

Practice Principled Innovation®: Generative and Reflective Card Deck User Guide

What is it?

Principled Innovation (PI) is the ability to imagine new concepts, catalyze ideas and form new solutions guided by principles that create positive change for humanity. This card deck is designed to inspire positive, reflective decision-making grounded in core values. Use the deck in a variety of settings to encourage deeper engagement with character as you navigate problems and design human-centered solutions. This deck is a flexible resource that brings to bear ASU's ninth design aspiration, Practice Principled Innovation, in which ASU places character and values at the center of decisions and actions.

The deck contains two kinds of cards: four **Character Domain** cards that define the domains and practices of PI, and forty **Question** cards that put those practices to work through paired reflective questions. You can use them to open or close meetings, guide dialogue, spark classroom discussion, deepen professional learning, advance Communities of Practice (CoP) or for your own personal reflection.

PI in Action - The Four Ps

PI in Action offers four practical lenses that map onto each character domain. This is the plain language highlighted on the bottom of each of the four Character Domain cards.

Purpose: clarify what matters and why before moving ahead. (*Moral domain*)

People: consider relationships, dignity and community impact. (*Civic domain*)

Process: slow down enough to think, learn from evidence and reflect before acting. (*Intellectual domain*)

Performance: values-aligned action, following through with care accountability. (*Performance domain*)

How does it support Principled Innovation?

These cards cultivate practical wisdom because they are a method for bringing reflections on values, character and impact into your real workflows. It doesn't take much time or preparation to integrate the deck into what you're already doing. When you use the deck consistently, you build the habit of reflection so that, when faced with a difficult decision or pressed for time, considering values, character and impact is second-nature.

Each domain helps you practice different skills. The **Moral** cards are grounded in values: naming what matters, noticing what your emotions reveal and weighing alternatives before acting. The **Civic** cards ask you to work with others: beginning with existing strengths, asking whose voices are missing and reflecting those most affected. The **Intellectual** cards help you slow down enough to think carefully and with care: checking that your information is trustworthy, seeing how people and structures shape one another, and acknowledging what isn't yet known. Lastly, the **Performance** cards carry help you act in the midst of uncertainty: beginning with empathy, anticipating unintended outcomes and turning missteps into learning. Drawing across all four domains, the questions posed in this deck help you or your team develop **practical wisdom**, which is when our actions align with values and mitigate unexpected consequences, which leads to human flourishing.

How do I use it?

On your own, the cards support personal reflection. With a team they can be used to open or close meetings, solicit missed perspectives and align a group around shared values (or identify diverging values!) before a decision. At the organizational or unit level, they establish an institutional value for reflection and keep character in view across longer initiatives. What changes with each use is who's in the room and how responses are shared.

How do I use it? (cont'd)

Once you've chosen the setting, choose a card. You can start with a domain (moral is a helpful starting point), or just draw a card at random. Read the first question and respond; then read the second and let it take you further. There are lots of ways to engage. You can discuss responses, journal on them or hold them quietly in contemplation, returning later to notice whether your thinking has shifted. Because the two questions build on one another, and the themes within a domain build from personal to collective, you can use one card or string several into a longer arc.

Here are five ways to begin:

1. **Start with a question**

Each person picks a card and shares how it connects to the topic at hand, then reflects on what shifted.

2. **Reframe your perspective**

Relate a card's question to a real experience, journal it and revisit to see what changed your view.

3. **Center character in your work**

On a current project, draw one card per domain and ask which values might be missing.

4. **Use questions to spark collaboration**

Use a card as a warm-up, or one question per domain to review or launch work.

5. **Design your own reflection**

Pick a focus, choose cards that fit and build an activity around the questions.

Why does it work?

Critical reflection, whether individually or in group contexts, plays a central role in learning (Mezirow, 1990, 1998). Critical reflection facilitates meaning-making by exploring lessons learned in past experiences, a process which triggers our moral imagination (Johnson, 1993; Cook-Sather & Baker-Doyle, 2017)—our vision for how the future could and should be—and guides future action (Mezirow, 1990).

Reflective practices using tools such as journaling or questioning, support the ongoing development of character and values. Reflective techniques such as these have been linked to the development of a wide range of values in college-aged young adults, including humility, altruism (Brooks et al., 2019; Lamb et al., 2021), empathy, fairness, perspective-taking, critical thinking, and the practices of systems-thinking (Rodríguez Aboytes & Barth, 2020; Shor et al., 2017; Van Beveren et al., 2018) and moral and ethical decision-making (Astin et al., 2006; Rockenbach, 2020).

Within teacher preparation in particular, critical reflection has been specifically linked to the development of critical consciousness and multicultural competencies (LaBelle & Belknap, 2016; Sharma et al., 2011)—important teacher dispositions which build on values of empathy, humility and perspective-taking. When practiced in teams, critical reflection can lead to change within entire organizations, bringing organizational practice into alignment with institutional values (Gray, 2007; Henderson, 2002).

The reflective questions in the card deck press us to question our assumptions and enter into discourse with taken-for-granted beliefs (Mezirow, 1997), triggering the meaning-making metacognition that has been linked to personal transformation (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). They are “generative” in that they engage our moral imagination and cause us to look ahead to what the outcomes could be from a range of possible actions today. By drawing across a spectrum of values, the questions help us access the practical wisdom needed to align actions with values and mitigate the unexpected consequences of our decision-making.

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