

Reflection

We used De Bono's thinking hats as a reflection tool.

Jessie wore the blue hat throughout this process, so as to keep it on track.

Reflection – Theory

White Hat – facts & figures

We are new to the living systems theory and HDM. They are things that take a long time to get to grips with.

Yellow Hat – positivity & optimism

It has been constructive to disrupt the conventional mechanistic thinking around complex systems and it's made it possible to see where the more valuable interventions can be made.

Black Hat – risk management

There is a risk that by following this approach, we have opened the scope too broadly and that when presenting this to the client, they may be overwhelmed.

Red Hat – emotion & intuition

These theories are very open, they don't give clear, defined answers, in fact, it raises more questions than answers. It is a very useful starting point but is it clear enough that there's a destination?

Green Hat – creativity & opportunities

The theory is so open that there are endless opportunities for creativity.

Reflection – Tools

White Hat – facts & figures

We used Quality of Life Statements, The five questions, The seven first principles of regeneration, inputs/outputs diagram, base map, sector analysis, zoning, PMI, De Bono's Thinking Hats.

Yellow Hat – positivity & optimism

We used appropriate tools to address a need, rather than using tools because we thought we should, in-keeping with the Regenerative Life approach. Although the sector analysis was basic, it was appropriate for the scope of this design.

Black Hat – risk management

The inputs/outputs diagram is a mechanistic approach and is not in-keeping with the chosen framework

Red Hat – emotion & intuition

Jessie liked the inputs/outputs diagram very much. Some of the tools around HDM and Living systems are abstract and cerebral so that can create feelings of uncertainty, compared to more traditional, definitive tools such as SWOT analysis.

Green Hat – creativity & opportunities

The inputs/outputs diagram was a way to illustrate and explore the connectedness of the vegetable growing with the other systems/activities and highlight the fact that the scope of what we needed to consider was much broader.

Reflection – Process

White Hat – facts & figures

Killian and I worked on this design collaboratively. We had some informal direct engagement with the clients. There was a limited amount of data to work with.

Yellow Hat – positivity & optimism

Working collaboratively allowed us to consider different perspectives and to discuss issues, and to develop ideas.

Black Hat – risk management

Perhaps we didn't get enough data from the clients – there could be all sorts of pipework under the various areas that we don't know about!

Red Hat – emotion & intuition

There's a great deal of anecdotal information to gather and we're aware that there's no way of knowing how effectively that has been done – you don't know what you don't know.

The social element of the whole may not have been sufficiently considered and it may cause the design to be less effective.

Reflection – Next steps

White Hat – facts & figures

We need to present this design to the Ridge and Furrow Farm team.

Yellow Hat – positivity & optimism

The client will start to understand the scope of what it is they are asking for and see the viability and benefits of a living systems approach.

Black Hat – risk management

The risk is that they don't see this and just want a planting plan and quick solutions.

Red Hat – emotion & intuition

There is some anxiety about presenting this work to the client – can we communicate our ideas effectively? Do people perceive that this level of planning and thought is unnecessary and prefer to use the dreaded phrase 'we work organically'. Is it seen as too complicated, people are stuck in the other paradigms.

Green Hat – creativity & opportunities

use HDM and four questions with the Ridge and Furrow Farm team to evaluate. We also need to think creatively about how to present this design to the client as we need to make the concepts that underpin the work accessible.

Reflection – Principles & Ethics

What went well?

The ethics relate easily to this design. Relating each QoLS to the ethics worked very nicely. The principles are new and interesting, and very fitting for the framework and HDM stuff. We really took them onboard

What was challenging?

The principles are new, and we haven't seen them used in any other context, so we had to get our heads around them independently

What is your future vision?

To learn to see 'Essence' in people and places, disrupting the habitual thinking that blocks this. To integrate these principles into our designing so that we create beautifully resilient designs that really do regenerate

What are your next steps?

To continue using these principles in future designs

Reflection – general musings

Regenerative Life and HDM are powerful tools but they take time to apply, and they can be difficult to convey to others, or to get people to take the time required to engage with.

A conventional framework can be explained, step by step, with little difficulty. Here there are conceptual barriers to cross and paradigm shifts to navigate. Containing this in a design within a limited scope and timeframe is challenging.

It wasn't possible, within the constraints of the design, to bring the client along with us.

The intention of the Whole of Ridge and Furrow Farm Workshop design was to act as an introduction to these concepts and a means to develop those ideas more completely, with a view to informing this design. We have realised that this will be a much longer process.

This design served as a good start to looking at these new methods, and in coming up against the limits we learnt more about the process.

We will be sharing this design with the team and they will be able to see how we have implemented the HDM process, and will hopefully see why we were banging on about HDM in the workshop!