

From *What Is* to *What If* to *Let's Try*: a Treasure-Box for the Playful Academic Supplementary Material B: Guide for Facilitators

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Below you find advice to help you use and adapt the protocol to your concrete context.

1. When to use (activities from) the protocol?

Overall, the activities we provide in the protocol invite you to take the time to arrive more fully to the material, physical and social environment of your everyday work, and thus discover it from a new perspective. Through its overall structure, it takes care of a diverse but nested exploration: it not only supports you to venture onto new grounds, it also equips you with tools to reflect on and integrate these experiences. As such it could be used to start a week, a day or a specific working project or session with a group, but it might also become part of a more regular routine.

2. How much time does it require?

To run the entire protocol we assume you need at least 2-3 hours. While we recommend to take this time once in a while, of course it is not always possible to devote several hours to explorative collaboration. At other times, you might therefore pick one or several of the activities, relevant to your current work, and use that to begin your meeting. By itself, and as a reminder of the entire 'family of activities' from the protocol, this can serve as a work-related but personally grounding check-in. When you explore with the protocol, it helps to set a time-frame that acknowledges everyone's needs and interests. Such a frame can also amount to 'we are open to how long this takes' - what matters is to set and subsequently take care of this frame, together.

3. Which (order of) activities to use?

We consciously chose the order and range of activities: the protocol begins with activities that ease you into working together and make you aware of your body, environment and fellow researchers. It proceeds with a set of questions to reflect on intentions and motivation, as well as tasks for creative reading and writing. Throughout the protocol, we invite moments of short sharing or check-in rounds. While we found this progression helpful, you might want to vary order or select single activities according to your needs.

4. How to vary the activities to prepare for a specific task?

The version of the protocol we offer here is particularly designed to facilitate playful writing. However, below each activity we provide a box with possibilities for variation - to cater towards other academic tasks or allow non-repetitive reuse of the scores over the duration of a project.

5. How to prepare the room and the group?

We recommend that you think about the level of introduction to the purpose or origin of the protocol / individual activities that is appropriate in the particular group you are working with. What does everyone need to be ready to start? In case you are hosting the meeting space: what should be available in that space, to support you and everybody else? In case the event is online and everybody is in their own space: in which way should they prepare (have water available, be undisturbed, which tools do they need..)?

6. Who should facilitate?

We suggest you take turns (at co-)facilitating, so that each of you has the chance to gather experience as a facilitator. This will also help you to learn to take care of your work as a group, together. Familiarity with the experiences you are facilitating can put you at ease and therein enable you to respond to the group in the moment - as such, consider which activities you might feel most comfortable with and begin by facilitating those.

7. How to cater for spontaneous needs and possibilities?

It is our biggest intent to stress the importance of sensitivity on all experiential levels. This of course applies to the facilitation of this protocol, too! During the session, try to be as neutral as possible and let the group find its own pace into the set of exercises that you have prepared: try to stay open to knowing *now* what is the right thing to do or say. The protocol is in important ways designed to lead us into uncharted territory. Our understanding is that presence and readiness to respond to unexpected courses of events are based on clear communication, regular check-in with the group, and the ability to stay calm and available to yourself *and* the group throughout the process. Trust that time will train your instincts on when to shift the task or setting. Consider your own and the group's experience your best teacher.

An image we find useful is that of a buffet, festive space, or a color palette and canvas: consider what is needed in advance and prepare with care, but then let go and engage with the dynamics of the moment, instead of clinging too much to your plan.

8. How to keep eyes and ears open for everybody's needs?

Working with the protocol can create intimate social spaces: moments in which members of a group feel at ease and thus ready to depart from long-time familiar territory. This is further encouraged by the opportunities for fun, creativity and surprise. Moving in unexplored, unfamiliar terrains, however, can also be uncomfortable or difficult, and confront us with our vulnerability. Since we are in a group process, it may be difficult for the facilitator to decide: am I ready to support the group in listening to all of us wherever we are? Such moments of tension can become important learning experiences and potential sources of strength for a group, but they can also take up more time than you want or anticipate. We take from this an interest in activities that look deeper into group dynamics¹

Since every group is different and continues to evolve over time, we suggest that you use the questions below to inquire about your experience with the protocol/activities. The qualitative analysis approach that we used for our own evaluation might help you here - you can find it in **Supplementary Materials C**. No matter whether you use the questionnaire for formal or informal evaluation - making the protocol useful can in itself be a fruitful process of collaborative exploration.

1. Please take a moment to think back to the experience. Do you recall any striking moments?
2. What did you find challenging, irritating or similar? What did you find especially valuable?
3. If you engaged with the protocol just recently: How do you think it might affect your study, research or work? If you engaged with it already a while ago: Did you experience any effects on your study, research or work?
4. Would you like to continue exploring with the activities of the protocol? If so, what do you imagine?
5. Is there anything else you would like to remark?

1 Find a list of resources that we consider useful at: <https://wearethefuture.net/social-moments/>