



The Learning Conference 2015

Opening Session: Set Your Learning in Motion

June 10, 2015



Session Goals

Create a fun, networking space by being visual, collaborative, imaginative, and human-centered

Bring a high energy start to The Learning Conference 2015

Begin a conversation around learning and outcomes by quickly generating ideas, uncovering insights and building relationships





Set Your Learning in Motion Circuit Card: For this session, you will be participating in a circuit to share your experiences around learning and evaluation. Please feel free to sit at any table. The table you select will have an alpha-numeric table card - the letter will represent your circuit zone, the number will represent the exercise. When instructed, move to the next exercise within the same circuit zone - it will be a table immediately adjacent to your current table. When instructed to, please rotate tables in an ascending order (i.e., A-1 > A-2 > A-3 > A-1). Please use this card as an opportunity to write down any interesting learnings/conversations that occurred in each exercise.

Name:

Date:

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L

1. Low Tech Social Network

2. Hear, Do, Change

3. Post the Path



1. Low Tech Social Network

1. Create the avatars. (6 minutes):

- A: Using the blank avatar cards on the table, create your own avatar by drawing a picture that represents you. This can be a sketch of yourself, of your interests, of your passions.
- B: Create 2-3 hashtag words that indicate a goal for the conference and/or an interest of yours or your organization's.
- C: Include your name at the top of the card.

2. Upload the avatars. (1 minute). "Upload" your avatars by taping your card to the "network" sheet on the table.

3. Make the connections. (6 minutes). Find the people you know in the network and draw *solid lines* to make the connections. Connections can be made to people that have already uploaded their avatars but are not currently at the table. On the lines connecting your avatars, write down how you are connected. If there are no connections, draw a *dotted line* to someone you would like to be connected to, based on his/her hashtags, and write down how (or why) you might connect with that person.



1. Low Tech Social Network

Example 1:

Name: Grant Grantmaker

#Hashtags:

#CravingChowda (*who serves the best bowl of clam chowder in Boston?*)

#HereToLearnNotKeepScore (*we really focus on learning not on "keeping score"*)



Example 2:

Name: Philomena Philanthropist

#Hashtags:

#BeachReads (*ISO summer reading recs*)

#SayItWithData (*connect grantees with fresh, relevant research*)



2. Hear, Do, Change

Consider the recommended (or aspirational) learning practices that you hear, compare that to the realities of your work and, if they do not match up, brainstorm an action that might make the aspirations a reality. Begin by assigning one person at the table to be the timer for this activity.

- 1. Theory (Hear).** (3 minutes). On Post-It notes, write down some recommended (or aspirational) practices (one per Post-It) that you hear around learning. Place the notes under the 'Hear' column on the worksheet on the table.
- 2. Practice (Do).** (3 minutes). On Post-It notes, write down some of the day-to-day realities that impede or take you away from the recommended (or aspirational) learning practices. Place them under the 'Do' column.
- 3. Action (Change).** (7 minutes). As a table, discuss what it would require to bridge the gap between theory/aspiration (#1) and daily practice (#2). Ask one person to be the note-taker to document the conversation under the 'Change' column.



2. Hear, Do, Change

Examples:

HEAR

Before making any requests of grantees, decide how our foundation will actually use the data we are asking them to collect and report.

Share what our foundation is learning with others, such as grantees, other funders, community members and policy makers.

DO

We just move ahead without asking ourselves these questions because we do not have the time to inquire, reflect and adjust.

We share this information quarterly with our board and we reactively share it externally when asked for it but we're afraid to be more public with it.

CHANGE

Be realistic about asking only for the three to five most critical, actionable things that are most useful for grantees to help inform their next steps and are simultaneously informative for us at the foundation.

Take a few small steps: post any research or evaluation that we commission publicly on our website and set up regular calls/meetings with grantees working in common strategy areas to make meaning from what we're collectively learning/hearing/seeing.



3. Post the Path

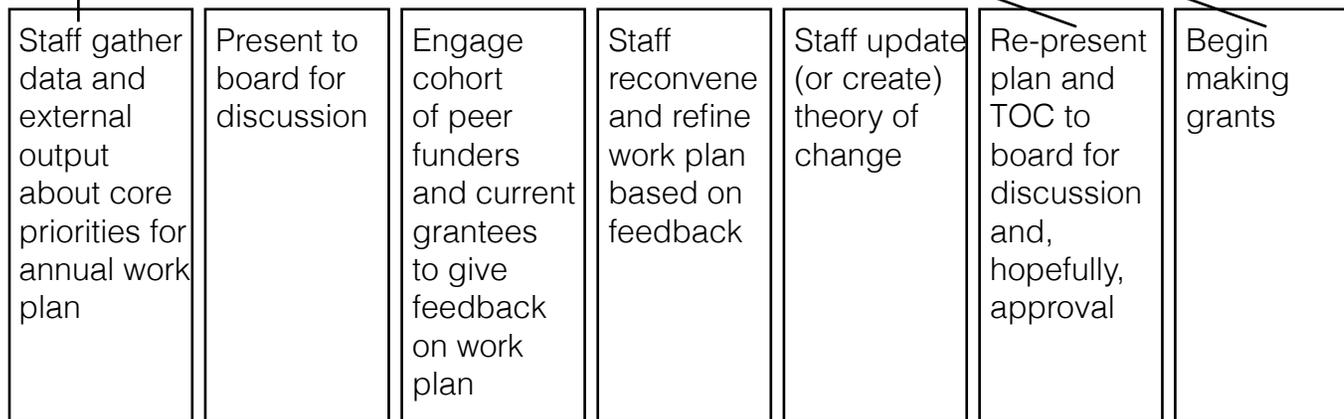
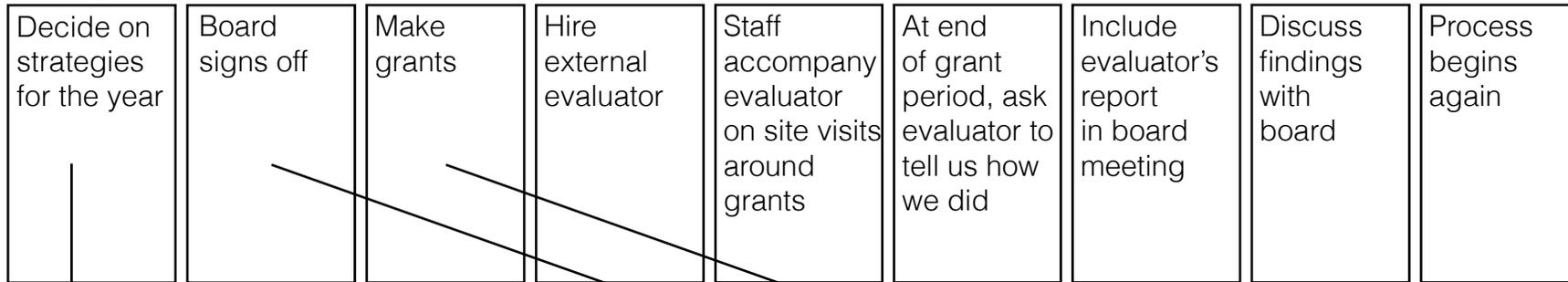
Consider your organizational and individual process for learning. Begin by assigning one person at the table to be the timer for this activity.

- 1. Individual Process.** (4 minutes). Using Post-It notes, map out the steps (one per Post-It) for your organizational and individual process for learning. When does learning occur in the organization? How are learning practices structured, either formally or informally? Who is involved? What are approvals/processes required? How are other commitments juggled?
- 2. Group Mapping.** (6 minutes). Each person should post their steps in rows on the worksheet on the table. As a group, compare the steps of the different learning processes as well as the timing of when the learning occurs.
- 3. Similarities & Differences.** (3 minutes). As a table, discuss the key similarities and differences from the different learning processes as well as any insights about the differences. Ask one person to document the similarities, differences and insights.



3. Post the Path

Examples: Path 1



Examples: Path 2



Reflection Wall

Looking around the room and reflecting on the session, write down and SKETCH (!) positive, stand-out moments of working together, learning from each other or participating in some way in this session together. (5 min)

Once complete, we will ask for volunteers to share their reflections with the larger group. Following the session, we encourage you to tape up your reflections on the wall outside the ballroom, forming a visual “reflection wall.” (5 min)



Everyone has the opportunity throughout the duration of the conference to see others’ reflections as well as put up new self-reflection moments that they are willing to share. These can include:

- Aha moments
- Things I learned
- Things I re-learned
- Things I was surprised by
- Positive, stand-out moments

Sticky colour dots will be provided next to the visual “reflection wall” for anyone to “like” or “endorse” other comments.

