

Naikan Reflection & Self-Growth

2021 Academy of Process Educators Conference

**George Dombi
Professor of Chemistry
University of Rhode Island**

and

**Cy Leise
Professor Emeritus of Psychology
Bellevue University (Nebraska)**

Objectives

1. Explain why neuroscience supports both PE and Naikan reflection.
2. Use the three universal Naikan questions as a guide for reflection on the four PE *roles* of knower, learner, grower, and self-grower.
3. Report insights about the value of the Naikan mindset for expanding consciousness of personal opportunities for self-growth.

What is your understanding of the Purpose of Reflection?

Discussion Notes:

The Four PE Roles Exemplified

1. Knowing:

- Self-observing social skills
- Solving quadratic equations
- Documenting personal history
- Explaining visual perception

3. Growing:

- Self-challenging to be more effective in life roles
- Analyzing data collected in an experiment
- Being proactive by applying methodologies
- Seeking feedback to learn from negative evaluations
- Seeing prompts about creative opportunities

2. Learning:

- Persisting to toughen self-esteem
- Applying statistics based on quadratic equations
- Interpreting symbolism in novels
- Challenging groupthink in teams

4. Self-Growth:

- Making performance decisions based on forecasting future career needs
- Directing others in research projects
- Being conscientious about strategies to increase fairness of judgments
- Developing an ethical system based on compassion
- Identifying new areas of growth to improve richness of life experiences

Matching Reflection Ideals with Role Levels

Knowing:

What strategies work to improve acquisition of new knowledge?

Learning:

How does strengthening of certain learning skills allow one to consciously improve how learning occurs for attaining a goal?

Growing:

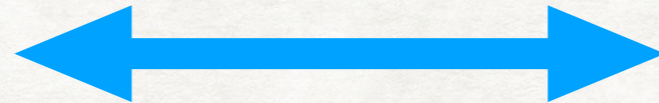
How does performance development strengthen one's values and capabilities to perform in significant life roles?

Self-Growth:

What capabilities will result in a meaningful life while also overcoming impediments and risk factors?

Reflection Depends Upon Quality of Recall

Acquired Memory is our “store” of knowledge about reality. It includes ideas represented by language.



“Episodic” Memory is an automatic (effortless) capture of subjective experience.

These memory types interact, e.g., an experienced actor has acquired more expert knowledge which helps with remembering a specific acting experience more fully and accurately.

Neuroscience Basics

(1)

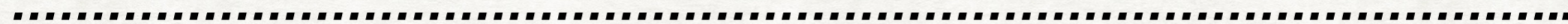
*Preconscious
“Predictions”*

(2)

*Initial Awareness
of Feelings*

(3)

*(Subjective) Attention
to Action Choices*



Barrett’s “Core Affect” Theory:

**Core Affect
Formation**

Emotion (Good/Bad)

**“Construction” of
Action**

Dweck’s “BEATs” Theory:

Belief (unaware state)

Emotion (Evaluative)

Action Tendency

Neuroscience is Clear: Attend to Actions

Preconscious “Predictions”

Our nervous system quickly uses internal and external inputs to prepare for **probabilities**

Initial Awareness of Feelings

Emotions are unavoidable “signals” but **do not determine** action choices

(Subjective) Attention to Action Choices

Both PE and Naikan reflection help to discriminate actions from emotions

The 3 Naikan reflection questions:

1. Who (or what) helped me to make this performance or decision possible?
2. What did I do to make it easier on those people or things who helped me?
3. What problems did I cause to people or things who helped me do the performance or make a quality-of-life decision?

Naikan Reflection Statements for the Four Roles

Knowing:

Q1: My mentor put me on to a key point.

Q2: I asked a peer before taking the time of my instructor.

Q3: When confused I told my mentor I understood, which wasted her time later.

Learning (L2L):

Q1: My teammate showed me the value of persisting longer.

Q2: I kept my word to our team leader by demonstrating a process even though I was unsure of some parts of it.

Q3: I failed to listen to my instructor's feedback and embarrassed my team when we performed.

Growing:

Q1: My department chair said I did a good job of prioritizing my work while developing a new course.

Q2: I tried out my instructor's recommended way to improve even though I believed it wouldn't work.

Q3: I was late with my team contribution because I got stuck emotionally.

Self-Growth:

Q1: My roommate told me I showed great excitement when talking about my major.

Q2: I shared with my team the value of a peer's assessment.

Q3: I didn't express gratitude for useful feedback from a peer.

The Value of Naikan Reflection:

- The three questions narrow attention to what is **objectively true**, e.g., someone opened the door for me.
- The three questions put our emphasis on **gratitude** for every life experience—we can't grow without appreciating reality.
- The three questions help us become aware of what our observable actions have **contributed or detracted**—our emotions are secondary.

George will introduce Naikan Reflection.

How PE and Naikan Reflection can Expand “Learning Moments” and “Growth Experiences”

PE Reflection

- a. Improve holistic memory
- b. Identify key elements
- c. Plan how to improve
- d. Gain insight
- e. Connect to ideals

Naikan Reflection

- a. Increase awareness of actions
- b. Gather data for three questions
- c. Increase “objectivity”
- d. Appreciate roles
- e. Increase gratitude

Ideal Reflection Criteria in the PE Framework and in Naikan Practice

PE

Deepen knowledge to an expert level

Self-challenge—conceptualize stretch goals for any role level

Expand uses of tools and strategies

Create new opportunities for performance growth

Expand self-concept by applying broad criteria

Imagine new sources of identity

Continually extend conscious imagination of the ideal self

Naikan

Increase objectivity by observing actions apart from emotions

Make consciousness of feelings secondary to action choices

Gain an attitude of gratitude about each experience that overrides any negative aspects

Make relationships central by observing how actions made life easier or more difficult for someone else

Breakout Time – Twenty Minutes

1. Focus on one PE mastery “role” as selected or assigned. (The options are knowing, learning, growing, and self-growth.)
2. Identify a captain and a spokesperson; assign a timekeeper.
3. Use information and examples to stimulate discussion for the first ten minutes. (Session resources can be accessed from the breakout room.)
4. Formulate one or two Naikan statements for each of the three Naikan questions for the one role level the team is working with.
5. Identify one or two insights.
6. The spokesperson will report out examples of Naikan statements and insights about the value of the Naikan approach for reflection.

Session Assessment

- 1. How did this session help you to strength your reflection work?**
- 2. How could we have improved our presentation of reflection?**
- 3. What new insights occurred for you about reflection as a process for improving the four role levels?**