

Checklist: Epiphany Triggers – A Tool to Inspire Breakthroughs for Business Communication Instructors

This checklist outlines a practical and psychologically grounded tool—Perspective Shift Cards—designed to help business communication instructors spark innovative ideas and inspire teaching breakthroughs. Use this guide to develop and integrate these cards into your instructional practice, whether for solo lesson planning or collaborative curriculum design.

Perspective Shift Cards are flexible, thought-provoking prompts printed or displayed as cards, each designed to challenge assumptions, reframe problems, or uncover new instructional strategies. Instructors can use these cards at various stages of the teaching process—before a class to plan with fresh angles, after a class to reflect on what could be improved, or during team meetings to fuel pedagogical innovation. Each card invites instructors to view their teaching through an unexpected lens, such as imagining a lesson without technology, reversing instructor-student roles, or redesigning an assignment around a single skill. Rooted in principles of cognitive science and creativity research, these cards are especially powerful in helping instructors break out of routine thinking and uncover approaches that elevate student engagement and learning outcomes.

Recognize Common Barriers to Innovation

- ☐ Identify signs of imposter syndrome and acknowledge their impact on teaching confidence.
- ☐ Evaluate whether content overload is compromising depth and comprehension.
- ☐ Examine if linear thinking is limiting interdisciplinary exploration.
- ☐ Reflect on whether fear of failure is preventing you from experimenting with new methods.

Understand the Power of 'Perspective Shift Cards'

- ☐ Use scenario-based prompts to encourage fresh thinking (e.g., 'What if students taught this lesson?').
- ☐ Challenge norms with constraint-driven prompts (e.g., 'Teach without any tech tools.').
- ☐ Explore redesign ideas (e.g., 'Rebuild the course around a single skill like public speaking.').

Leverage Psychological Principles for Maximum Impact

- ☐ Incorporate prompts that trigger cognitive dissonance to challenge assumptions.
- ☐ Use the surprise element to promote neuroplasticity and creative thinking.
- ☐ Design cards to encourage divergent thinking—brainstorming multiple approaches to a problem.
- ☐ Introduce randomness or serendipity to enable spontaneous idea generation.

Create Your Own 'Perspective Shift Cards'

- ☐ Brainstorm 10–20 card prompts based on common instructional challenges.
- ☐ Use varied prompt styles: constraint-based, student-centered, visual-only, etc.
- ☐ Involve teaching peers in card creation to generate diverse viewpoints.
- ☐ Keep prompts brief, specific, and open-ended to encourage flexible thinking.

Incorporate Cards into Teaching Workflow

- ☐ Use cards during lesson planning to explore alternative delivery methods.
- ☐ Apply after-class for reflection on what could be done differently next time.
- ☐ Use in peer coaching or mentorship sessions to inspire collaborative innovation.
- ☐ Make drawing one card a weekly routine to maintain teaching creativity.

Evaluate and Refine Your Use of the Cards

- ☐ Track which prompts lead to actionable changes or improved engagement.
- ☐ Collect feedback from students on changes inspired by card use.
- ☐ Regularly revise prompts to reflect new challenges or teaching goals.

Chapters 4–6

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