

8. Drawing metaphors

Aim: This is a reflective drawing activity that can reveal insight into the change achieved by an individual from working within a practice.

Group reflection

1. **First consider**, what is a metaphor? A definition is provided along with references for those interested in further reading.

Metaphor defined

Metaphors allow us to understand and experience one kind of thing in terms of another. Like the “container” in the “Container of time” drawing activity (see activity 3) is a metaphor for “time”. They help us to identify our beliefs and assumptions. When we look beyond the literal we can analyse and interpret them in order to gain a deeper understanding of ourselves. Metaphors can allow others to better know how we feel while also allowing us to recognise our feelings. When we draw metaphors they speak back to us. Our vision/sight is our strongest sense. Presenting a metaphor visually helps others see what we mean.

(Eisner, 2002, 2008; Feinstein, 1982; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Leavy, McSorley, & Boté, 2007; Morgan, 1986; Sullivan 2010)

2. **Select** the most appropriate set of instructions, A or B. For wider application ‘Mentoring’ can be substituted with supervisor, head of department, coordinator, principal etc.

Instructions A. Metaphor – Mentoring

Draw and/ or write your metaphor for mentoring in as much detail as you can.

Consider:

- How do you see yourself as mentor of colleague teachers?
- What does, mentoring colleague teachers mean for you?

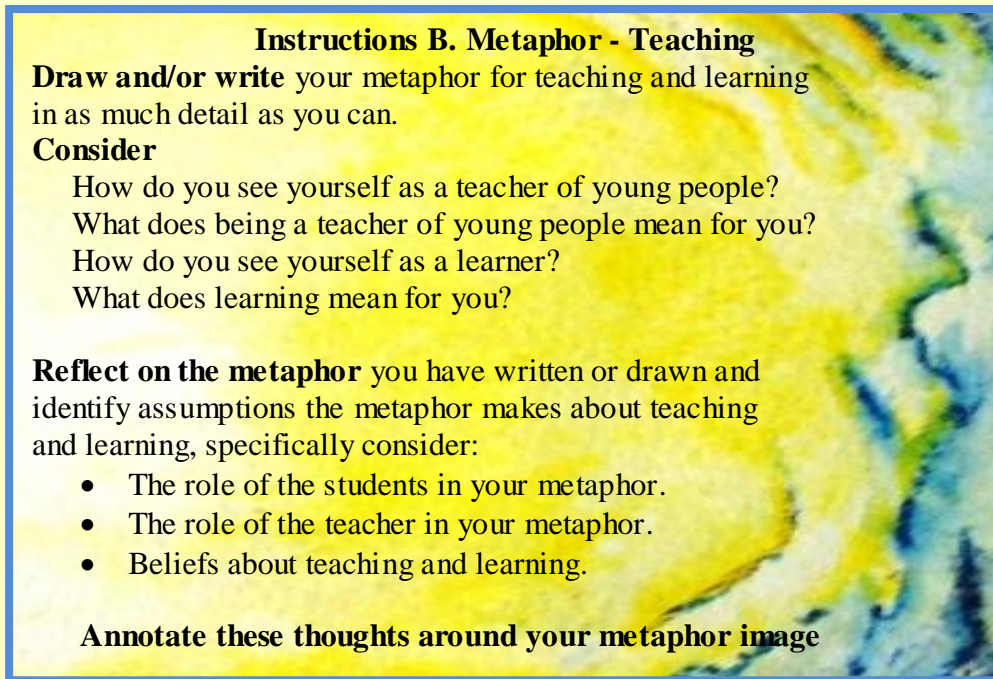
Reflect on the metaphor image and identify assumptions the metaphor makes about mentoring, specifically consider:

- The role of your colleague teachers in your metaphor.
- The role of the mentor in your metaphor.
- Beliefs about mentoring.

Annotate these thoughts around your metaphor image

Resources

- Large sheet of drawing paper (A3)
- Drawing pencils



Instructions B. Metaphor - Teaching

Draw and/or write your metaphor for teaching and learning in as much detail as you can.

Consider

- How do you see yourself as a teacher of young people?
- What does being a teacher of young people mean for you?
- How do you see yourself as a learner?
- What does learning mean for you?

Reflect on the metaphor you have written or drawn and identify assumptions the metaphor makes about teaching and learning, specifically consider:

- The role of the students in your metaphor.
- The role of the teacher in your metaphor.
- Beliefs about teaching and learning.

Annotate these thoughts around your metaphor image

The drawn and/or written metaphor is now a resource for reflection

Group or Personal reflection

3. Discuss and/or write

It is important to articulate and clarify the intentions of the metaphor image drawn. This is best done with another person or in a small group. Each member explains what they intended to communicate. Interpret the image by analysing it by treating the whole image or parts of the image as symbols.

What do the images/symbols mean in the light of past or present experiences?

What does the image reveal to the creator?

What does the image reveal to other members of the group?

Allow the discussion to unfold as each person will interpret the images from their context adding to the creators intentions. This will give a fuller interpretation and may provide new meaning of each member's personal metaphor image.

4. Date your image and place it in a safe place for several months.

5. Revisit the metaphor The aim is to reveal new insights into the mentor's and/or teacher's learning as the result of their work within the mentoring and/or teaching practice.

Write and/or discuss the aspects of the metaphor image that the mentor and/or teacher would change since its creation?

OR

Draw and/or write a new metaphor image following the same instructions as used previously. Compare and contrast the two images.