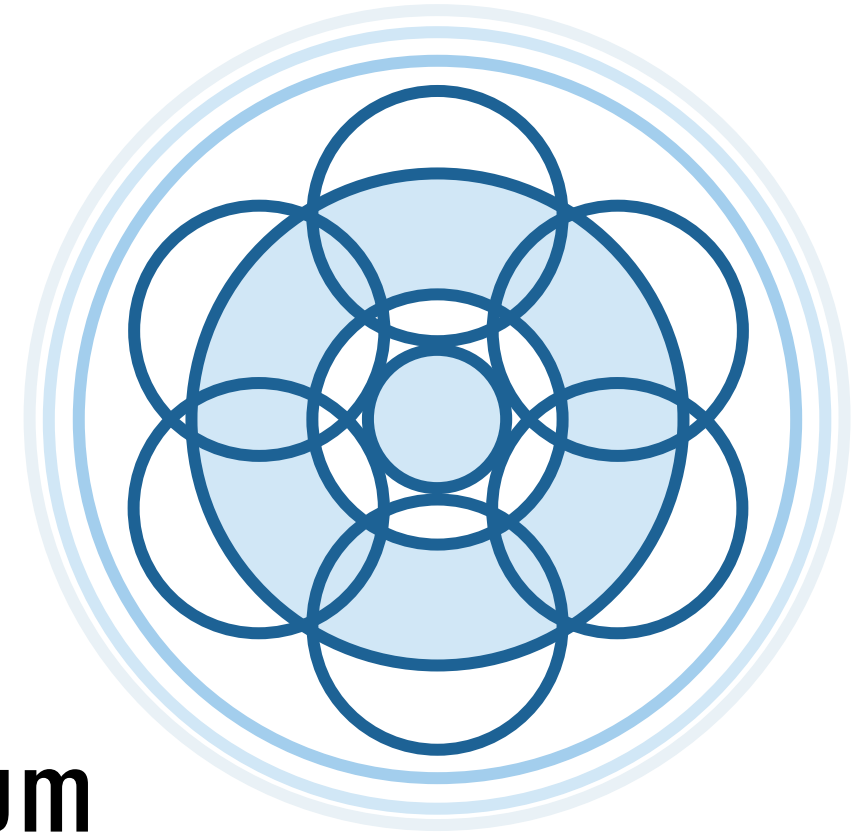# INTRODUCTION TO THE PNI PRACTICUM

What will the course be like?

What will happen in it?

What will I learn?

This introduction covers both PNI Practicum courses (**PPI** and **PPII**). Differences are marked in green.

PNI Practicum

A project-based course in participatory narrative inquiry

workingwithstories.org/pnipracticum

ABOUT YOU

Let's all take a moment to introduce ourselves and (quickly) answer these questions:

Where are you, geographically speaking?

Where do you live?

Why are you here?

What brought you to this moment? What interested you in this course?

What do you want to **get** out of this course?

What would you like to have at the end of it that you don't have now?

How much do you already **know** about PNI?

What about story work in general? Research? Facilitation? Anything else you'd like to mention?

THIS IS A PROJECT-BASED COURSE

In the PNI Practicum, everyone will carry out **a real PNI project**, and everyone will learn from every project.

I see the PNI Practicum working like a **planetary gear set**, in which a large outer "ring" gear (PNI) is driven by the **connected energy** of a "sun" gear (me) and a group of "planet" gears (you and your projects). Everyone benefits – you, me, PNI, and a whole world of people trying to get along with each other and make decisions together.
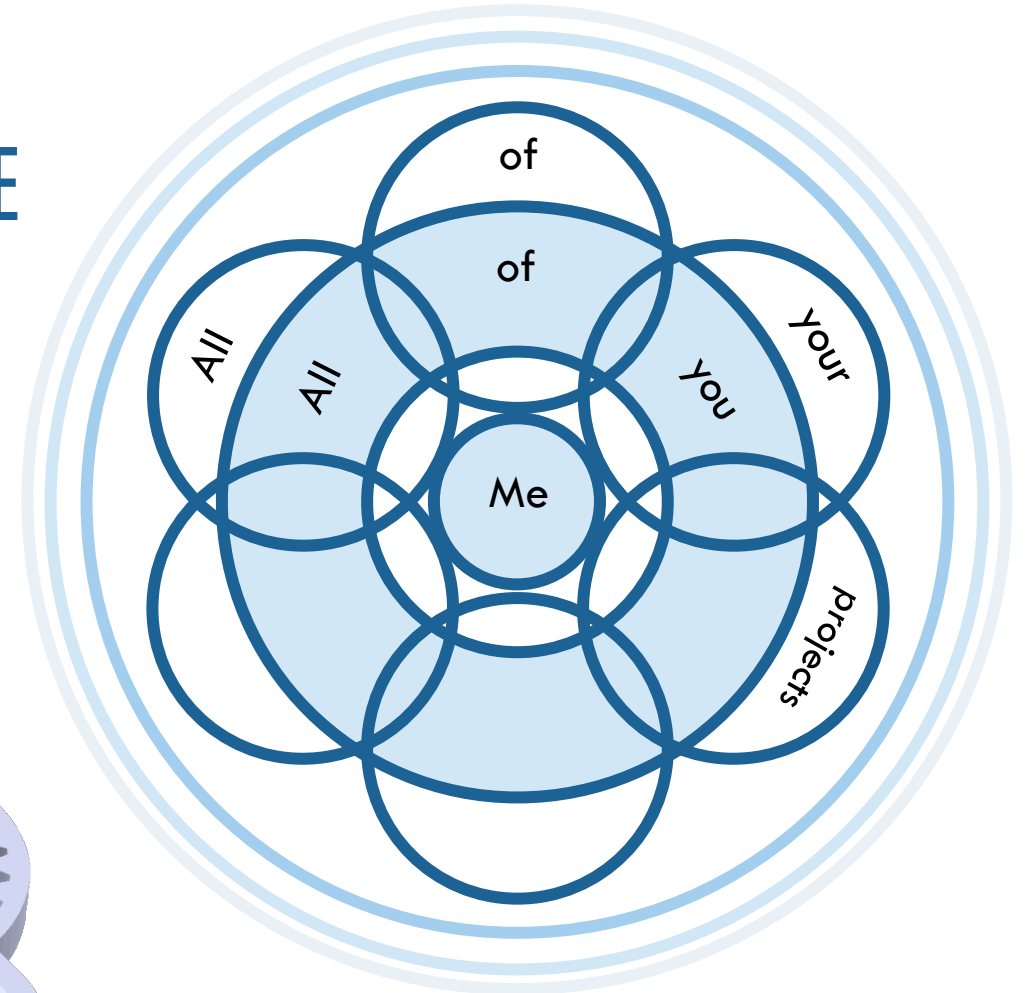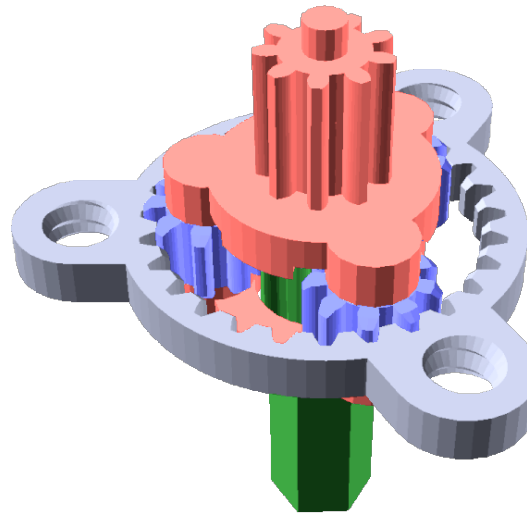
All of PNI

All of everybody

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COURSES

- **16** weeks
- Each project will collect **24**+ stories
- Each project will involve **6**+ project participants
- Story collection will be entirely **conversational**
- You will ask a **few** questions about stories, with mostly free-text answers
- You will use **simple** software (e.g., word processor, spreadsheet)
- There will be **no** narrative catalysis (pattern finding)
- During sensemaking, project participants will work **directly** with the collected stories
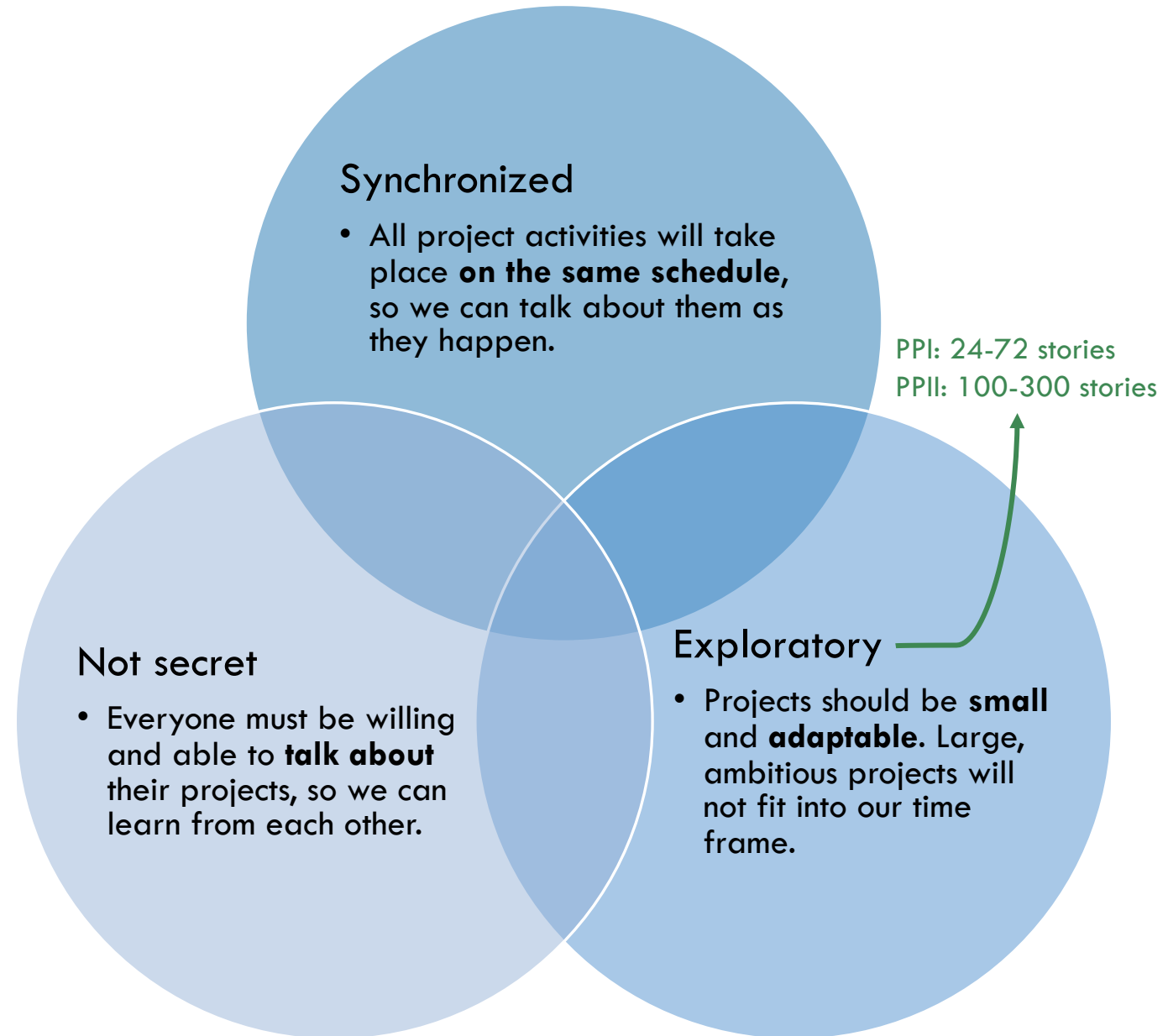
PNI Practicum I: Smaller-scale PNI

- **20** weeks
- Each project will collect **100**+ stories
- Each project will involve **20**+ project participants
- Story collection will be both **conversational** and **survey-based**
- You will ask **several** questions about stories, with mostly fixed-choice and numerical-scale answers
- You will use **advanced** software for survey collection, data visualization, and statistical analysis (e.g., NarraFirma)
- We will spend a **month** on narrative catalysis
- During sensemaking, project participants will work with **both stories and patterns**

PNI Practicum II: Larger-scale PNI

YOUR PROJECTS

For this project-based course to work, your projects must be:

Synchronized

- All project activities will take place **on the same schedule,** so we can talk about them as they happen.

PPI: 24-72 stories
PPII: 100-300 stories

Not secret

- Everyone must be willing and able to **talk about** their projects, so we can learn from each other.

Exploratory

- Projects should be **small** and **adaptable.** Large, ambitious projects will not fit into our time frame.

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THIS IS NOT A LECTURE COURSE

The PNI Practicum will follow a "flipped classroom" model. This first meeting will be the only one with a lecture in it. In all of our other meetings, I will **listen and respond** with feedback, advice, and answers to your questions.

Peer support is also very important in this course. We will *all* listen and respond.

"Students in the **flipped classroom** view digitized or online lectures as pre-class homework, then spend in-class time **engaged in active learning experiences** such as discussions, peer teaching, presentations, projects, problem solving, computations, and group activities."

Flipped learning: What is it, and when is it effective?
https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/09/28/flipped-learning-what-is-it-and-when-is-it-effective

ZOOM MEETINGS – PROJECT PROGRESS

Our primary course meetings will begin on the first day of the course and will repeat every other

Tuesday (PPI) or **Thursday (PPII)**

They will be **two hours** long.

To accommodate all time zones, each course will meet at

1700 and **2300 UTC**

You can come to **either or both** of these meeting times.

To find out when these times are in your time zone, visit

https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/timezone/utc

All calls will be at the same Zoom link, which you will/have receive(d) in your course confirmation email.

Report-in hour

We will talk about what happened when you carried out the previous course activity. Everyone will get a chance to share their experiences.
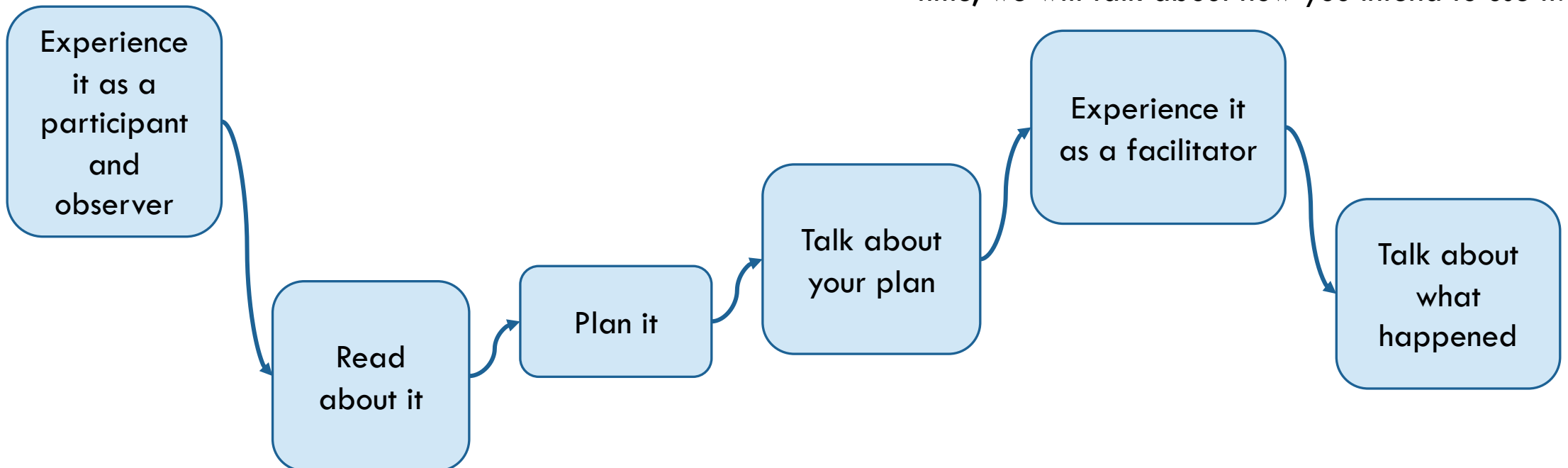
Plan-out hour

We will go over your plans for the next course activity. Everyone will get a chance to present their plans and get feedback and advice.

ZOOM MEETINGS – SANDBOX

Sandbox meetings will also happen **every other Tuesday (PPI) or Thursday (PPII)**, but they will start the *second* week of the course, and will alternate with the project progress meetings. They will also happen at 1700 and 2300 UTC, and again, you can come to either or both meetings.
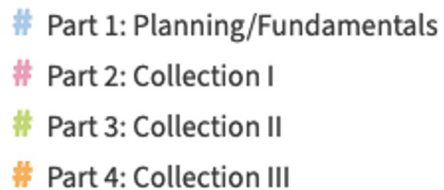
In each sandbox meeting, I will facilitate an activity or exercise just like the ones you will be facilitating in your own projects. Each sandbox will **preview** an activity or exercise you might later use yourself. After the activity, if there's time, we will talk about how you intend to use it.

Experience it as a participant and observer → Read about it → Plan it → Talk about your plan → Experience it as a facilitator → Talk about what happened
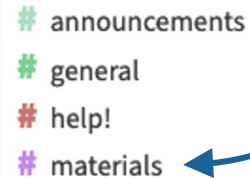
ZULIP CHAT

We will use a Zulip chat site to ask questions and discuss issues outside of our regular meetings. You will/have receive(d) the link in your course confirmation email.

Messages are in **streams,** one for each part of the course

Part 1: Planning/Fundamentals
Part 2: Collection I
Part 3: Collection II
Part 4: Collection III

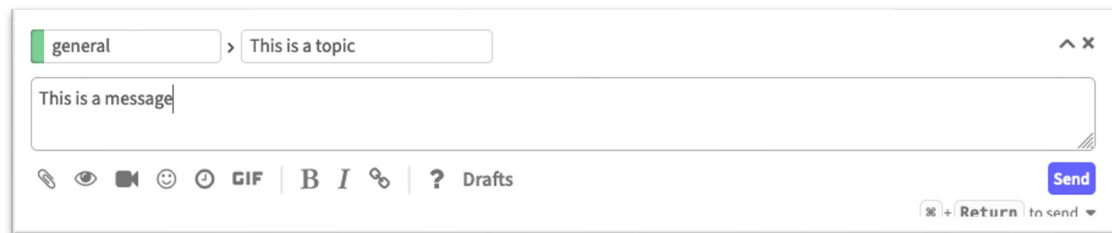A few streams are for the whole course

announcements
general
help!
materials

The **materials** stream has all of your course materials to download.

Topics are like message subjects

general	>	This is a topic	∧ ✕
This is a message			
🔗 👁 🎥 ☺ 🕐 GIF B I 🔗	? Drafts			Send
			⌘ + Return to send ▾

You can **star** important messages to find them again

Star this message (Ctrl + s)

✏ ⋮ ☆ 2:53 PM

★ Starred messages 2

Read more here:
https://zulip.com/help/getting-started-with-zulip
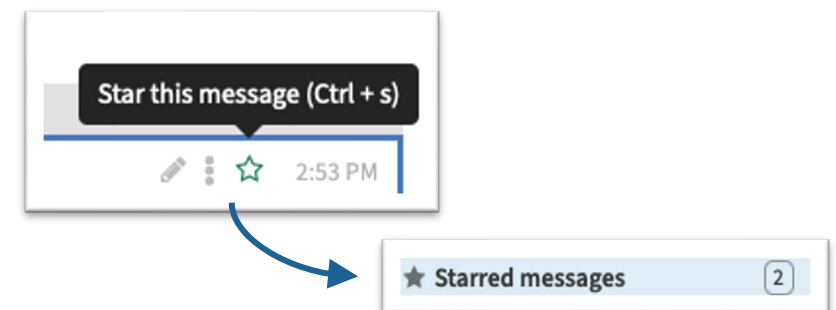
GROUND RULES

Before the Zoom meetings

At least **skim the short readings,** so you are ready to discuss the relevant topics and activities.

During the Zoom meetings

Do **respect everyone's time** and attention. Don't dominate the discussion. Give everyone time to speak.

In the Zulip chat

Don't start off-topic or political discussions. **We don't have to agree** on everything to learn together.

In your project

Do put your time and energy into your project! You will learn about PNI in this course, but only if you actually **do a PNI project.**

About other people's projects

Be respectfully curious. Ask useful questions. Don't insult or make fun of people, their projects, or their mistakes.

YOUR COURSE MATERIALS

Introduction	• This presentation, which describes the course.
Syllabus	• An index to the materials you will use in each part of the course.
Activity Instructions	• What to do in each part of the course.
Course Log	• A file with questions you can answer to create a record of the course and your project.
Story Form Library	• Sets of questions to use in this project and save for future projects.
Short Readings	• Slide sets that briefly cover what you need to know in each part of the course.
Working with Stories	• My PNI textbook, from which the medium-length readings are drawn.
More Work with Stories	• My (unfinished) advanced-topics textbook, from which some of the long readings are drawn.

COURSE READINGS

In each part of the course, the syllabus lists readings that are:

Short

Slide sets that can be skimmed in minutes (summaries of sections from *Working with Stories*)

Medium

20-40 pages from *Working with Stories*

Long

Selections from 1-2 other books on relevant topics

Only the short readings are required. Please read or skim them before the project progress meetings. You can also read the medium or long readings, dip into them briefly, or save them for later.

COURSE LOG

The course log is a record of the course, **written by you.** There are many questions for you to answer as you go through each part of the course.

Please make this document your own. Add your own questions, notes, comments, thoughts, photos, recordings – whatever you think you will want to remember when you look back on the course later.

The course log is optional, but you may find it helpful.
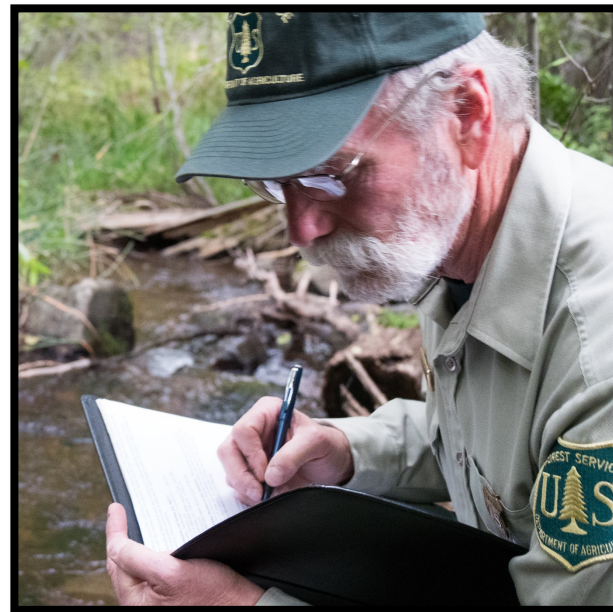
On what **dates** are you taking this course?
Why are you taking the course? What do you hope to get out of it?
What are your **expectations** going in?
Describe the **project** you intend to carry out as you take the course.

...

Activity – Observe a story-sharing conversation

Record (or take notes on) a casual conversation. Listen to the recording (or look at your notes). Find the stories in the conversation. Answer some questions about them.

In your attempts to draw out stories, what **worked**, and what didn't? Did anything surprise you?		
Answer the following questions for up to three of the **stories** you heard on the recording.		
What was the story **about**?	What was the story **about**?	What was the story **about**?
How did the story **start**? How was its abstract offered and accepted? Did you hear any reframing or negotiation?	How did the story **start**? How was its abstract offered and accepted? Did you hear any reframing or negotiation?	How did the story **start**? How was its abstract offered and accepted? Did you hear any reframing or negotiation?

...

Activity – Facilitate a Sensemaking Workshop

Help a group of people use your previously collected stories to make sense of your topic. Record the session and/or take notes on it. (If you do more than one workshop, you might want to copy and paste this table of questions for each workshop.)

What parts of the workshop were **easier or harder** than you expected? What felt natural to you, and what was difficult?
What part(s) of the workshop did the participants seem to **like** most and least?
What did you notice about the **dynamics** of the group? How did the energy flow throughout the workshop? Did it change as time went by?

PROJECT ACTIVITIES FOR PNI PRACTICUM I

Part 1 **Planning and Fundamentals**	Parts 2-4 **Collection**	Parts 5-7 **Sensemaking**	Part 8 **Intervention and Return**
Plan your project; observe conversational storytelling	Choose a story form, then gather at least 24 stories in a series of increasingly complex story sessions	Build story cards, then use them in a series of increasingly complex sensemaking sessions	Plan a narrative intervention; write a project report; return stories to the community

Individual interview (1 person, 1+ hr)	Group interview (2+ people, 1+ hr)	Story-sharing session (3+ people, 1+ hr)

Brief sense-making exercise (2+ people, 1+ hr)	Longer exercise (2+ people, 1.5+ hrs)	Full sense-making workshop (3+ people, 3+ hrs)

These collection and sensemaking activities are **iterative** by design. The idea is to **build your skills by practicing** each type of facilitation three times, with discussion, feedback, and reflection in between.

Because this is your project, I cannot set up these repeated sessions for you. **You must schedule each session with your project participants.** You can ask the same people every time, different people every time, or a mix. (A mix is best.)

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PROJECT ACTIVITIES FOR PNI PRACTICUM II

Part 1 **Planning and Fundamentals**	Parts 2-4 **Collection**			Parts 4A-B **Catalysis**	Parts 5-7 **Sensemaking**			Part 8 **Intervention and Return**
Plan your project; observe conversational storytelling	Choose a story form, tweak it, gather at least 100 stories in a survey and a series of story sessions			Check data; answer questions; find patterns; write observations, interpretations, ideas; build story cards	Facilitate a series of increasingly complex sensemaking sessions using story cards plus catalytic material			Plan a narrative intervention; write a project report; return stories to the community
	Individual interview (1 person, 1+ hr)	Group interview (2+ people, 1+ hr)	Story-sharing session (3+ people, 1+ hr)		Brief sense-making exercise (2+ people, 1+ hr)	Longer exercise (2+ people, 1.5+ hrs)	Full sense-making workshop (3+ people, 3+ hrs)	
	Survey pilot	Survey (20+ ppl, 0.1+ hr)						

The collection and sensemaking activities are **iterative**. The idea is to **build your skills by practicing** each facilitation type three times, with discussion, feedback, and reflection in between.

Because this is your project, I cannot set up these repeated sessions for you. **You must schedule each session with your project participants.** You can ask the same people every time, different people every time, or a mix. (A mix is best.)

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

Please take a moment to talk about your project plans.

Is there a **particular project** you plan to do in this course?

Can you briefly describe it?

If you don't have a particular project in mind, **what sort of project** are you interested in doing?

What are some topics you'd like to explore?

How do you feel about **collaborating on shared projects** with other students?

Does that seem appealing to you? Or would you rather work on your own project?

TIME COMMITMENTS FOR PNI PRACTICUM I

Here are some **minimal time estimates** for each two-week part of the course. You may or may not need more time than this, depending on how ambitious you want to be.

| Part	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TOTAL	11 hrs	12 hrs	11 hrs	15 hrs	12 hrs	10 hrs	12 hrs	14 hrs
Readings	2 hrs	2 hrs	1 hr	2 hrs	3 hrs	No readings	No readings	1 hr
Zoom calls	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs
Course log	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr
Activities	Plan project: 2 hrs	Choose and tweak story form: 2 hrs	Conduct group interview: 1 hr	Design story-sharing session: 1 hr	Design sensemaking session: 1 hr	Design sensemaking session: 1 hr	Design sensemaking session: 1.5 hrs	Design and carry out intervention: 4 hrs
	Observe story sharing: 2 hrs	Conduct individual interview: 1 hr	Transcribe stories, prepare story cards: 4 hrs	Conduct story-sharing session: 1.5 hr	Conduct sensemaking session: 1.5 hrs	Conduct sensemaking session: 2 hrs	Conduct sensemaking workshop: 3.5 hrs	Write project report: 4 hrs
		Transcribe stories, prepare story cards: 2 hrs		Transcribe stories, prepare story cards: 6 hrs	Write session record: 2 hrs	Write session record: 2 hrs	Write session record: 2 hrs	

TIME COMMITMENTS FOR PNI PRACTICUM II

Here are some **minimal time estimates** for each two-week part of the course. You may or may not need more time than this, depending on how ambitious you want to be.

Part	1	2	3	4	4A	4B	5	6	7	8
TOTAL	13 hrs	13 hrs	11 hrs	15 hrs	13 hrs	15 hrs	12 hrs	10 hrs	12 hrs	14 hrs
Readings	2 hrs	2 hrs	1 hr	2 hrs	2 hrs	2 hrs	3 hrs	No readings	No readings	1 hr
Calls	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs
Course log	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr	0.5-1 hr
Activities	Get started with NarraFirma: 2 hrs	Choose and tweak story form, set up survey in NF: 4 hrs	Conduct group interview: 1 hr	Design story-sharing session: 1 hr	Code qualitative question(s): 2 hrs	Write observations: 2 hrs	Design sensemaking session: 1 hr	Design sensemaking session: 1 hr	Design sensemaking session: 1.5 hrs	Design and carry out intervention: 4 hrs
	Plan project: 2 hrs	Prepare for and conduct individual interview: 2 hrs	Transcribe stories, enter into NF: 4 hrs	Conduct story-sharing session: 1.5 hr	Check data integrity: 1 hr	Write interpretations, ideas: 2 hrs	Conduct sensemaking session: 1.5 hrs	Conduct sensemaking session: 2 hrs	Conduct sensemaking workshop: 3.5 hrs	Write project report: 4 hrs
	Observe story sharing: 2 hrs	Transcribe stories, enter into NF: 2 hrs		Transcribe stories, enter into NF: 6 hrs	Review graphs, mark remarkable patterns: 3 hrs	Cluster elements, prepare materials: 2 hrs	Write session record: 2 hrs	Write session record: 2 hrs	Write session record: 2 hrs	

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IF YOU FALL BEHIND

It might be hard to schedule all of your participatory sessions on your project schedule. People might be busy. They might say they'll come but not show up. Or you might get sick or have a busy month. *That's fine.* You will be practicing story collection and sensemaking **three times each.** So even if things get delayed, you should still be able to complete all of your course activities.
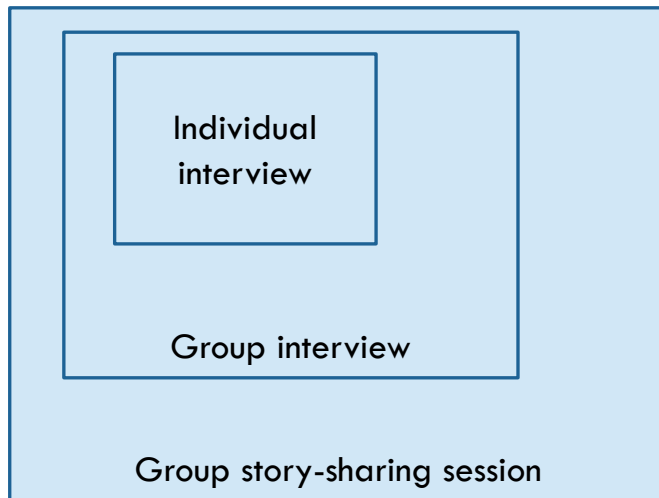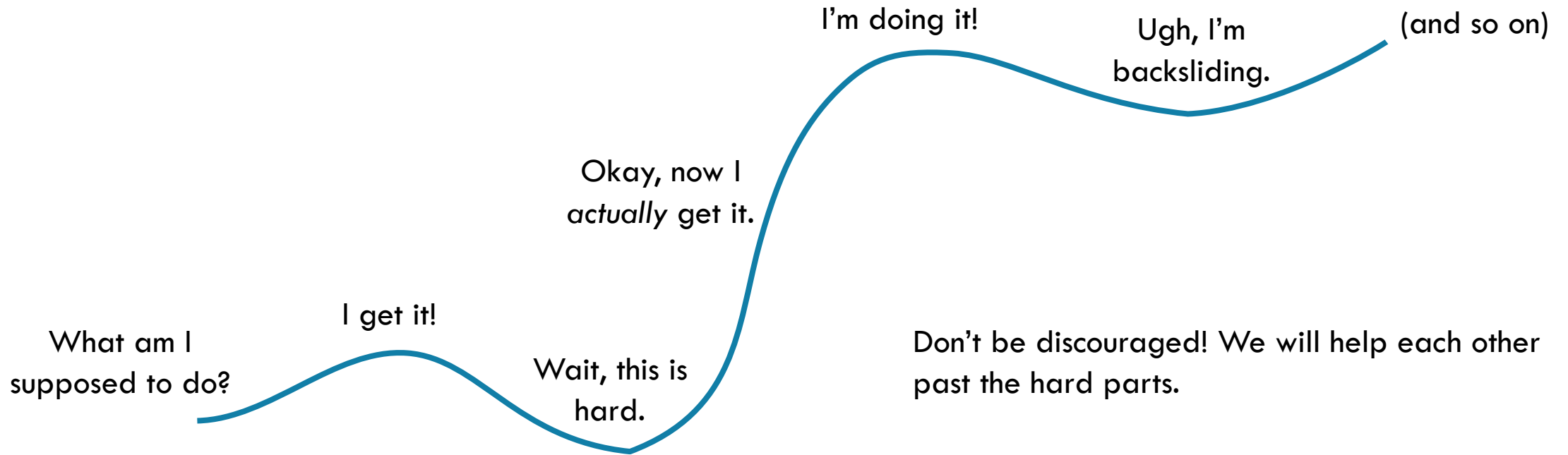

You should **gather at least 24 (PPI) or 100 (PPII) stories** during the three story-collection parts of the course, ideally with one activity every two weeks. However, you will have **six weeks** to do this. If you end up collecting all of your stories in the last week of the six, that's okay. It will be a busy week, but you can do it.
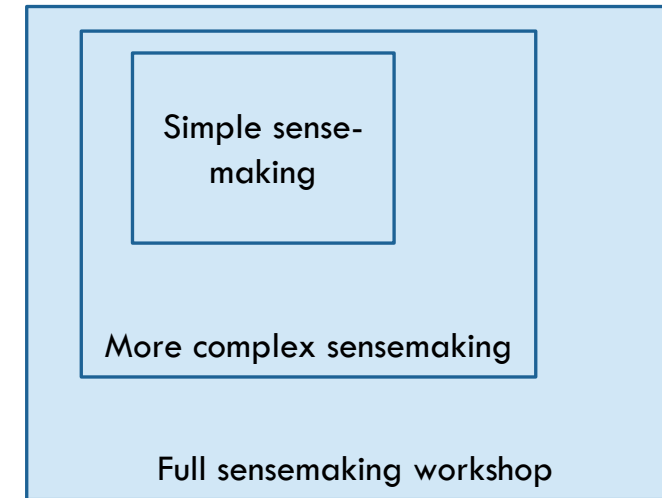
You should **hold three sensemaking sessions,** ideally one every two weeks. But again, you will have **six weeks** to do this. If you end up holding all three sessions in the same busy week – or even if you can only fit in two sessions – that's okay. It won't ruin the course for you.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Because this course is all about learning by doing, you are likely to find that your **learning curve** looks something like this:

I'm doing it!

Ugh, I'm backsliding.

(and so on)

Okay, now I *actually* get it.

I get it!

What am I supposed to do?

Wait, this is hard.

Don't be discouraged! We will help each other past the hard parts.

ONE-ON-ONE HELP

If at any time during your project you feel the need for extra help, you can use this special Calendly link to schedule a **one-hour Zoom problem-solving session**, just you and me. I'm here to help.

calendly.com/cfkurtz/pni-practicum-problem-solving-session

To make sure everyone can get the help they need, please sign up for **no more than two sessions** per course. If you have already used your two sessions and still need help, talk to me.

QUESTIONS?

Do you have any **questions** about the course?

What are you **excited** about?
What **concerns** you?

Imagine that the course is over, and it went **much better** than you thought it would.
What happened? What can we do to make that happen?

Imagine that the course is over, and it was a **waste of your time.** What happened?
What can we do to avoid that happening?

IMAGE CREDITS

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Students operating seine https://www.flickr.com/photos/internetarchivebookimages/20649855692
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