

Burren Innovation Lab

Creative Facilitation at Burren College of Art



You Need

- Something different.
- An event or journey of events that has a lasting impact.
- To connect to your teams hearts as well as their heads. To leave with a feeling in their gut for willful action.
- A facilitation framework that provides structure yet freedom to go to the place of most potential.

We Have

- **An environment conducive to creative learning:**
 - The Burren – the ultimate outdoor classroom
 - Newtown Castle – 16th century medieval castle on Ireland's remote Atlantic coast
 - Burren College of Art – steeped in creative arts with studios and facilities that allow you to be, think and act creatively
- **Expert facilitation:**
 - to create and hold the space for the work you need to do
 - to guide and navigate you through your creative journey
 - to question, challenge, encourage and draw out your best
- **Creative faculty:**
 - World class BCA resident and visiting faculty
 - BCA students
 - Local artists, writers, sculptors, story tellers, dramatists , musicians and poets
- **An Innovative Framework:**
 - Theory U (developed at MIT by Prof Otto Scharmer) – a framework that allows participants to travel a journey to profound innovation and change. Details below.
- **Creative Processes & Methodologies**
 - World Café – methodology to have meaningful conversations
 - Dialogue circle – process for deep dialogue
 - Painting, drawing, scribbling, collage, photography, and sculpture
 - Vision Quest – outdoor silent exploration in the Burren to contemplate profound questions resulting in creative insight
 - Voicing– using our voice to overcome blindspots
 - Conscious Embodiment - martial art and mindfulness practice to offer simple yet deep techniques that help you recognize how your mind and body habitually react to pressure, and to access more skillful and unified responses
 - Personality Typing – using Enneagram or similar process to create greater personal awareness as a key to becoming aware of the 'self' as a block to the creative/innovative process. *Where am 'I' in the situation/problem?*
- **Local Resources:**
 - Burren Outdoor Education Centre – outdoor learning experiences
 - Ailwee Caves & Birds Of Prey Centre – Hawk Walk: guided walk with experienced handlers giving opportunity to handle, fly and feed your very own hawk, an unique opportunity to interact with nature
 - Michael Cusack Center – home of founder of the GAA
 - Atlantic Ocean – yachting, cruises, water sports, etc.
 - Many more.

The Result

- **A Creative Team:** of reflective, independent learners; to enhance deep understanding of the focus of your workshop within and across functions; and to promote critical and creative thinking.
- **Collaborative Problem Finders & Solvers:** Participants share innovative practices and build strategies to find and solve the challenges they face within and outside their organisation.
- **Captured Insights:** Participants harvest key lessons from the cutting-edge methodologies and the practical experiences gained from them.
- **Usable Knowledge:** Participants explore and learn methods and models that can be adapted to suit a variety of organisational contexts.
- **Leadership Capacities:** Seven Essential Theory U Leadership Capacities – see below.
- **Practical Impact:** Participants support one another in making real advances in the challenges they face in their organisation.

Sample Workshop Topics

- Strategy Creation – Blue Ocean
- Shared Vision
- Team Development
- Values Based Culture
- New Product Creation
- Organisational Change Exploration
- Problem Finding / Solving
- Organisation Repositioning / Reinvention
- New Market Development
- How to Create a Learning Organisation
- How to Get the Best from our People
- Etc, etc

All workshops are customised specifically to meet your needs.

Note: Lab can used as a place where you come to work on issues /opportunities as and when they arise (developing an approach and skill-base in the process).

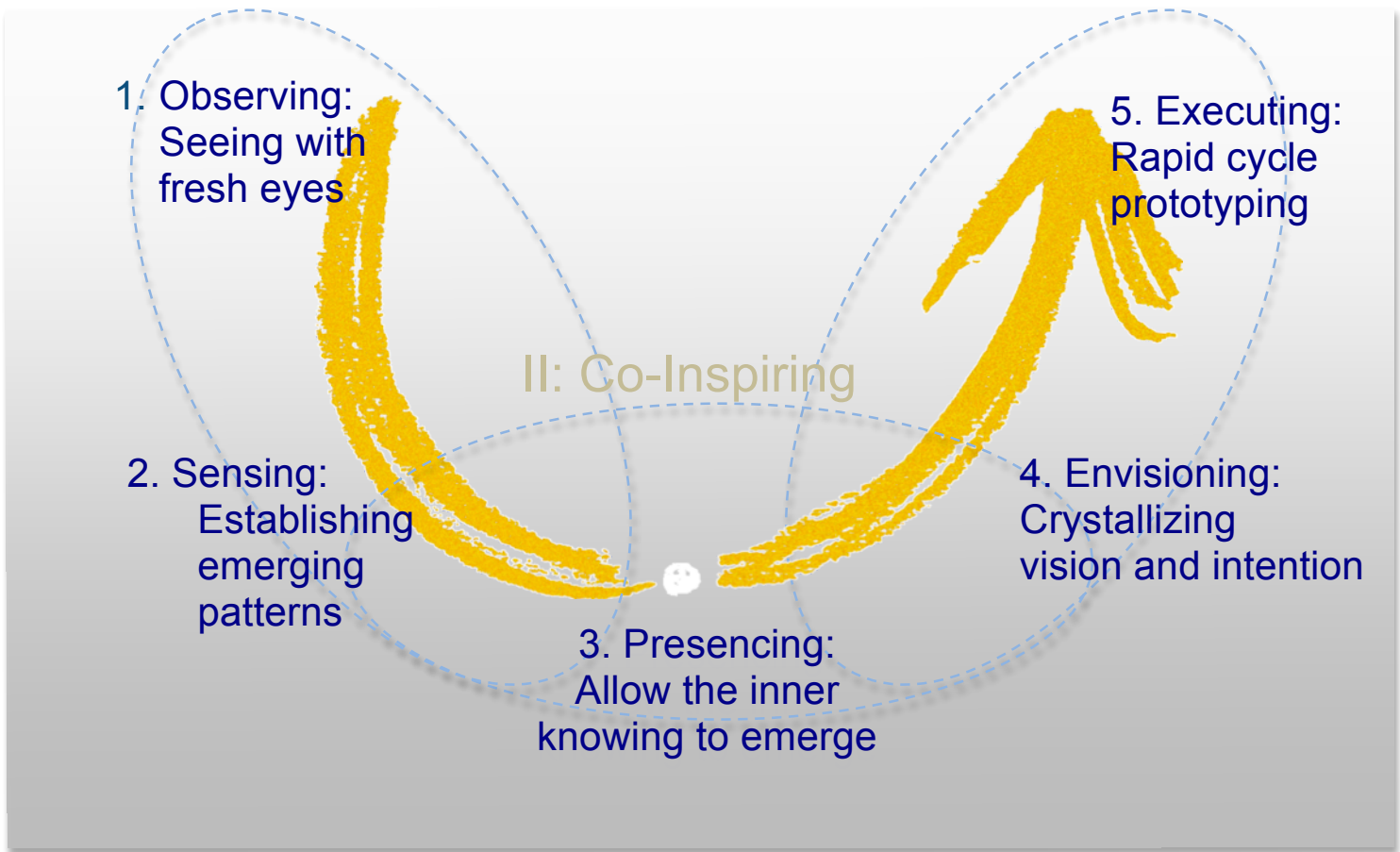
What's Different?

What prevents us from attending to situations more effectively is our blind spot, the inner place from which our attention and intention originate. It is blind because we are unaware of how it functions and the enormous influence it has on our perceptions and hence our actions. By moving through Scharmer's U process, we consciously access the blind spot and learn to connect to our authentic Self -- the deepest source of knowledge and inspiration -- in the realm of "presencing," a term coined by Scharmer that combines the concepts of presence and sensing. Here we are able to pay attention in a way that allows us to experience the opening of our minds, our hearts, and our wills. Through this process we shift our awareness, connect with our best future possibility, and gain the ability to realise it.

The Framework

I: Co-Perceiving

III: Co-Creating



As the diagram illustrates, we move down one side of the U (connecting us to the world that is outside of our institutional bubble) to the bottom of the U (connecting us to the world that emerges from within) and up the other side of the U (bringing forth the new into the world).

On that journey, at the bottom of the U, lies an inner gate that requires us to drop everything that isn't essential. This process of letting-go (of our old ego and self) and letting-come (our highest future possibility: our Self) establishes a subtle connection to a deeper source of knowing. The essence of presencing is that these two selves—our current self and our best future Self—meet at the bottom of the U and begin to listen and resonate with each other.

Once a group crosses this threshold, nothing remains the same. Individual members and the group as a whole begin to operate with a heightened level of energy and sense of future possibility. Often they then begin to function as an intentional vehicle for an emerging future.

Seven Theory U Leadership Capacities

The journey through the U develops seven essential leadership capacities.

1. Holding The Space of Listening

The foundational capacity of the U is listening. Listening to others. Listening to oneself. And listening to what emerges from the collective. Effective listening requires the creation of open space in which others can contribute to the whole.

2. Observing

The capacity to suspend the “voice of judgment” is key to moving from projection to true observation.

3. Sensing

The preparation for the experience at the bottom of the U—presencing—requires the tuning of three instruments: the open mind, the open heart, and the open will. This opening process is not passive but an active “sensing” together as a group. While an open heart allows us to see a situation from the whole, the open will enables us to begin to act from the emerging whole.

4. Presencing

The capacity to connect to the deepest source of self and will allows the future to emerge from the whole rather than from a smaller part or special interest group.

5. Crystalising

When a small group of key persons commits itself to the purpose and outcomes of a project, the power of their intention creates an energy field that attracts people, opportunities, and resources that make things happen. This core group functions as a vehicle for the whole to manifest.

6. Prototyping

Moving down the left side of the U requires the group to open up and deal with the resistance of thought, emotion, and will; moving up the right side requires the integration of thinking, feeling, and will in the context of practical applications and learning by doing.

7. Performing

A prominent violinist once said that he couldn't simply play his violin in Chartres cathedral; he had to “play” the entire space, what he called the “macro violin,” in order to do justice to both the space and the music. Likewise, organisations need to perform at this macro level: they need to convene the right sets of players (frontline people who are connected through the same value chain) and to engage a social technology that allows a multi-stakeholder gathering to shift from debating to co-creating the new.

Source: Otto Sharmer, Presencing Institute

Sample Workshop & Agenda

Background: This organisation wanted to develop their culture to become truly innovative. Their new strategy was all centered around innovation. They knew this could only come from an innovative culture.

Purpose: Define the required culture and establish a set of values that would cultivate this culture.

Duration: 2 separate days (month between)

Pework: All members of the management team to interview three members of staff using the Stakeholder Dialogue Interview process. Also, bring with them objects, artifacts, photos, etc. that represent values they hold dearly.

Agenda

Evening Pre-Day1

- Team members arrive, check into accommodation, meet for dinner followed by Irish traditional music in castle tower around turf fire. Craig agus ceol!

Day 1

- Dialogue walk interviews in pairs to uncover purpose and needs of individuals and the group.
- Briefing and practice of four levels of listening.
- Vision Quest – outdoor silent exploration in the Burren to contemplate critical questions.
- Story teller – local farmer tells story of how the Burren operates as a micro-culture, how the elements and people work together to make this unique landscape. Purpose: to experience systems thinking - and how a systems approach can create a shift.
- Sculpting Exercise – shaping the system with insights from the day, and how it is perceived from four different perspectives.
- Dialogue circle – process for deep dialogue on what is emerging and what our work is to do.

Interim Period

- Shadowing Journey: step into someone else's daily work experience by accompanying them for a 1/2 day to observe him/her during work, and learn from this observation.
- Visit from CEO of another company to share values based culture experienced he has had and how they attempt to live those values.
- Culture Survey with staff.

Day 2

- Centering practice.
- Culture survey reflection.
- World Café – meaningful conversations using powerful questions around what matters with respect to our culture.
- Voicing– using the power of voice to identify blindspots
- Painting, drawing and collage exercise to determine what wants to emerge.
- Dialogue circle – closure to this experience, next chapter?