Thinking

Section 7 - Agility

Find out more at
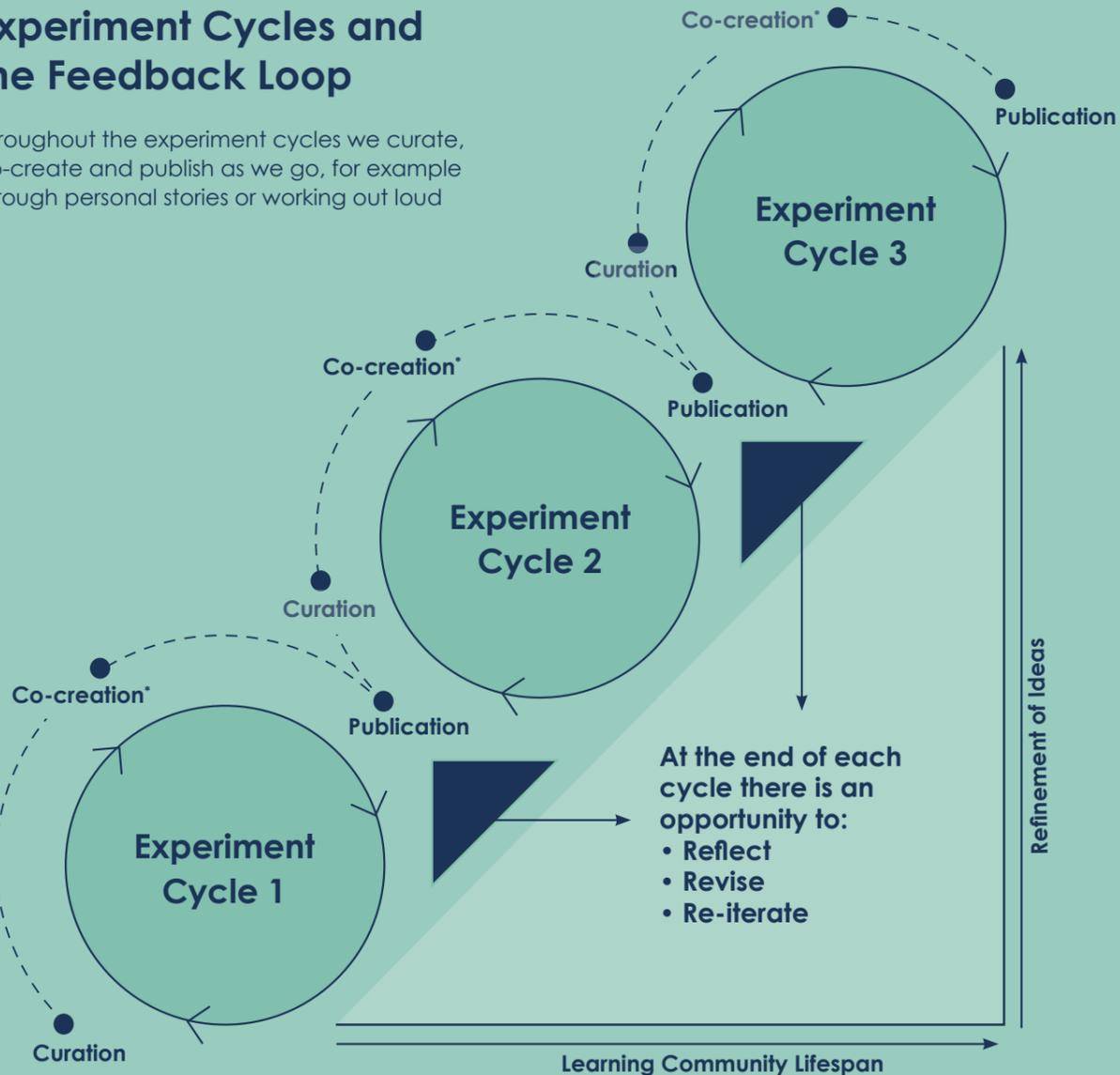**bit.ly/AcademyLearningArchitecture**

Agility in Learning

Integrating agility with social learning and social learning design means two things. First, we iterate ideas in a feedback loop: we try something, we receive feedback, we try something else. Every community and every context is different and learning designers should be in a constant cycle of discovery, figuring out what works, what doesn't work and how to move forward as a result.

Second, we build opportunities for learners to experiment and try new ideas, engaging in experiential and social collaborative learning. Observation, assessment and review can be built into the design process through naming experiments, seeking feedback, asking questions and accepting challenges of your ideas, and encouraging learners to do the same. As part of your learning design, you create mechanisms and build relationships allow you to assess the tools you experiment with.

Experiment Cycles and the Feedback Loop

Throughout the experiment cycles we curate, co-create and publish as we go, for example through personal stories or working out loud

Co-creation*

Publication

Curation

Experiment Cycle 3

Co-creation*

Publication

Curation

Experiment Cycle 2

Co-creation*

Publication

Curation

Experiment Cycle 1

Refinement of Ideas

At the end of each cycle there is an opportunity to:
• Reflect
• Revise
• Re-iterate

Learning Community Lifespan

*Co-creation includes:** Critique, Challenge, Support, Sense-Making, Comparison

The Feedback Loop

This is one way to think of agility in social learning and learning communities. The feedback loop takes learners through three iterative steps, with a view to becoming a generative learning community, a precursor to a community of practice. Groups of learners can use a similar approach in activities that ask for experimentation. Adapted from Wenger's Cultivating Communities of Practice, the Deming Cycle as well as Julian Stodd's writing on the subject.

Considering agility in learning design and fostering an agile attitude in learners contributes to a co-creative culture, where critique and challenge are the norm, where feedback is freely given and valued, where learners are encouraged to try new ideas, tell stories of their successes and failures and try again, continually improving and refining as they go*.

In scaffolded social learning, a learning community offers opportunities for storytelling, both personal and co-created. The learning community is purpose driven* and generative: it guides learners towards a common goal and expands not only the knowledge of participating individuals, but also fosters co-creation of accessible collective knowledge. Agility is a mindset and a skill that both learning designers and learners can adopt to contribute to the success of a co-creative, generative learning communities in the context of a scaffolded social learning opportunity.

Formative assessment in social learning is not just about measuring learner's knowledge. In this type of learning, equal value can be placed on behaviours and attitudes that create bonds and build trust between individuals. For example, a learner who engages in collaborative and problem-solving techniques, demonstrating an ability to frame - and solve - unique challenges, is successful in a social learning opportunity because they demonstrate an ability to find and create knowledge. Assessment should be multi-faceted, quantifying knowledge if necessary, as well as valuing agility, behaviours and attitudes that lead to acquiring and creating new knowledge.

Imagine you are working with a diverse target audience that includes people from many different cultural backgrounds, experiences, etc. You may hesitate in deciding what learning design approach to take, wondering what the effects of presenting content from will be. How will people engage with it? Will they respond, where and in what way? This would be a case for trying something new, sharing an example from your perspective and inviting discussion, encouraging learners to use your example and experiment with it, bringing their own examples back to the learning community.

*See the section on Learning Communities for more information about purpose driven, co-creative communities.