again in the course, or is this a one-off?
 - What do you hope the students will gain or learning from focusing on the trigger?

Creating your own trigger

- Share your with one other person at your table
- Offer each other suggestions for improvement
- Revise and discuss as a whole group
- Reflect on what you can do with triggers in your own tutorials and make suggestions in your notebooks
- Choose one trigger from the table to share with all

prompt

call to action

trigger

request

offer

cue

Feedback

constructive feedback



Please take some time now to complete the feedback forms

Announcements:

Online GTA Training Workshop to go “LIVE” again on 19 February 2010; contact Frank.Manista@manchester.ac.uk

Please consult <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/ceeb/> for future F2F workshops