



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.

