

# Unleashing Potential: Brave Strategies for Growth in Ourselves, Teams, and Organizations

Cherie Werhun, PhD



I care a lot about developing  
human potential.



# My Journey

- the psychological experience of discrimination and stereotyping in achievement
- Teaching and learning potential (University of Toronto)
- Faculty potential
- Recent years – the future potential capacities of our students



# What do we mean by potential?

Figure 4 - What are the top skills employers look for in entry-level and mid-career hires?



(LinkedIn L



Flexibility

# The 2024 Most In-Demand Skills

1. Communication
2. Customer service
3. Leadership
4. Project management
5. Management
6. Analytics
7. Teamwork
8. Sales
9. Problem-solving
10. Research

Top skill of the moment: Adaptability

**Organizations must invest in their leaders and leaders in turn must invest in their teams, helping them navigate all of these changes while staying productive and avoiding mental and physical burnout.**

More than that, they have to support their teams to emerge better than they were, with new skills, a higher level of engagement and commitment, and the resilience and agility they need to tackle the next big challenge and excel.

**177%**

Increase in learning of **coaching skills** year-over-year

**150%**

Increase in learning of **team-building skills** year-over-year

**136%**

Increase in learning of **empathy skills** year-over-year

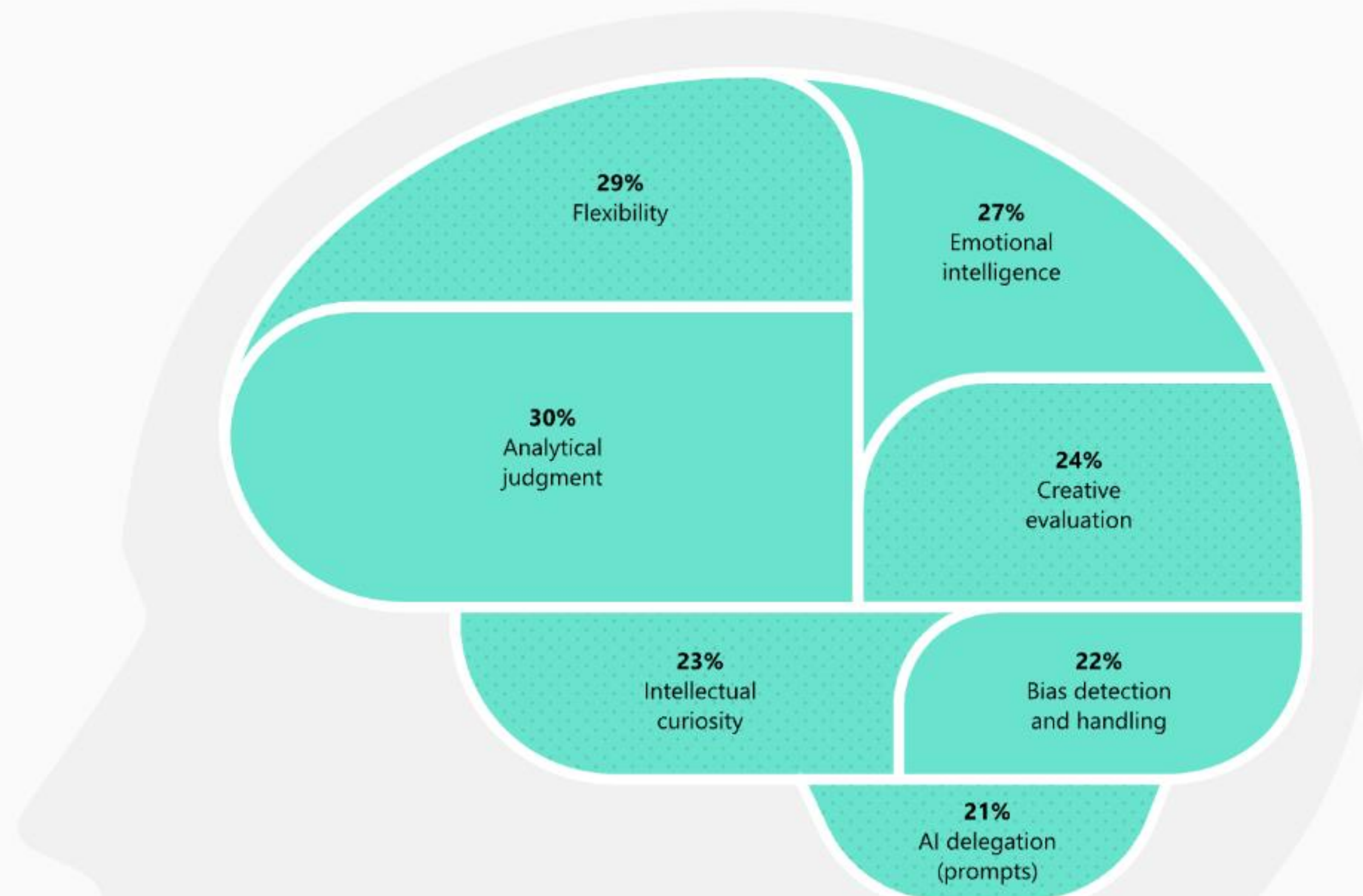
**101%**

Increase in learning of **resilience skills** year-over-year

## New Skills for a New Way of Working

'Analytical judgment,' 'flexibility,' and 'emotional intelligence' top the list of skills leaders believe will be essential for employees in an AI-powered future.

Select skill for more



Survey question: Some believe that it is likely that artificial intelligence (AI) will usher in a new era of technological advancements. Which of the following skills do you think will be most essential for your employees to learn to evolve with these potential changes?

Illustration by Manuel Bortoletti

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# A call for a “higher education”.

- A capacity *for potential*
- able to use their skills in VUCA states





- It's no longer enough
- Resiliency, adaptability, agility are skills or *capacities* to be taught in their own right



To *know how to* evolve with...



**when they  
graduate...**

**this is who I am, and  
this is what I can do.**



some **tricky** things about ***designing***  
***for*** resilience and agility.



What happens within you when.....



What behaviours do you kick in...?



where did you learn how?



# We enter most experiences believing...



a

a piece of crappy feedback

a piece of good feedback

complex information; dilemma

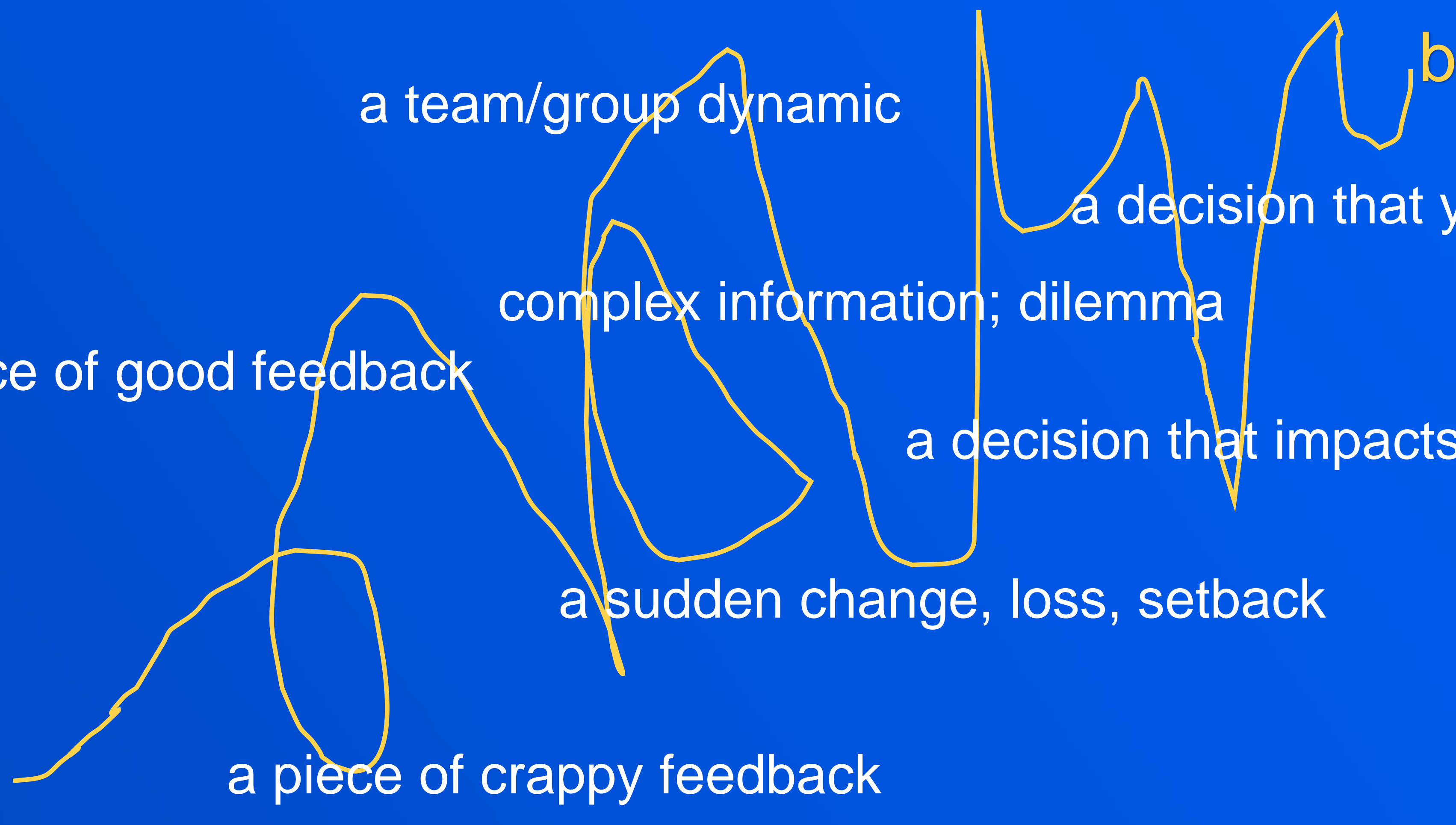
a team/group dynamic

a sudden change, loss, setback

a decision that impacts you

a decision that you have to make

b





**This is not easy stuff.**



“Managers are reluctant to talk about it because they fear that to do so will signal a lack of it”

(Ramanaa, 2023)



# The Sheridan- *Sense* Program





# **identify the capabilities**

- what *underpins* our capacities to be resilient and agile?



## THINK

how we manage assumptions about ourselves and others; how flexible we are with complexity

- adaptability
- understanding our assumptions
- challenging biases
- critical thinking
- flexible thinking
- identifying personal beliefs
- managing ambiguity
- noticing habits
- processing complex information
- reframing thoughts



## RELATE

how we relate to our emotions and those of others; how much we value the power from connection (relational intelligence)

- active listening
- awareness of lived experiences and cultures
- compassion to others
- nurturing relationships
- taking perspective
- regulating emotions
- seeking and valuing feedback
- understanding & naming emotions
- valuing collaboration



## INNOVATE

how aware and open we are to different methodologies, tools, and approaches

- challenging habits
- thinking creatively
- expanding my approaches
- generating new ideas
- using my imagination
- being open to ideas
- practicing non-judgement
- productivity techniques



## EVOLVE

how we see the potential/growth in ourselves in learning, reflecting, and responding to each experience with curiosity and compassion

- connect with broader humanity
- identifying areas of growth
- identifying strengths & growth
- kindness to self
- reflecting on my growth
- reflecting on my potential
- reflecting on setbacks
- seeking new experiences

\*white paper; analyses



PRACTICE INNOVATE

# Morning Pages

In "The Artist's Way," Julia Cameron suggests writing "morning pages" can enhance creativity. Use this strategy to document all your ideas to explore your creativity.

- 1 Choose a journal or device where you can write down your thoughts easily.
- 2 First thing when you wake up, write anything that comes to mind.
- 3 Write whatever thoughts you have without filtering or judgement.
- 4 Aim for 10 minutes or 3 pages each day.
- 5 Occasionally, look over your pages for themes and new ideas.



Sheridan | S-SENSE

PRACTICE THINK

# Tame The Inner Critic

Use this practice to work WITH your challenging thoughts/feelings instead of fighting them when they stand in the way of your success.



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- 1 Write down a negative thought you're having. *E.g., I'm stupid.*
- 2 Notice what feelings are there with the thought. *E.g., shame, anxiety, fear.*  
  
Try to welcome them with kindness. Use words that work for YOU. *E.g., "Hi (anxiety). I know you're trying to help me. Thank you." Or, "Hey anxiety, might you step back while I do this test, task, etc.?"*
- 3
- 4 Check-in: How do your body and mind feel now?

PRACTICE RELATE

# R.A.I.N

A strategy to ground yourself when you are feeling intense emotions during a challenging moment.



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- R** Recognize what is happening (I am thinking this, I am feeling this...).
- A** Allow whatever is there to be just as it is, no judgement, no questions.
- I** Investigate the feelings and sensations with curiosity and kindness.
- N** Nurture what's here. Give yourself what you need like a break, a warm touch, or reassurance.  
  
*Remember that all feelings are temporary. Let the waves come and go.*

# Link them to the how - Practices

PRACTICE EVOLVE

# The Power Of "Yet"

When we feel we're not good at something right away, we might think "I'll never be able to do this!" and give up. Use this practice to boost your "growth mindset" to realize you're just not there yet.



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- 1 You're working on something challenging and think "I can't do this!"
- 2 Try adding in "yet" as in, "I can't do this YET, but I can learn."
- 3 Create small goals or steps you can achieve gradually over time.
- 4 Set a time frame in which you can realistically improve 1-10%.
- 5 Brainstorm fun activities that could help you improve during that time.
- 6 Do the activities during the set time. Celebrate each sign of progress!
- 7 Repeat the process for your next 1-10% growth. Or try it for another skill.

PRACTICE INNOVATE

# Offer An "And" Instead Of A "But"

To keep ideas flowing within a group, try to use "and" rather than "but" in response to other ideas.

- 1 You're listening to others' ideas and you're not sure about their strength.
- 2 You care about the team's ability to succeed, so consider all perspectives.
- 3 Instead of saying "but" in response to someone's idea, say "and."

**Example:**  
"I hear what you're saying AND I'd like to..."



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PRACTICE EVOLVE

# Be Your Own Ally

We are often harder on ourselves than on others. Give yourself the encouragement you'd give a friend in the same situation.



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- 1 Note what you're saying to yourself in this challenge or struggle.
- 2 Imagine a friend came to you in the same situation.
- 3 What would you tell them? How would you respond to them?
- 4 Say these things to yourself as you would to this friend.
- 5 Notice how you feel now.

PRACTICE RELATE

# Let Compliments Sink In

Receiving compliments can be hard, especially if we were taught that accepting praise is arrogant or selfish. This practice helps us respond to compliments with humility and dignity.



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- 1 Someone just complimented you, and you're uncomfortable.
- 2 Put your attention OUT to notice the other person's tone and body language.
- 3 Are they smiling or showing enthusiasm? Let their positive energy sink in.
- 4 Praise can be a door to connection. Notice how you can connect more here. *E.g., see how it feels to say "Thanks," "Thank you," or "I appreciate that."*
- 5 Try saying more about your experience. *E.g., "I love baking for others."*

PRACTICE RELATE

# Two Things Can Be "True"

When we have an opinion and someone disagrees, we tend to think only one person can be right. Try this practice to get more comfortable with complexity, being more open, and different viewpoints.



- 1 You're in a situation where there are differences of opinion. *E.g., You like meat and Li is a vegetarian.*
- 2 Consider: What if your different perspectives can CO-EXIST?
- 3 What if BOTH can be true?
- 4 Reflect: How do you feel about these differences now?
- 5 Note: ALL feelings are allowed. It takes time to adjust to new "truths."

Two Things Can Be True.png

Sheridan | S-SENSE



# Remember!

some **tricky** things about *designing for* resilience and agility.



**Make it always  
available—  
designed a platform**

- Grab practices, try, reflect, tweak, build habits
- Declare aspirations and set personal goals
- Track, reflect, develop
- Self assess – get to understand their own tendencies
- \*\*Infused with psych sciences



10:30

**S-SENSE**

Good morning, Cherie.

How will you **S-SENSE** today?

**DRAFT**

Cultivate self-awareness and set intentions

It's You Time

**PRACTICE**

Expand yourself with S-Sense Practices

Just T.R.I.E.!

**EVOLVE**

Turn self-reflection into self-potential

Lean Into You

3:03

**Draft**

Today I T.R.I.E  
Reframing Thoughts  
Jun. 20, 24

Thought of the day  
What if this doesn't land well  
20-06-24

Worried

Motivated

Beyond Limiting Beliefs

PRACTICE

Tai  
Inn

Use this  
your cha  
feelings  
when th  
your suc

55 SP

10:33

**Aspirations**

MIT ASPIRATION

Good job on creating your aspiration, checking how you fell and identifying key qualities to help with aspirations.

06-20-2024

Being assertive with my direction  
This will assist leading my team  
I feel...

Optimistic

Qualities

The qualities I need to develop to support my aspiration:

- Noticing Habits
- Adaptability
- Regulating Emotions
- Active Listening
- Generating New Ideas
- Identifying Strengths & Growth
- Reflecting on Setbacks

**My Hub**

Cherie Werhun  
The Navigator  
Edit profile

**My Points**

S-Sense Points **490**

Streak Points **1** days

Time Investment **77** min

**S-Sense Qualities**

The qualities you are developing through T.R.I.E practice

10 %

Activity History

Settings



**Link directly to  
the right kind of  
development**

- Created **BOOSTS!**
- Run every day
  - *Tame the Inner Critic*
  - *Get Curious not Judgy*
- Connect with others
- Talk it out



**Integrate into the  
*fabric* of the learning  
experience**

- Access *everywhere*
- Embedded into student *services*
- Peer mentoring/tutoring
- Within Course learning journeys

# “Decoding” their Courses!

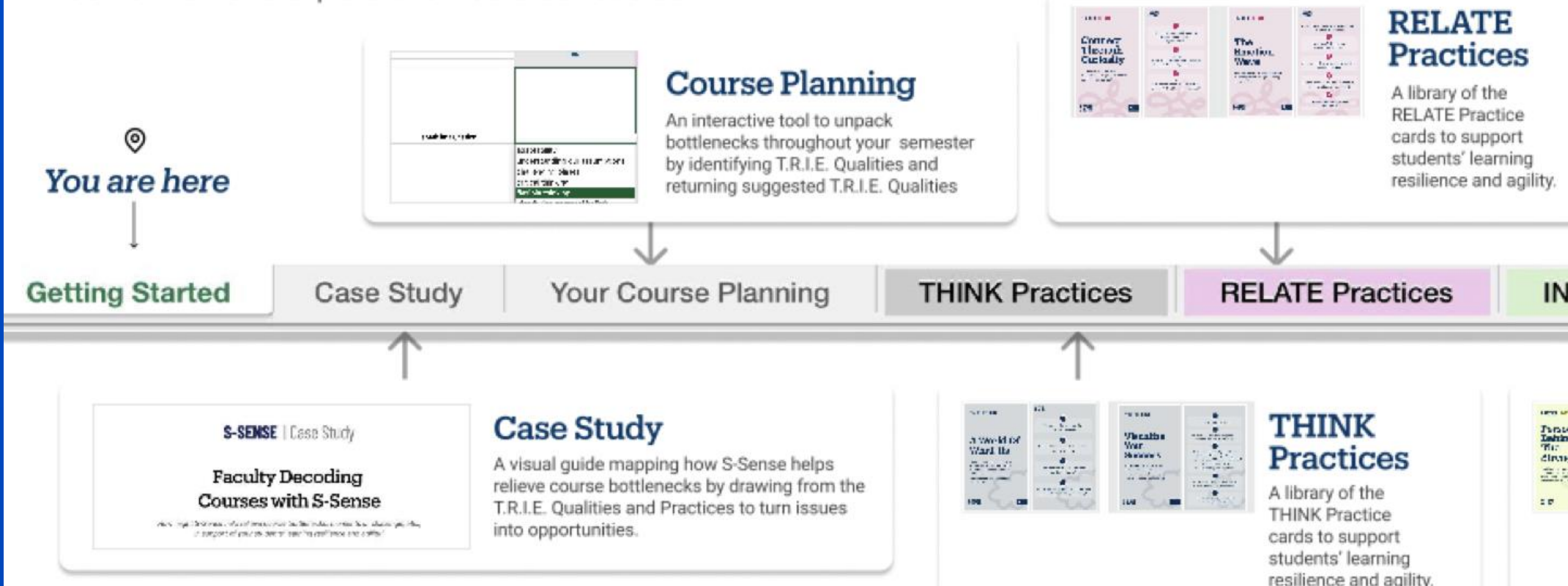
## S-SENSE | Faculty Toolkit

### Welcome

This your toolkit to utilize S-Sense to help relieve course bottlenecks and moments of challenge, to help refine your course offering in support of your students' learning resilience and agility.

### Getting Started

Get to know and explore this file's Excel tabs below!



## S-SENSE | Case Study

### Faculty Decoding Courses with S-Sense

How might S-Sense help relieve course bottlenecks, moments of challenge, etc., in support of your students' learning resilience and agility?



#### Example Dilemma

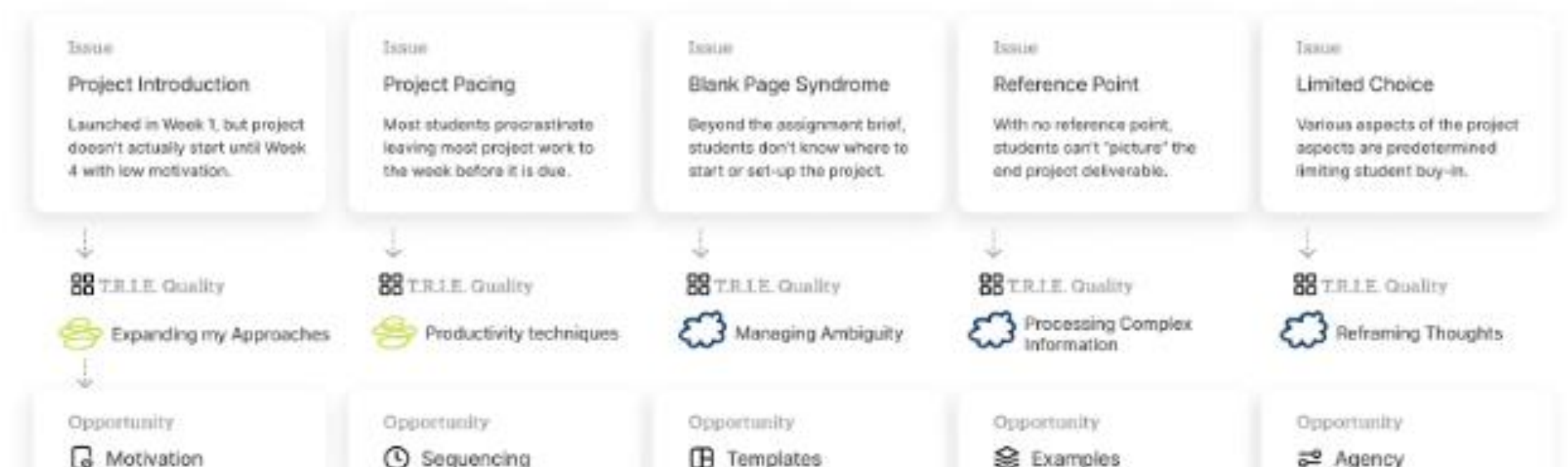
- Project worth 25%
- Project runs first half of the semester
- Students lack **motivation** to work on and complete project
- Students lack **capacity** to figure it out **independently**

#### 🔍 Main Questions Considered

- when is the **project introduced**?
- is there a **template** for the project set-up etc?
- are there **examples** of projects from the past?
- are there points for **student check-ins**?
- are there spaces for **increasing student agency** in selecting/determining parts of the project?

#### 🔍 S-Sense Questions Considered

- when considering the course bottlenecks, **what inner skills underpin student success** on the course activities?  
For example: project work requires a great deal of courage to come up with an original idea
- what inner skills might be required of those who **lack experience designing projects**? (confidence, openness, patience, self-compassion)
- what TRIE micro-qualities might be at play?





**Not just part  
of student  
development**

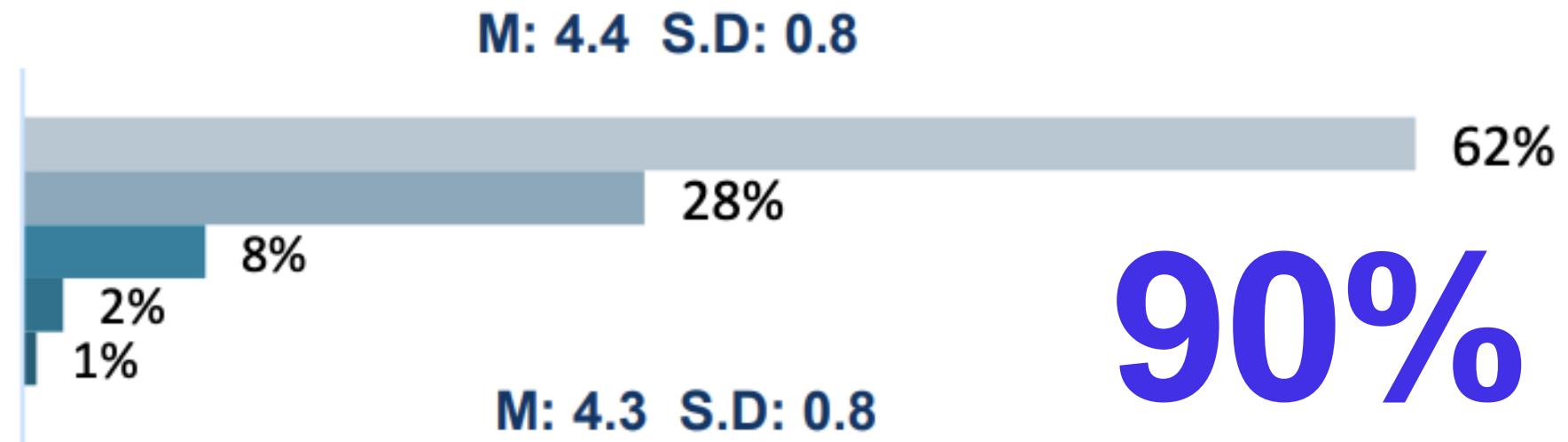
- **Faculty Development**
  - Formative Reflection
- **Staff Development**
  - Leadership competencies



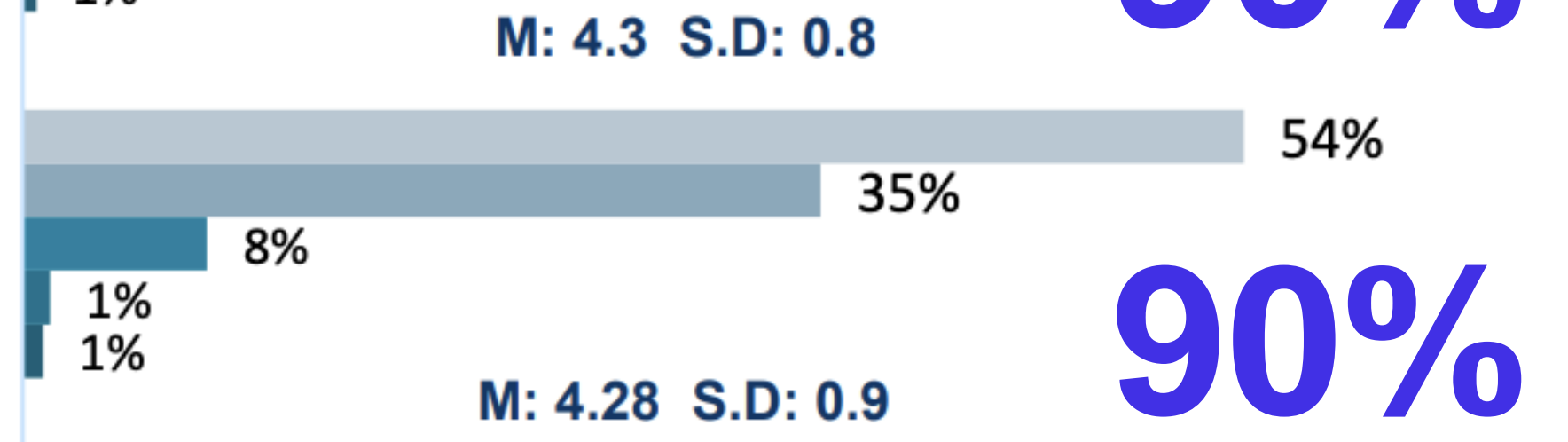
**What folks are saying...**  
**(they're kinda all over it).**

**Figure 6**  
Cumulative Responses

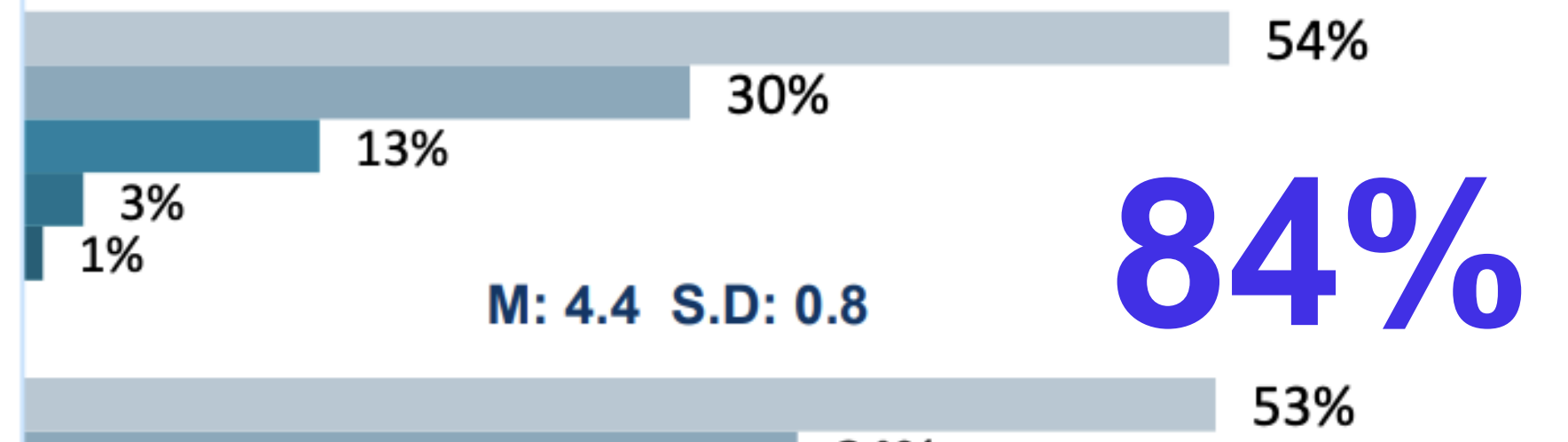
As you continue to learn about S-Sense, how likely do you feel you would want to, in the future, focus on building your S-Sense as you pursue your personal and professional aspirations at Sheridan?



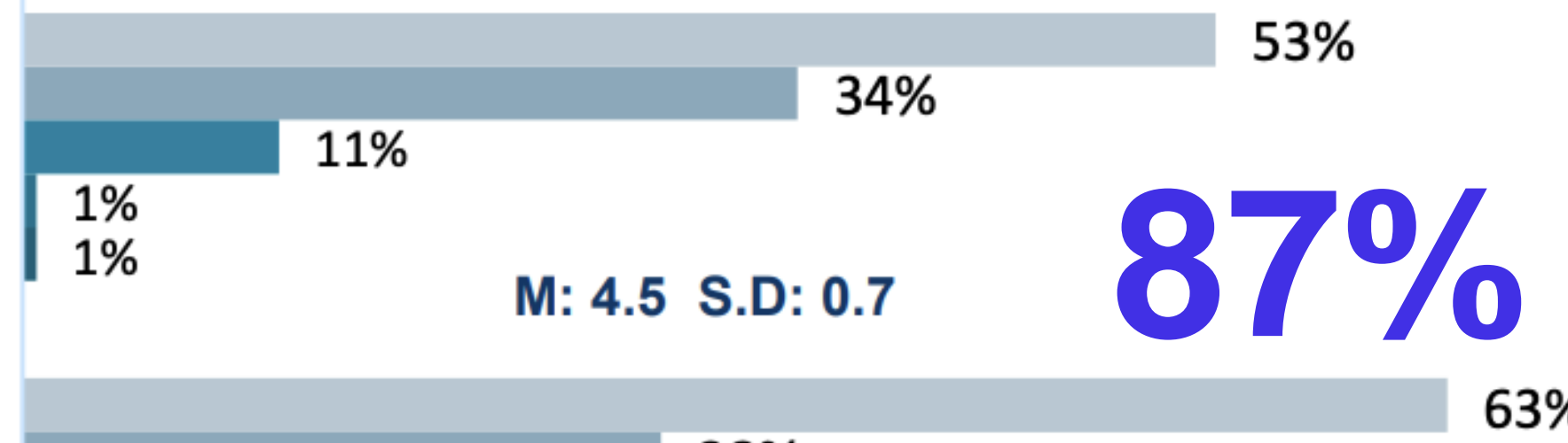
How likely would the content and/or activities support you in building the qualities of S-Sense?



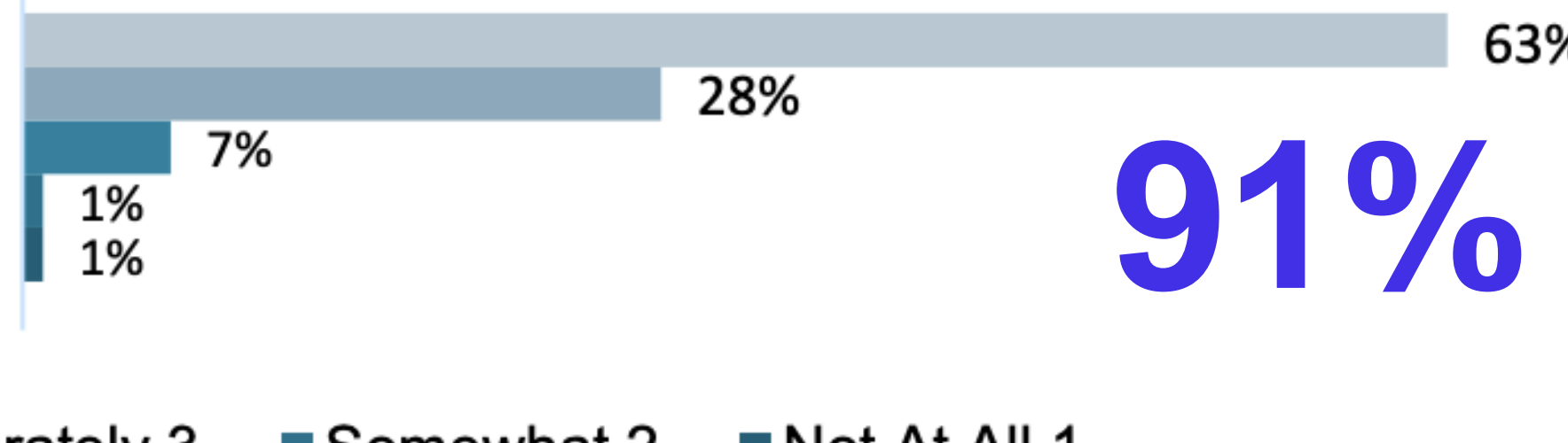
How much did the content and/or activities resonate with you personally?



How useful was the content and/or activities in helping you understand what 'doing S-Sense' means?



How clear or understandable was the content and/or activities in the session today?



■ Highly 5   ■ A Great Deal 4   ■ Moderately 3   ■ Somewhat 2   ■ Not At All 1



*“Developing your S-Sense is just as crucial as obtaining your degree. It is important to first embrace our true selves before we go on building a newer version.”*

*“After joining S-Sense I got to know about a lot of practices that I can do. There are a lot of small things which I can put in the day-to-day lifestyle that can make me ready to face similar situations in the future”*

*“That no matter what the situation or challenge facing me I can better it and I have the strength and abilities to tackle it and S-Sense has helped me harness and channel them. “*

*“It’s about building mental and emotional resilience in the face of complexity and uncertainty”.*

*“S-Sense is not just a course or a program, but a journey of self-exploration and self-transformation”*

*“It’s my chance to finally overcome my mental barriers and become the best version of myself”*

*“I am just really proud of being a part of Sheridan. I don’t know if other colleges have such programs, but S-Sense is truly wonderful. “*

PRACTICE THINK

# Minimize The Spotlight

Often, we think others pay more attention to us than they actually do. This is called the spotlight effect. Try this practice to lessen its impact.

- 1 You are about to join an experience and you are worried that something you lack confidence in will become the centre of everyone's attention.
- 2 As you join, focus *outward* on the other people rather than inward on your worries.
- 3 Notice how you feel focusing outward.
- 4 Did others notice what you were worried about? Or are they actually more focused on themselves?



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March 4 at 1:16 PM • 56 Words

I think it is very interesting to promote outward thinking, it helps me take the focus off of myself and actually try and think about everything else. Personally, I feel that my mind can be distracted very quickly. If I try to change the chain of thoughts to something more positive or outward, it is really helpful.

[↩ Reply](#)

Hi [REDACTED] I completely agree in terms of thinking outward being a great asset. Thank you for sharing!

[↩ Reply](#)



**started our journey...**



**brave decisions along the way...  
to embrace the challenge**



**Brave enough to  
be part of our  
strategic plan**

- 1500 staff, faculty, students were consulted in our strategic plan
- *What do you desire the Sheridan learning experience to be known for?*



**Brave enough to  
invite everyone  
*into* design  
process**

- “Calls” for students, faculty, and staff to be in “scapes
- **Use S-Sense** in design process

Showcased along the way

75 students

60 faculty / staff

20 different departments

# “design-scapes”

## The S-Sense of Business Cultivates...

Community of Care



Individual & Collective Excellence



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



Agility



Curiosity



Deep Learning



Industry Influence



Technology

## Never-the-Same Land

Continually collaborate in creative, multidisciplinary real-world challenges that build desired skills with unexpected learning experiences.



Created by Olena Panasovska from Noun Project

Across the college, and as an option on their virtual home projects are to pique curiosity and provide simple entry in projects. One is open-ended discovery-based projects with S-Sense program, and potential larger projects. The second opportunities around Sheridan. For instance, a design challenge healthy eating. Similarly, a project for redesigning outdoor

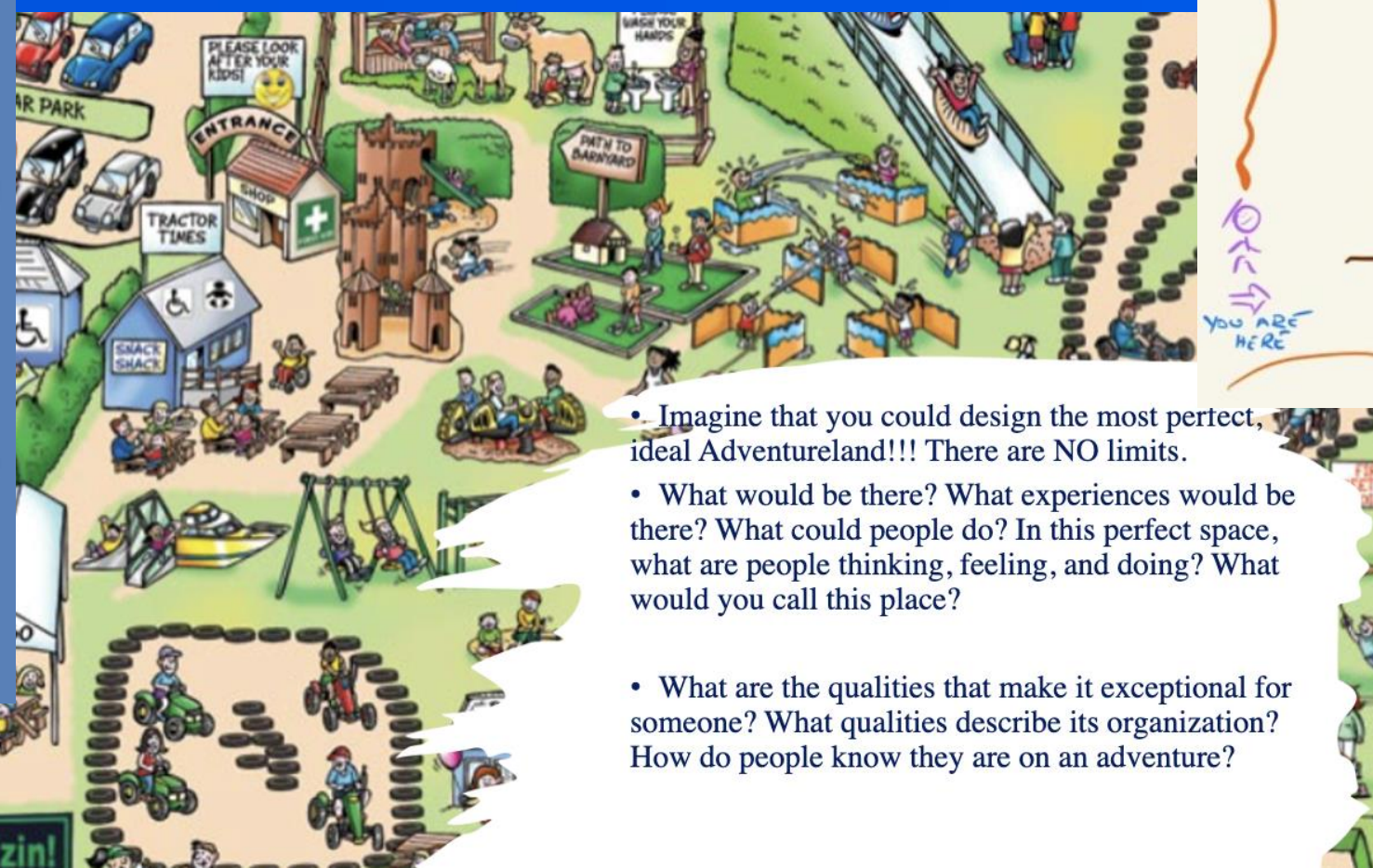
GEH: Challenge Lab, Guided Exploration, Virtual World



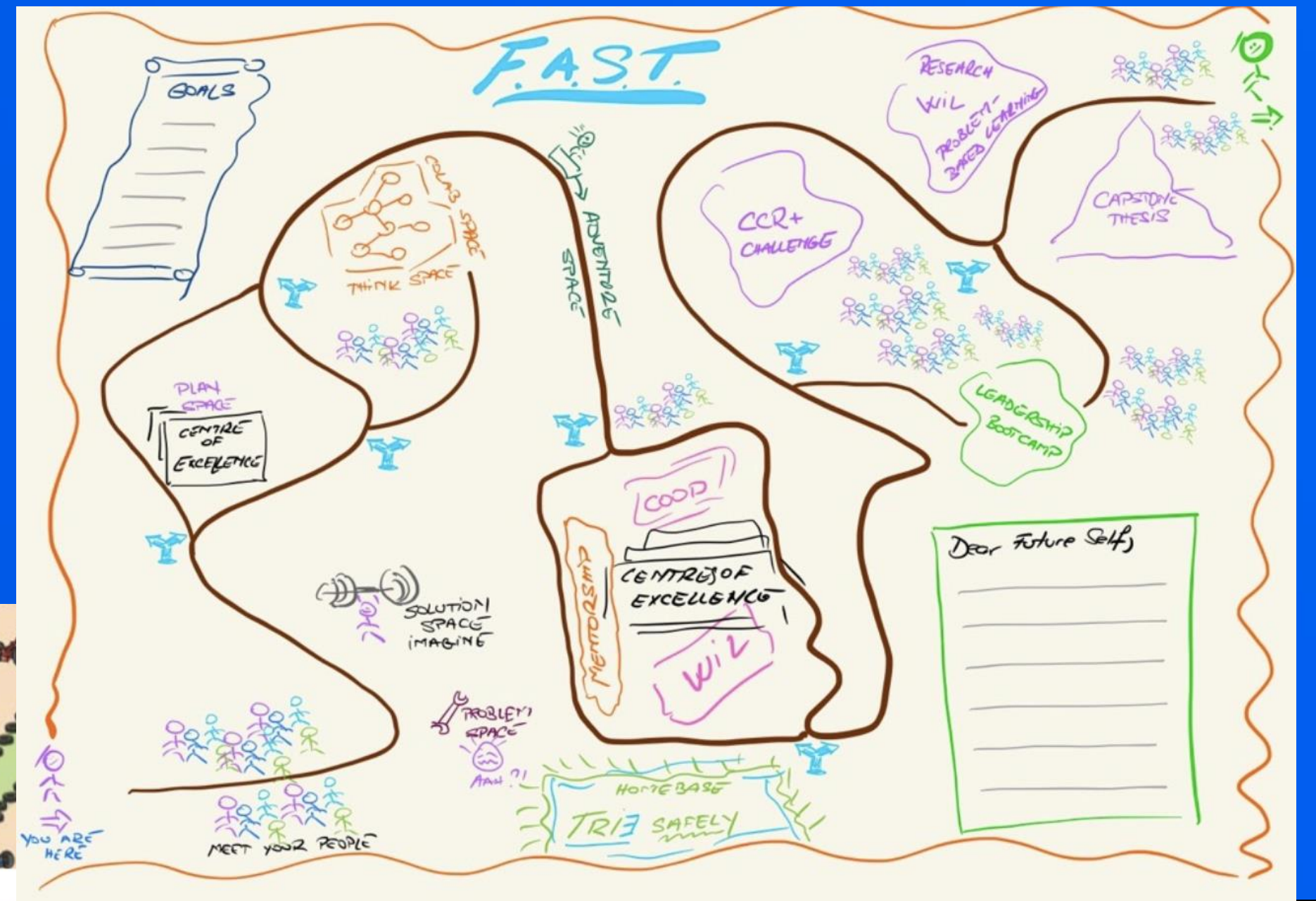
Created by Piffor from Noun Project

The problems and challenges collected during the institutional challenge day (discussed in chapter 1) form a pool of potential projects for students to work on. These challenges can be used inside the classroom (i.e. HR challenges for Pilon students) or for student groups to solve outside of class. In both cases, the solutions created should be forwarded to the original faculty/department for feedback or to be used in the case of a successful solution. This helps students cultivate their agency and become invested in the success of Sheridan (or at least a department at Sheridan). The projects should also be tagged with the RITE of Passage skills they are developing.

GEH: Guided Exploration, Challenge Labs



- Imagine that you could design the most perfect, ideal Adventureland!!! There are NO limits.
- What would be there? What experiences would be there? What could people do? In this perfect space, what are people thinking, feeling, and doing? What would you call this place?
- What are the qualities that make it exceptional for someone? What qualities describe its organization? How do people know they are on an adventure?



THE MISSION:  
RE-DISCOVER OUR STORY, BUILD OUR COMMUNITY,  
TO LET STUDENTS DISCOVER THEIR S-SENSE

## S-SENSE: PUZZLE GAMES

## S-SENSE PROJECTS: CHALLENGE DAY

, and



**Brave enough to  
disrupt our language,  
create a vibe**

- Intentional
  - Knowledge translation
  - Agile and playful
  - Surprising people
- 
- *Intentional Offerings*
    - **S-Sense “Dream Camp”**



**PRACTICE INNOVATE**  
**Wouldn't it be cool if...**  
 Sheridan | S-SENSE

**PRACTICE EVOLVE**  
**Ready, Set, Grow**  
 Sheridan | S-SENSE



**35 student  
positions to  
date**





**Brave enough to  
hand it over:  
make meaning of it**

- ***Nuanced*** within the disciplines, the Faculties, the Departments
- Special projects
- Impactful partnerships



**Brave enough to  
normalize it**

- Videos from leaders
- Designation/special opportunities/  
scholarships/awards
- *Festival of Firsts*



**“In any given day, I move through moments where I am destabilized...**

**it’s about developing the kind of leader you want to be...**

**Are you going to be open, contemplative... ?”**



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**DANIELLE PALOMBI**  
**STUDENT AFFAIRS, LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES**

*"Our SSENSE comes from within. I have no doubt we can face ambiguous and complex experiences. We do this by acknowledging and drawing from the tools and skills inside each of us to persist and thrive in our world. I am my best self when I get curious about what I am thinking and reflect upon how I might challenge my own assumptions. My experiences reveal that relating to others nurtures my creative spirit. It is through relationships that I become aware of different perspectives and possibilities. It is together that we emerge with compelling thoughts and ideas for navigating diverse problems and opportunities. I deeply appreciate what becomes a shared approach to growth, development, and leading change. I hold space and care for myself and others, as all experiences foster our learning and help us to evolve"*



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**JANICE FENNEL, STUDENT AFFAIRS, ACCESSIBLE LEARNING & INCLUSION**

*"My S-Sense is reflected in the way I intentionally strive to be self-reflective and self-compassionate about the complex experiences I encounter along my personal and professional journey (Managing ambiguity, adaptability, practicing non-judgement). I create space to **think** about each experience as an opportunity to learn and grow and reflect on lessons learned (identifying areas of growth, mindfulness, reflecting on setbacks, reflecting on my growth) that might inform and relate to future opportunities or activities( critical thinking, processing information). I am keenly aware that I am constantly evolving in my personal and professional journey and remain open to exploring ways to be innovative in my approach in confronting challenges and exploring possibilities (creative thinking, expanding my approaches, challenging habits, generating new ideas, imagination, openness)"*



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**MARK ORLANDO, FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

*"My S-Sense grows out of an ever-evolving landscape. As a person who is driven to always be learning, I feel a responsibility to acknowledge that others are part of this same learning journey. Collectively, our learning environment changes constantly and grows. Each lived experience makes us that much more aware of multiple others. In the promise of each moment, I become more myself"*



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**ELYSE REDQUEST, WELL SERIES & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

*"My S-Sense is a journey. It is non-linear, it takes weaves and turns and sometimes I find myself on a completely different path than when I started. This is okay. I interact with various individuals along my journey and appreciate the experiences we have shared and the experiences we have not shared. I value our connection. I am aware of the world around me and the impact on myself and others. When I stray from my original path I stop and self-reflect and enjoy the process. I know there are many different approaches to my journey and I can see solutions to the barriers that I will inevitably experience. Along the way I stop to appreciate where I am, how far I have come, and what lies ahead. My journey has only just begun"*



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**SUSAN SHEPLEY, LIBRARY SERVICES**

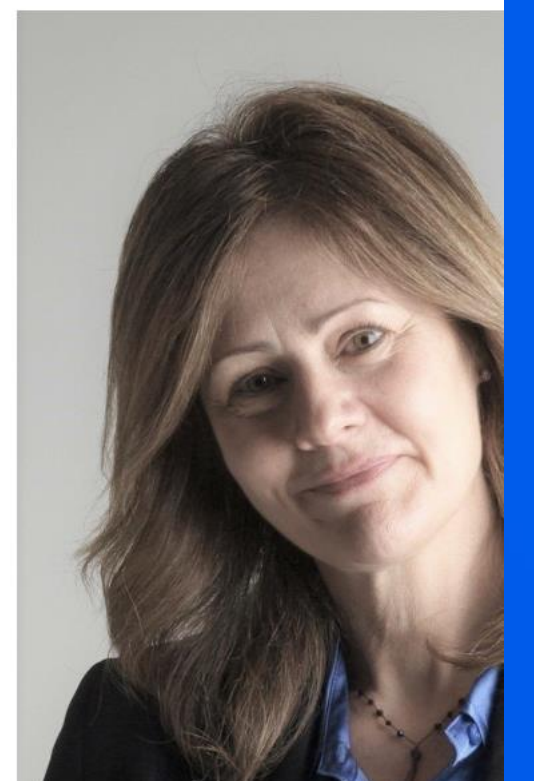
*"My hope is to co-create spaces with colleagues/learners that foster a sense of curiosity and encourage us to be comfortable in navigating ambiguity. A spirit of collaboration, continuous learning, and respecting diverse perspectives are pillars that I aim to embody in every interaction. Respect and reciprocity are critical skills that we can use to solve problems, take risks, and create new knowledge and I seek ways to nurture this as a leader. I recognize my learning and growth will evolve over time, and I prioritize reflective practice"*



---

**KAREN BOOTH, PILON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

*"My S-Sense Statement is all about how I connect and collaborate with others so each experience is an exploration where I think about how I might be able to contribute and learn, seek out and encourage the sharing of perspectives and explore ways in which I can apply that learning in future collaborations to steward new ideas and create a collaborate environment for sharing"*





**Seems to be landing well.**



## **Walk away with...?**

- Can't "sit on the side"
- Assess on the *building blocks*
- Tie building blocks directly to development programs
- Create cultures that award
- Integrate into all spheres of service and influence – a learning ecosystem
- Leverage frameworks and phenomenal technology



*bring this inner  
“personal  
development”  
into the open*

(McKinsey, 2020)





 **Harvard Business Publishing**

COURSE DESIGN

# In the Age of AI, Students Need to Develop Their Self- Intelligence

5 Ways Educators Can Help Cultivate These Uniquely  
Human Skills

by Cherie Werhun

March 21, 2024





**Thank you. Merci.**

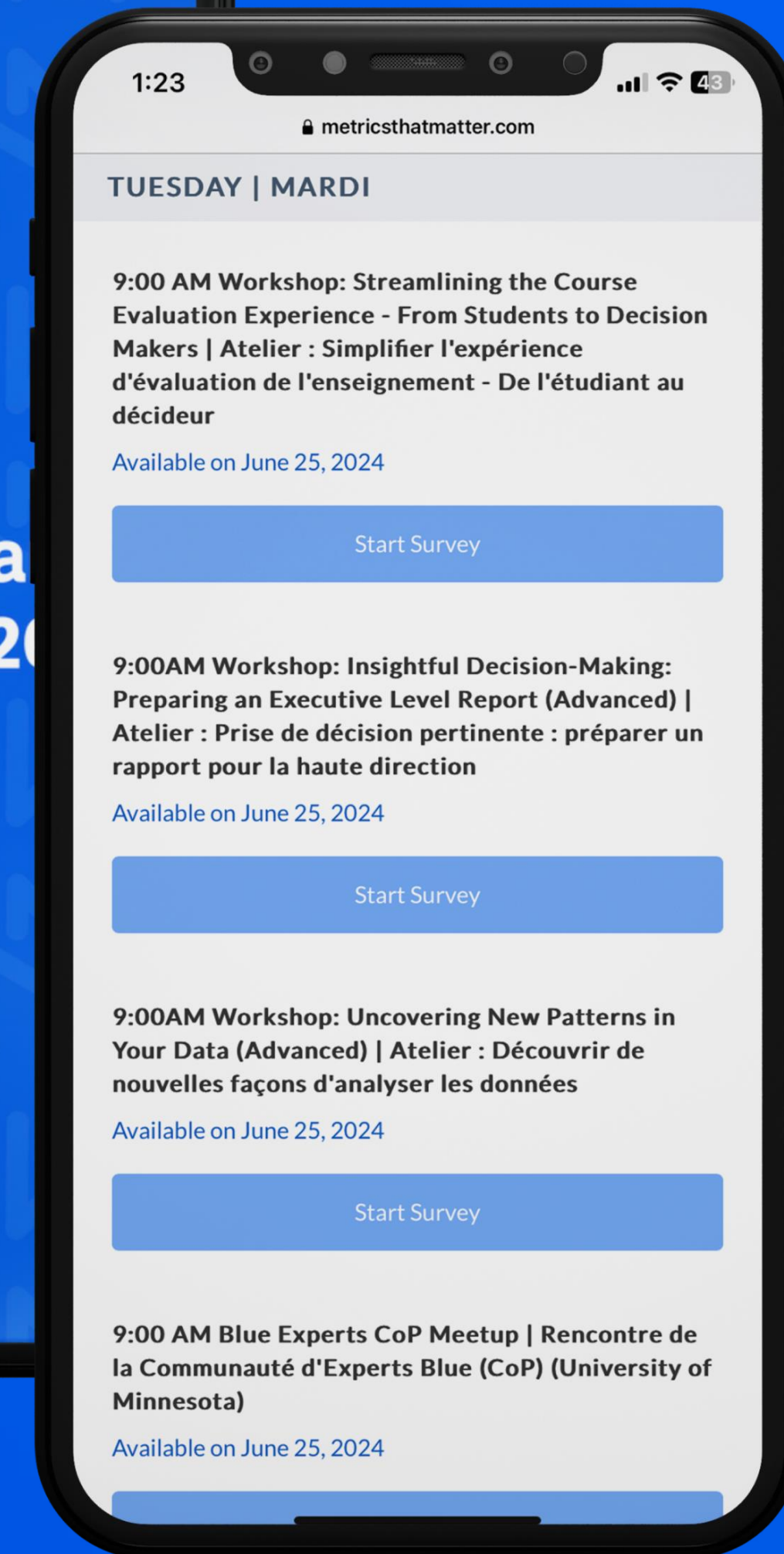
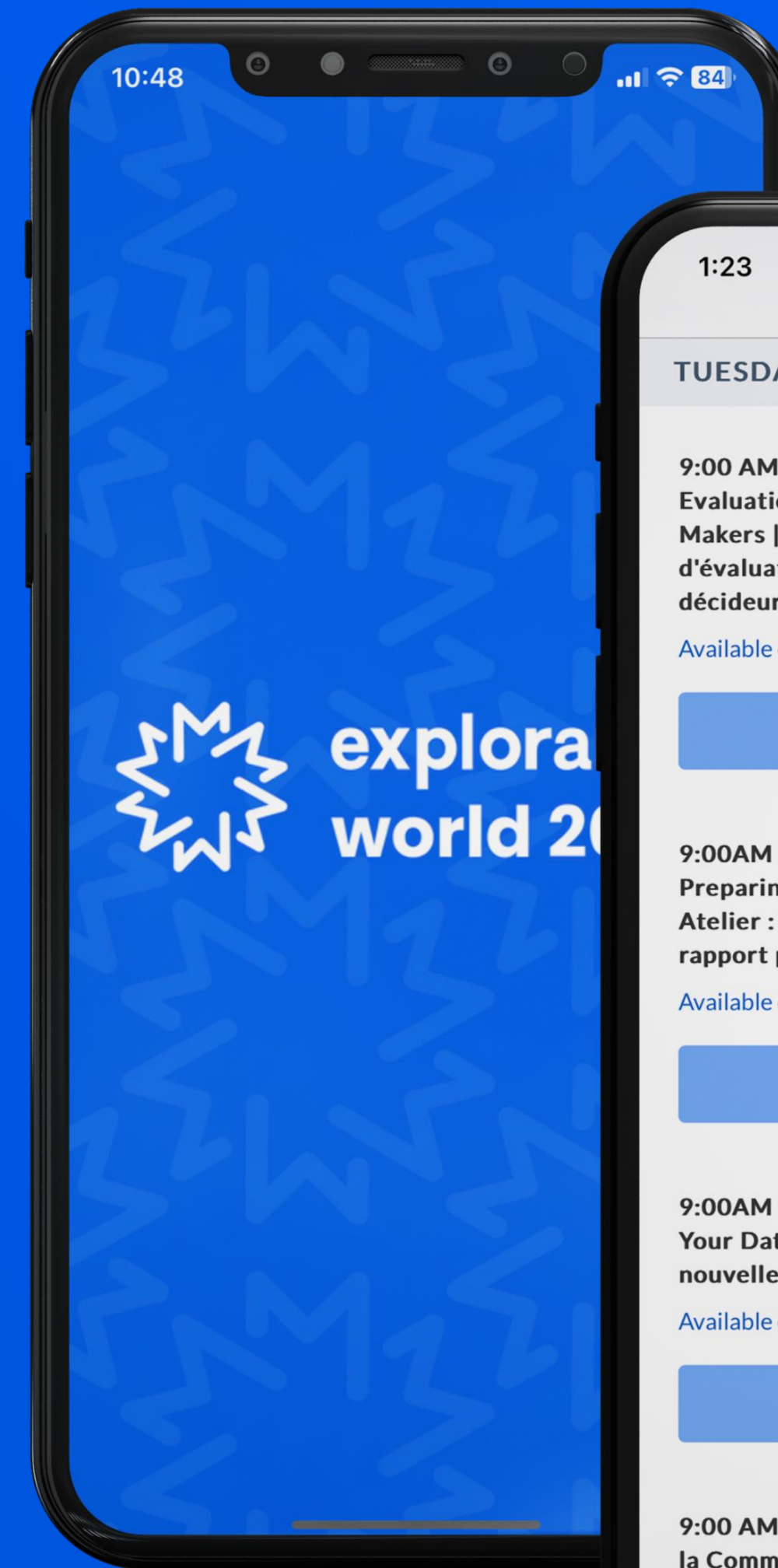


explorance  
world 2024

**Provide Your Feedback!**



**CONFERENCE SURVEYS**



# Engagement & adoption

## Entry points via:



### General use

- Access app through outreach, etc., hallways, classrooms
- Integrated into Learn Well, invitation, special courses, events

### DREAM

#### "Dream Camp" If only I could...

- Special experiences to support "stepping out of your comfort zone"
- Video application/written application -- templated
- They are acknowledged with CCR Credit



### Unleashing My T.R.I.E

- Students who complete all 4 receive 4 CCRs
- Support the Dream Camps
- Post-graduate positions
- Career Catalyst recognition

### OPPORTUNITY

#### The S-Sense of...

- Opportunities focused on known areas that tax student's resilience & agility
- Sought-after competencies
- Specific practices that can enhance specific competencies
- Set up and managed via CCR

### BOOST

#### "Career Boosted"

- Discover new parts of themselves
- Who may feel that they are not on the right path
- Who seek a whole self learning



#### The S-Sense of Me

- Students who complete all 4 receive 4 CCRs
- Support the Dream Camps
- Post-graduate positions
- Career Catalyst recognition

