



ACT-ivate AMBIGUITY

**Systemic change
requires us to stop
surviving the unknown
and start designing it.**



The reason embedding the WFG Act feels hard isn't laziness or resistance — it's neuroscience. **Our brains are pattern-completion machines,** wired to reach for the **nearest familiar solution when faced with ambiguity.** Some of WFG Act such as **long-term thinking and prevention feel viscerally uncomfortable because they don't resolve quickly.** This activity names that discomfort, then gently expands our capacity to work with it.



AMBIGUITY

1. Ask participants to **reflect on times when their work has been full of uncertainty**. Ask them to construct a metaphor for how the ambiguity feels to them: is it a blocked drain? A fog? A wall? A slow tide? Ask them to write it onto a *tile*
2. **Briefly explain the science**: our brains treat unresolved problems like physical pain. To escape that unease, we instinctively grab for quick fixes that simply repackage business as usual, like using tick-box exercises to retrofit old solutions onto new objectives.
3. **Draw three columns on a board "Endure, Engage, Embrace"** and ask the group to place their personal metaphors tiles across this spectrum.
4. Next, ask them to take a different coloured pen and **write a second metaphor** onto a new *tile* detailing how their organisational culture handles uncertainty, and map it onto the same board.
5. **Step back and explore the spread together**, noticing any differences, use reflective questions to capture what the map means to the participants.
6. **Turn that cultural friction into collaborative momentum**. Pose the design challenge: **How might we more consistently embrace ambiguity?** Play a rapid-fire, five-minute game of 'Yes, and...' where each person immediately builds on the last suggestion.

WORKS WITH



A good activity as part of long-term thinking exercises especially **Foresight Cards** to help participants process any unease that session has surfaced.

SOURCE

Andrea Small & Kelly Schmutte (2022) *Navigating Ambiguity: Creating Opportunity in a World of Unknowns* A Stanford d.school guide.



FORESIGHT



ACT-ivate

AXIS OF UNCERTAINTY

Stress-testing work plans for future resilience



Resilience comes from acknowledging that the **future is a range of possibilities**, not a single track. This activity **moves** participants **towards adaptive thinking**. By stress-testing current processes against **different versions of tomorrow**, they can identify which actions are safe bets and which make them vulnerable when the environment shifts.

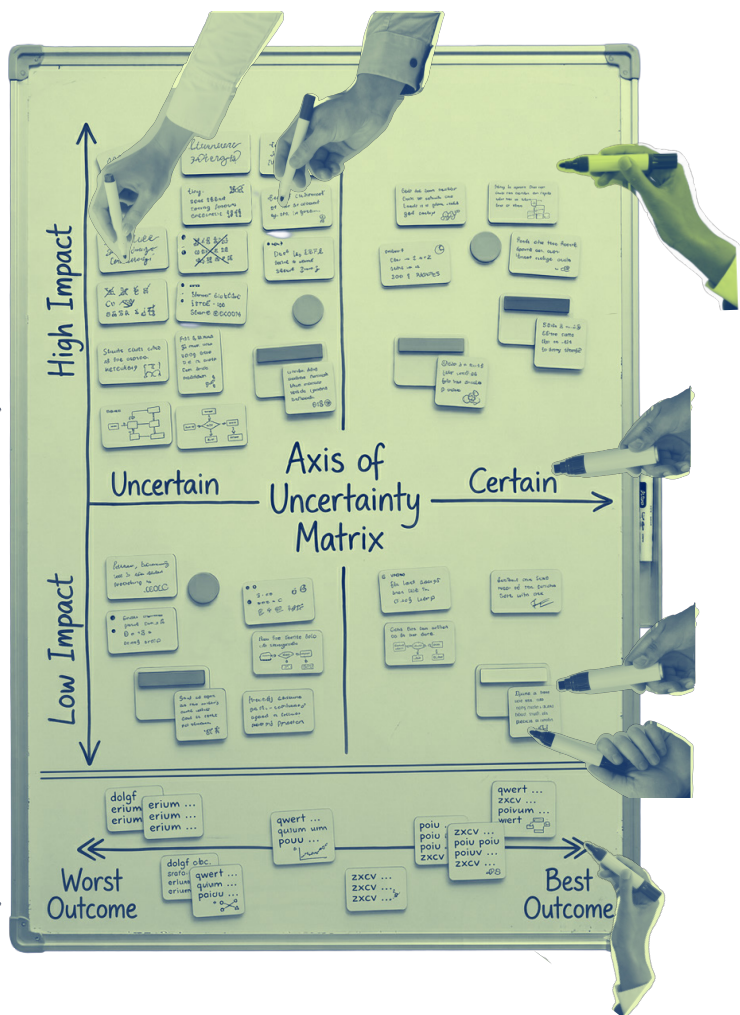
AXIS OF UNCERTAINTY

1. **Tailor the topic to something relevant to the group** you are working with. Eg The workforce of the future for HR, Finance planning etc.
2. Use a cabaret style set up to **organise trainees into groups between 4-6**. If using the sustainable toolkit give each table a large double sided dry wipe board with the impact/certainty matrix drawn out (see over). Use flip chart and sticky notes if this isn't available.
3. *If this follows from PESTLE-C analysis refer the group to the changes previously identified. If using this as a standalone activity you will need to provide this information to the group. We recommend using the key headings from the future trends infographics as moveable 'tiles'.*
4. Taking it in turns, encourage the group to **take a driver tile and move it to the relevant part of the matrix**. Ask your participants:- *Do you think this driver could have a big impact on the future of your work? How certain are we about what that might look like?* the tile is **placed on the matrix according to impact and certainty**.
5. Ask the group to **identify one tile from the high impact high uncertainty quadrant and remove it from the board**. If using the sustainable toolkit flip over your board to reveal a continuum drawn out from worst to best outcome. Looking at the driver that they have chosen answer the following questions - **What worries you about this trend? What are your hopes?** (What is uncertain about this trend/ driver?). Write answers directly on the board and place along the continuum depending on group views. *Talk through an example in plenary to aid the conversation.*
6. Bring the group back together and ask what drivers people looked at. Choose one and ask - **how might we use our work to nudge the future towards the best outcomes.**

**Axis of uncertainty
sustainable
toolkit
worked
example**



**Outcome
continuum
sustainable
toolkit
worked
example**



WORKS WITH



Follow **Act-ivate PESTLE-C** analysis to root discussion in the drivers of change they have identified as relevant to their job.



Act-ivate Ambiguity to help address any uncomfortable feelings from the activities

SOURCE

Hwb Dyfodol Community of Practice. Welsh Government **Future Trends Report**



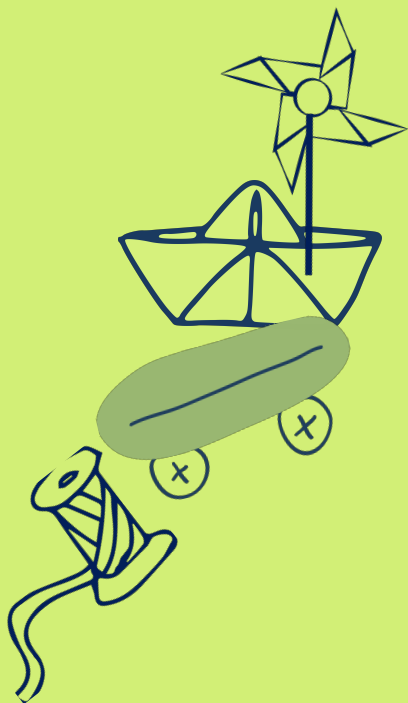


ACT-ivate **AXIS OF**
UNCERTAINTY



ACT-ivate PROTOTYPE

**Experience the future
you want to build**



Say the word **prototype** and most of us think of eccentric inventors in cluttered sheds.

Challenge your trainees to get creative with 'experience prototyping' to test how their ideas for better implementation of the WFG Act interact with the everyday.

PROTOTYPE

1. If no idea has already emerged for prototyping **start the session with a 'how might we' question based on the theme of your session.** Once an idea is fixed, introduce participants to their toolkit - **you will have curated a range of items eg. masking tape, coloured string, envelopes, high-vis vests, bells, and beads. Use repurposed items where possible.** Split the group into teams you will need at least two different teams.
2. Challenge teams to **visualise their 'idea'** using only the materials available. **How could they build a model of their idea so it physically appears in the room.**
3. Once prototypes are constructed, **groups pair up and trial each others prototyped models.** Use this as a testing phase, how do they work, where do users find friction or confusion?
4. Ask the group to come back together - use reflective questioning, **Did the physical build reveal unexpected problems? Did it help you think through the process through the eyes of the user and what did that reveal?**

WORKS WITH



Act-ivate Empathy either to test out identified issues, or as a precursor to test how the users responded to the new ideas.



Combine with **Act-ivate How Might We** to test out any solutions to the problems encountered with the prototyped solution.

SOURCE

Nesta and Thinkpublic (2012) Prototyping Framework: A guide to prototyping new ideas. London: Nesta.

Scott Witthoft. (2022) *This Is a Prototype: The Curious Craft of Exploring* Stanford d.School Guide Ten Speed Press.





ACT-ivate

PRIORITIES

Making space for what matters



Achieving the **Wales We Want** may not be **possible** if our day to day is filled up **with yesterday's solutions**. This activity uses a gardening metaphor to help groups 'prune out' the deadwood of their own work programmes.



PRIORITIES

1. **The Gardener's Dilemma:** Introduce the metaphor. You cannot grow a prize harvest if you never prune. Cut away 'suckers'—green shoots that drain energy.
2. The Personal Audit: **Ask participants to identify one 'sucker' in their real life** (e.g., a subscription or habit) to build the 'stopping' muscle.
3. **Identify the 'Dead Wood':** In their work, which legacy reports, meetings, or processes are brittle, dry, and blocking the light for fresh growth?
4. **The Shears:** Use the seven well-being goals as the pruning tool. If a task doesn't provide nutrients to at least one goal, it's a candidate for composting.
5. **The New Growth:** By 'stopping' one specific thing today, name the new 'seed' (a project or way of working) that finally has the space and light to grow.
6. Be playful with the way this is presented, where time allows think about how you curate the space to make the metaphor come to life.

WORKS WITH



Act-ivate Commitment if something needs to stop – hold people to it.



Act-ivate Ambiguity– prepare yourself for challenging the status quo by getting comfortable with metaphor.





ACTivate

PASSAGE OF TIME

Exploring how one
decision has multiple
outcomes



This exercise uses the ‘seeing in multiples’ methodology from the **K12 Futures Library** to help explore divergent outcomes. Its aim is to help cultivate the cognitive flexibility needed to shift away from business as usual.

PASSAGE OF TIME

1. **Working in pairs provide a time branch map (see over) to each participant.** Ask each pair to reflect on where they think their organisation is today in terms of implementation of the WFG Act.
2. Then, **ask them to visualise three different scenarios** branching out from today. Ask them to explore a future scenario where (a) *the principles of the Act get forgotten*, (b) *They stay the same* or (c) *they vastly improve*.
3. **Ask the group what happens next?** Encourage the group to think about the variables which may have significant leverage within each system.
4. **Pairs pair up to form of groups of four to reflect on the outcomes of the time branches.** - *what feels most like the current trajectory? which would be preferable? what do they need to do to develop certainty to avoid future pitfalls.*
5. **In plenary use reflective questioning to understand where shared points of failure and opportunity lie.**
6. What signals might they need to pay attention to that will help them see which branch is unfolding.
7. Use a *How Might We* round to challenge participants to activate their learning

WORKS WITH



Act-ivate Time Branch – you could be more playful with the approach and ask your participants to become temporologists and map out how they create the pathway the minister tasked them with

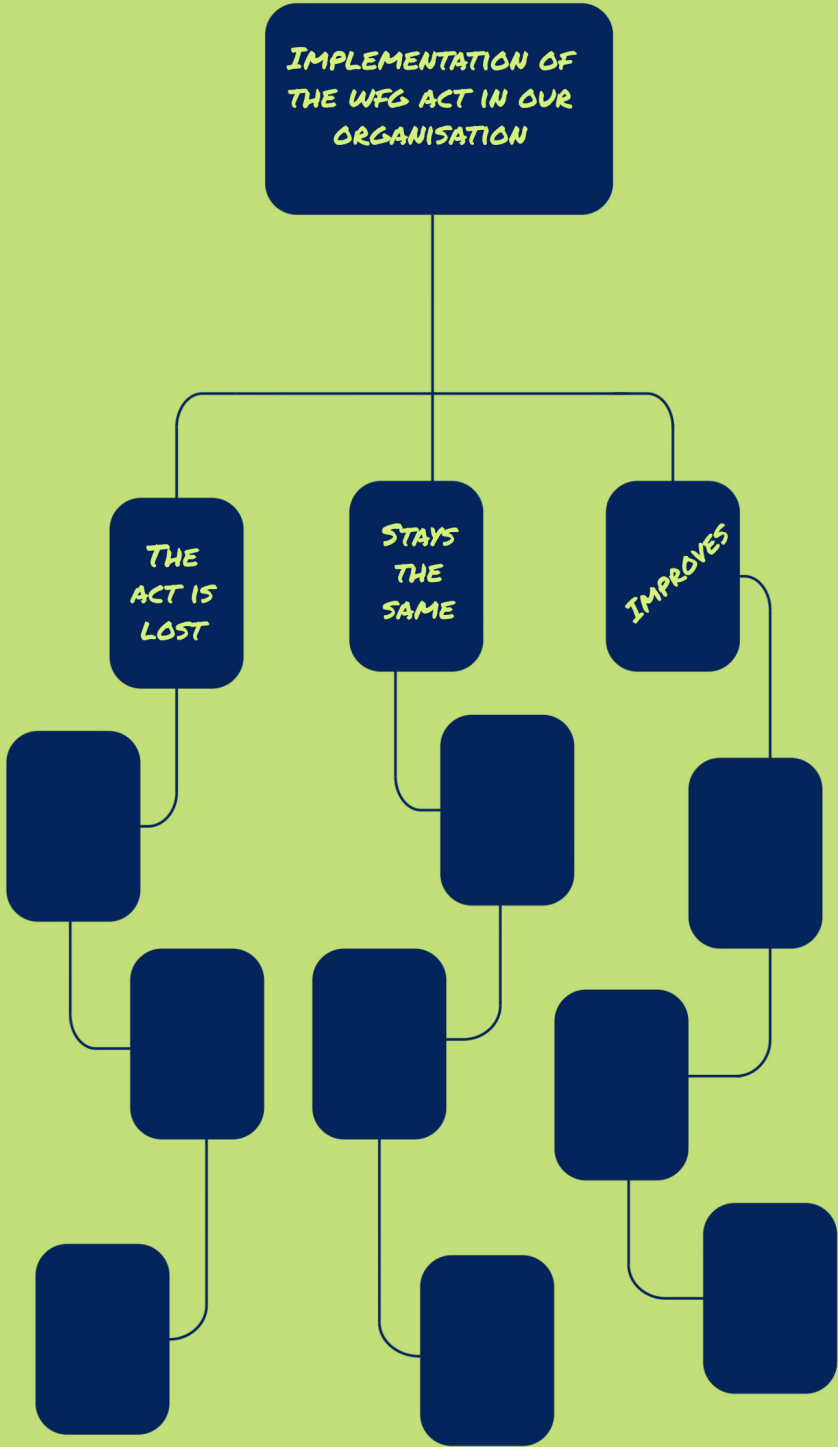


Act-ivate Reflection – use after a reflection session to plot out the consequences of no change, flexing creative muscles after detail orientated work.

SOURCE

This activity takes inspiration from the ‘branching out’ tool developed by Ariel Raz and Louie Montoya at the D school K12 Futures Library.

TIME BRANCH MAP EXAMPLE





ACTivate
PASSAGE OF TIME



ACT-ivate

WAYS OF WORKING

Moving policy speak to practical habits



To a **newcomer**, the five ways of working can feel like a **layer of jargon on top of the day job**. This card is your translator to help trainees feel confident and comfortable.

WAYS OF WORKING

1. **Introduce the Five Ways of Working as a mechanism of positive change.** Using skills from Act.ivate Knowledge, show a real world story of change, where the ways of working have made beneficial impact, either to an organisation, a community or a specific outcome.
2. **Present the Journey Spectrum:** Making Simple Changes → Being More Adventurous → Owning your Ambition → Leading the Way. Ask groups to plot where their current approach sits.
3. **Introduce 'Enablers and Disablers' concepts from the Learning Journeys.** Ask trainees to identify one 'Disabler' (e.g., working in silos or short-term budget cycles) currently holding them back.
4. Review the 'Enablers' list. Identify which internal support (e.g., multi-disciplinary teams) they need to move towards 'Leading the Way'.
5. Choose one Way of Working (e.g., Prevention). Use **Act-ivate 'How Might We'** techniques to bring creative thinking to the task, e.g. *How might we change one small thing to move us forward on this journey ?* Combine with **Act-ivate 'Yes and'** so the group can build momentum to embed their learning with positivity.

WORKS WITH



Act-ivate the Seven Well-being Goals for a thorough applied session on the basics



Act-ivate Future Vision to make the theory come to life



Act-ivate How Might We and **Act-ivate Yes, And** to conclude the session on a positive note.

SOURCE

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales **Journeys to help embed the well-being goals** Guides to help better understand how to embed the well-being goals from the Well-being of Future Generations Act.