DAF Learning Symposium

HOSTED BY AETC

(U.S. Air Force photo by Miriam Thurber)

2024
WORKBOOK

Dear Symposium Participants! *Welcome!*

Thank you so much for making time to bring your perspectives and representing your communities of practice at the 3rd Annual Department of the Air Force (DAF) Learning Symposium. As you know, this year we are diving into the important topics of competency modeling, implementation and measures! We are sharing exemplars, challenges, and building on efforts from across the DAF. This convening is to fully engage in a robust dialogue with the intention of creating and documenting a shared understanding of competency implementation standards and flexibilities to serve total force development.This symposium workbook is designed to support your learning, inspire reflection, and help document the stated outcomes of the symposium.

Expected Outcomes:
1. Convene a diverse population of the DAF total force (uniform enlisted, officers, and civilians of the USAF and USSF) representatives to share their efforts and experiences related to competency model development, implementation, and mapping to learning and career opportunities.
2. Actively facilitate understanding of the current state of competency-based learning implementation, highlighting exemplars, and identifying systematic challenges to collectively imagine and document opportunities to optimize progress.
3. Collectively discover tangible opportunities to advance competency acquisition to optimize readiness for global power competition and conflict.

The symposium is designed as part of a larger strategy to facilitate growing and managing a body of knowledge to optimize total force learning for mission success. The beauty of this activity is that while it serves to improve mission success, it also serves to improve all of us individually and collectively. As you grow so does the DAF!

You are among learning professionals, competency experts, talent management professionals, career field and functional managers, leaders and learners representing many career fields. This is an excellent opportunity to extend your learning network, share perspectives, challenges, understandings, and misunderstandings to create a larger unified possibility of competency-based learning to achieve mission success! Thank you for being here, fully present, and ready to fly, fight, and win!

With kindness & courage,

Dr. Wendy D. Walsh, SL, DAFC
Chief Learning Officer
HQ Air Education and Training Command

Your Facilitation Team

Dr. Rob Nyland

has been working at the intersection of design, innovation, and data in higher education for the past 15 years. He currently works as a Learning Architect for the Global College of PME at Air University where he helps to create engaging, collaborative online experiences for learners across the Air Force. He is a certified Think Wrong Facilitator and enjoys employing design thinking methods to tackle tough issues facing higher education. Additionally, Rob is a leader in IEEE ICICLE, an organization committed to the development of Learning Engineering.

Dr. W. Ethan Eagle

has provided dozens of public seminars using his facilitation methods for creativity and strategy and is active as a private coach to executives and corporate teams who want to build the courage, conviction, competition, and commitment to do what's never been done before. Currently, Dr. Eagle is the head coach for the USAF Innovation Education Program 'Project Mercury' where he provides stewardship for innovation teams during the 12-week curriculum. These efforts have gone on to launch successful innovators at the North Spark Defense Lab as well as given birth to the USAF strategic innovation initiative, Project Morpheus, among many others.

Col Sarah Bahkitari, Ph.D.

Hey y'all. I'm a warrior-scholar that was seduced by the effectiveness of design a decade ago while trying to rethink how we develop strategy in the Department of Defense. I co-founded an in-government strategy startup that used design to general novel ideas for defense strategy and which influenced the writing of the 2018 National Defense Strategy. I'm thrilled to be in the facilitation and design space for the symposium with this amazing team...and with YOU! We aim to set the conditions for you to participate authentically and unlock creative collaboration.
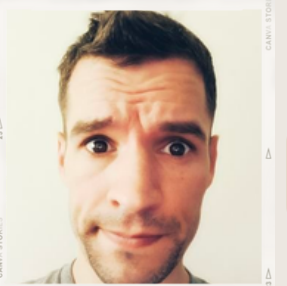
MSGT Daniel Hulter

Daniel Hulter is a writer on the subject of culture and innovation, and founder of Agitare, a community of practice for facilitators of sensemaking and design frameworks such as design thinking, human-centered design, Cynefin, Think Wrong, futures, systems thinking, and more. He is passionate about promoting facilitation and sensemaking practices to help DoD organizations and individuals innovate and navigate complexity. He currently works as a facilitator and designer at Air Force Cyberworx at the Air Force Academy, where he designs and runs workshops and research efforts to get after the DAF's wickedest problems.

Jenny Hegland

Hello everyone! I'm the co-founder of Unlimited Boundaries, a consultancy that helps teams work better together across silos to improve communication, connection, and collaboration. My career includes 15+ years of experience as a social entrepreneur, experiential educator, facilitator, counselor, Art of Hosting practitioner, community organizer, higher education and nonprofit leader, and listener poet. I'm passionate about cultivating the conditions for shared leadership and individual/organizational transformation and healing.

Marcus "Cus" Carrion

If you're reading this, sitting in the Radius Center in San Antonio, thank you for accepting our invitation and more importantly thank you for your focus and collaboration. I love building ideas through collaborative problem-solving, design and grit. From my days triaging aircraft as a flying crew chief, to responding to emergencies as a fireman in Sacramento - I fell in love with being the person responding. As a field engineer abroad I was introduced to design which navigating the intersection of human and machines systems. Still an Airman, I find myself charged with this gathering - responding to the needs of our community.

Day 1

Theme: Understanding/Modeling Competencies

TIME	TIMING	EVENT	LOCATION
0800-0830	30 minutes	Registration	Common area
0830-0930	60 minutes	Dr. Walsh Welcome	Common area
0930-1045	75 minutes	Foundational Listening for Competency Development	Plenary
1045-1100	15 minutes	Break	Plenary / common area
1100-1200	60 minutes	Deflection Point (X4 groups) Identify Key Discussion Topics	Plenary or common area
1200-1300	60 minutes	LUNCH	Common area
1300-1315	15 minutes	Discussion Sign up - migrate to rooms	Plenary to breakout rooms
1315-1430	75 minutes	Session 1 - Understanding competency (60 min discussion/15 min reflection)	Break out rooms
1430-1445	15 minutes	BREAK	
1445-1545	60 minutes	Group session 2 - Modeling 45 min discussion/15 minute reflection)	Break out rooms
1545-1600	15 minutes	Reflection group session sharing	Plenary or Common area

Day 2

TIME	TIMING	EVENT	LOCATION
0800-0830	30 minutes	Coffee-tea - Discussion sign up	Common area
0830-0900	30 minutes	Recap of Day 1 and Introduction to Day 2 (adjustments)	Common area
0900-1030	90 minutes	Group session 3 - Implementation (70 min discussion/20 min reflection)	Plenary/offices and conference room
1030-1045	15 minutes	Break	
1045-1200	75 minutes	Poster Gallery walk	Plenary/Gallery/Cafe Areas
1200-1300	60 minutes	Lunch	Plenary
1300-1400	60 minutes	Group Session 4 45 min discussion/15 minute reflection)	Break out rooms
1400-1415	15 minutes	Break	
1415-1545	90 minutes	Fishbowl Discussion	Plenary or Common area
1545-1600	15 minutes	Reflection group session sharing	Plenary or Common area
1700 - 2000	Optional	No-Host Social	Idle Beer Hall & Brewery 414 Brooklyn Ave San Antonio, 78215

Day 3

TIME	TIMING	EVENT	LOCATION
0800-0830	30 minutes	Coffee & Tea - Discussion sign ups	Common area
0830-0900	30 minutes	Recap of Day 2 and Introduction to Day 3 (Adjustments)	Common area
0900-1030	90 minutes	Group session 5 - Competency Measures (70 min discussion/20 min reflection)	Plenary/offices and conference room
1030-1045	15 minutes	Break	Common area
1045-1200	75 minutes	Group Session 6 (60 min discussion / 15 min reflection) ------------------------------------- Pecha-kucha Prep time	Break out rooms
1200-1300	60 minutes	Lunch	Common area
1300-1430	90 minutes	Attendee Pecha-Kucha (time blocked talk + Q&A)	Plenary
1430-1445	15 minutes	Break and feedback	Common area
1445-1700	135 minutes	Closing Session - Listening/Sharing/ whats next?	Plenary

AIR FORCE FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES

INTEGRITY ★ SERVICE ★ EXCELLENCE

DEVELOPING SELF

ACCOUNTABILITY
Demonstrates reliability and honesty; takes responsibility for the actions and behaviors of self and team

PERSEVERANCE
Displays grit in accomplishment of difficult long-term goals. Works strenuously toward challenges; maintains effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress

COMMUNICATION
Effectively presents, promotes, and prioritizes varied ideas and issues both verbally and non-verbally through active listening, clear messaging, and by tailoring information to the appropriate audience

DECISION MAKING
Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions that weigh situational constraints, risks, and benefits

INFORMATION SEEKING
Demonstrates an underlying curiosity; desires to know more about things, people, oneself, and the mission or issues; an eager, aggressive learner

FLEXIBILITY
Adapts to and works with a variety of situations, individuals, or groups effectively

RESILIENCE
Negotiates, manages, and adapts to significant sources of stress or trauma

INITIATIVE
Does more than is required or expected to improve job results; takes action appropriately without prompting

SELF CONTROL
Keeps emotions under control and restrains negative actions when under stress

DEVELOPING OTHERS

TEAMWORK
Collaborates effectively with others to achieve a common goal or complete a mission task

DEVELOPS PEOPLE
Invests in others to maximize their contributions to the mission by inspiring and providing an environment of continual feedback and learning opportunities

SERVICE MINDSET
Desires to help or serve others to meet their needs; makes and focuses efforts to discover and meet others' needs

LEADERSHIP
Inspires, builds, and sustains others' motivation and morale to accomplish the mission; organizes people and actions

FOSTERS INCLUSION
Creates a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contributions to the success of the group, and where there are no unnecessary barriers to success

DEVELOPING IDEAS

ANALYTICAL THINKING
Identifies problems; evaluates alternative perspectives/solutions; makes effective recommendations and identifies courses of action

DIGITAL LITERACY
Uses technology to identify, critically evaluate, and synthesize data and information; explore, create, and manage digital content; and appropriately interact in a virtual environment

CREATIVE THINKING
Develops new insights into new situations; questions conventional approaches

FOSTERING INNOVATION
Builds a culture of behaviors and business practices that encourages, champions, and rewards creativity and informed risk taking; is open to change

INFLUENCE
Intends to persuade, convince, or impress others to elicit their support to make specific impacts or achieve particular effects on others

DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Carefully and responsibly administrates resources placed under an Airman's control with the intent to maximize readiness and lethality and improve organizational performance

RESULTS FOCUSED
Demonstrates concern for working well or for competing against a standard of excellence

CHANGE MANAGEMENT
Adapts, helps others adapt, or implements change with the goal of ensuring unit goals are properly aligned to the desired end state

STRATEGIC THINKING (PLANNING)
Considers and organizes activities and resources to achieve a desired goal; thinks on a large and small scale, long and short-term

PRECISION
A concern for order, quality, and accuracy with an underlying drive to reduce uncertainty in the environment

BEHAVIORS

knowledge   skills

abilities

other characteristics

A competency is an observable, measureable pattern of <u>Behaviors</u>, <u>Knowledge</u>, <u>Skills</u>, <u>Abilities</u>, and <u>Other Characteristics</u> needed to perform successfully on the job.

A move to competencies is central to **Develop the Airmen We Need**.

Foundational Competencies are what **all Airmen** need to know and be able to do regardless of rank, grade or job.

Occupational Competencies are what **Airmen in a specific job** need to know and be able to do.

2

Connecting the Dots: Listening and Competencies

"Listening is the most important and the most underrated leadership skill today."
Otto Scharmer, Author and Action Researcher, Senior Lecturer at MIT

Listening is an essential tool for learning and development, leadership, and teamwork. It can help us see new possibilities, take collaboration and innovation to new heights, resolve conflict, and feel more connected and aligned amidst constant change and uncertainty.

Deeper listening is necessary to understand the current state of competency-based learning implementation across DAF and to discover tangible opportunities to advance our competency acquisition.

The following tools and resources will help us put listening into practice over the next three days and beyond as we work toward our shared purpose to optimize the development of mission-ready airmen.

Four Levels of Listening Framework

Listening is a muscle we can only strengthen through practice. The first step is becoming aware of and paying attention to our own listening.

The "Four Levels of Listening" is a framework developed by Otto Scharmer, organizational theorist and senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The ability to adapt listening quality is crucial for leadership and change efforts, underscoring the importance of understanding the four qualities of listening. As we build awareness for the level we are listening at, we are then able to consciously choose which level of listening is required based on the needs and desired outcome of any given situation.
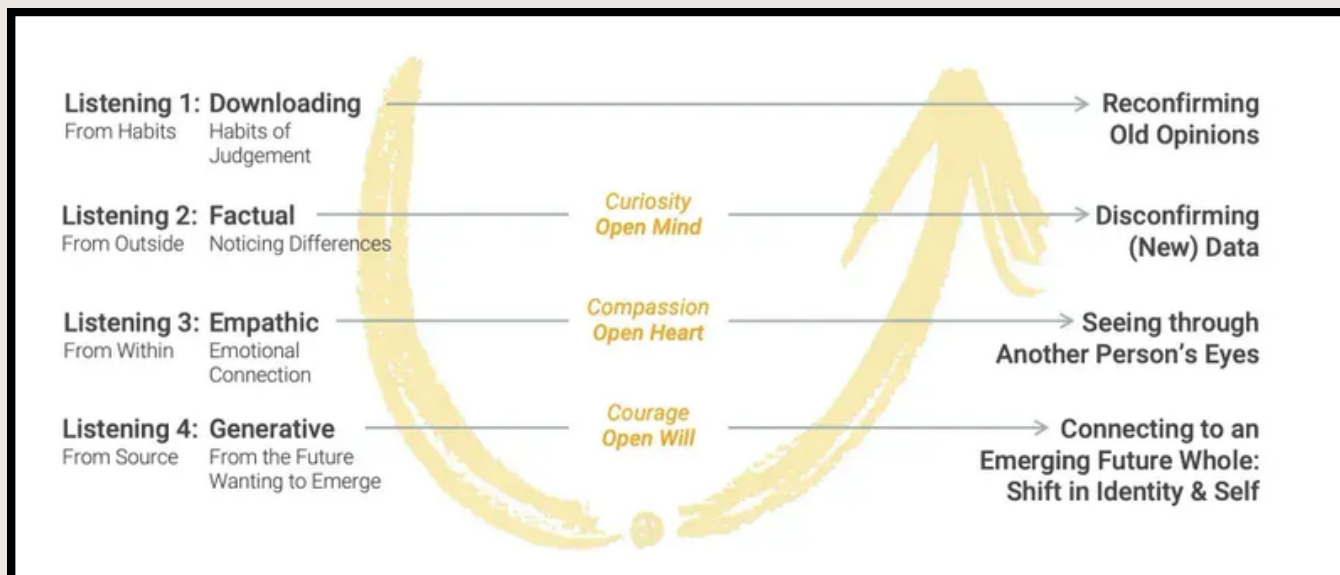
Capturing Your Listening Intentions & Insights: Levels of Listening

1. What stands out to you about the Four Levels of Listening? What level(s) of listening you want to bring to your interactions today?

2. Scan the foundational competencies on page 7. As you reflect on how these competencies look and feel in your day-to-day, how does your level of listening impact foundational competency building?

3. How can listening be a vehicle for developing self, developing others, developing ideas, and developing organizations?

 4. Choose 1-2 competencies where listening could make the biggest difference in your competency growth. Set an intention for how you would like to practice this today.

Listening Threads for Competency Development Across DAF

If we only listen to confirm the things we already know, we don't open ourselves to receive new information and therefore can't learn. By paying attention to listening threads, we can intentionally direct our attention to enhance the building of foundational competencies and our capacity to develop individually and collectively.

Directing our attention to listen for certain threads is a specific practice to build our listening muscles. Here are some listening threads you may want to experiment with "listening for" across different conversations throughout the Symposium and beyond:

Listening Threads	What you're listening for	Notes
Values and Shared Goals	What does the person or group you're listening to care about most deeply? What competencies matter most to them and why? What's the north star you are collectively working toward, even across differences?	
Powerful Questions	What questions, if explored more deeply, could make the biggest difference in furthering competency development across DAF?	
Bright Spots / Exemplars	Where do you see and hear competency stories of exceptional success, effective strategies, or positive outcomes?	
Tensions and Paradox	What hot spots are showing up across multiple competency conversations? What might be underlying these tensions? Paradox is often characterized by multiple truths coexisting that contradict one another. It requires "both/and" vs. "either/or" thinking. Upon closer examination, what deeper insights might the paradox reveal?	

Listening Threads	What you're listening for	Notes
Patterns or Themes	What dots can you connect or what are recurring themes you're hearing across conversations? What are possible linkages between these themes and competency development across DAF?	
Barriers: Adaptive Challenges vs. Technical Problems	Technical problems refer to challenges that can be solved through linear, step-by-step processes, and by the knowledge of experts. Adaptive challenges are complex, non-linear, and involve human dynamics that require adjustments to human behavior. Can you identify the nature of the competency-development barriers you're facing?	
Feelings and Unmet Needs	Signs of unmet needs can be frustration, confusion, debate, and withdrawal. Recognizing the unmet need beneath these emotion can create breakthroughs in conversation and outcomes. Needs include things like safety or security, belonging, and being heard. What feelings and unmet needs are you noticing getting in the way of competency development?	
Metaphors	The stories we live in are often conveyed through metaphors. What dominant metaphors do you hear and what metaphors do you notice are outliers?	
Opportunities to Take Ownership	Where are there opportunities for you to take ownership post-symposium to further competency development across DAF?	

Capturing Your Listening Intentions & Insights: Listening Threads

1. What stands out to you about the Listening Threads?

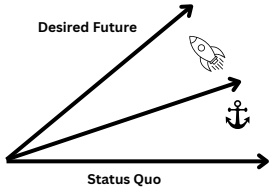2. What thread(s) would you like to listen for today and why?

3. What insights are emerging around Listening Threads and competency development across DAF?
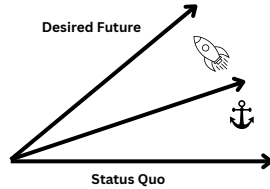
Additional Notes

Deflection Point
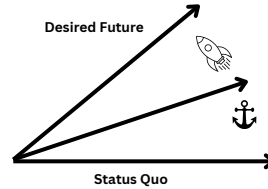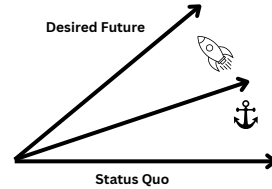
Identify key Community Topics

Understanding

Desired Future

Status Quo

Modeling

Desired Future

Status Quo

Implementation

Desired Future

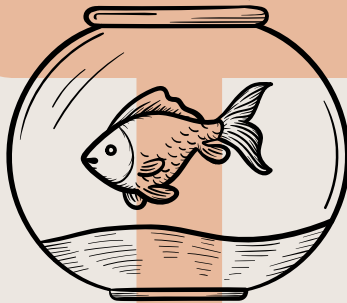Status Quo

Measures

Desired Future

Status Quo

KEY DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

THEMES FOR LARGE GROUP PANEL DISCUSSION (FISHBOWL)
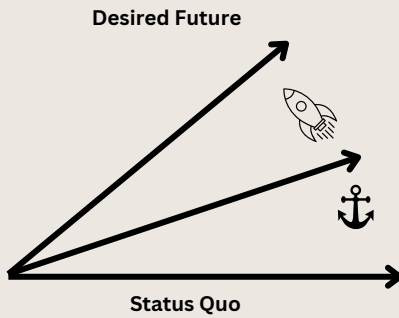
TOPICS FOR SME

DAY 1 -3 BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS

DAY 2 FISHBOWL (INTERACTIVE PANEL)

ATTENDEE PECHA-KUCHA 15 MIN

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS CAPTURED (SYNTHESIS & REPORTING)

DPAR Activity

Desired Future

Status Quo

The goal of this activity is to surface what the group feels would be most impactful to address within the discussion blocks

Sticky note Rules:

1. One idea per Sticky note
2. 3-5 words per Sticky
3. Fill the sticky legibly
4. No debate on what people write
   a. Disagree with another sticky!

Dot Voting instructions: What Matters Most?

1. Use your Sharpie to put a dot on the sticky note you're voting on
2. When you get to the dot-voting step, here's how to think about where to put your dots:

- what things (status quo) are most urgent that we address?
- What barriers (anchors) should we focus on overcoming?
- What enablers (rockets) should we be feeding/ amplifying?
- Which future states (bold path) should we be focusing our attention on the most?

Your dots will be used to visualize the most pertinent topics to discuss in breakouts

Creating Discussion Topics:

Once all the dots are present, on a note card write a complete sentence or two about what you voted on and why you think it's important for the group to address that - these will become discussion topics

Discussion sign ups

The facilitation team will prioritize the discussion topics from highest voted to least voted.
Highest voted will be assigned to rooms with most seating capacity and the remain topics in descending order.
Sign up sheets will be provided for each area for each topic.
Choose the discussion topic you wish to contribute to and go to that room for your discussion.

Discussion Intent

The intent of these discussions is to share and hear each participant's perspective and experience as it relates to the discussion topic. We hope your curiosity leads you to lean into tensions, synergies, surprising moments as they surface.
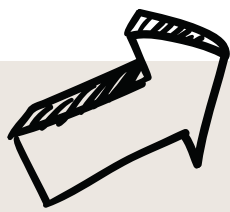
Session 1 - Understanding Competency

Topic: _____

Discussion Listening Notes:

_____

Reflection: Based on what you heard in this discussion:
1. What challenges are most urgent that we take on?
2. What opportunities exist that we should take advantage of?
3. What tensions or constraints are we facing
4. What actions should be taken, by whom?

Submit group reflections here for each discussion session

Session 2 - Modeling

Topic: _____

Discussion Listening Notes:

_____

Reflection:

Submit

Session 3 - Implementation

Topic: _____

Discussion Listening Notes:

_____

Reflection:

Submit

Session 4

Topic: _____

Discussion Listening Notes:

_____

Reflection:

Submit

Competency Fishbowl

PURPOSE

The fishbowl activity will provide a content rich discussion, based on a common thread identified by participants in the Deflection Point exercise. This format allows for both active participants and observers to engage deeply with the topic at hand through a structured yet open dialogue format. This approach encourages a diversity of perspectives, ensuring a rich and comprehensive exploration of the subject.

Structure

- Inner Bowl Participants: There will be a total of four fixed positions in the inner bowl, with one additional rotating position open for outer bowl participants to join the discussion.
- Outer Bowl Participants: All other individuals will be positioned in the outer bowl, where they can listen and contribute through a digital tool or by entering the inner bowl.

inner bowl

outer bowl

"open" fishbowl, outer bowl members to enter inner bowl
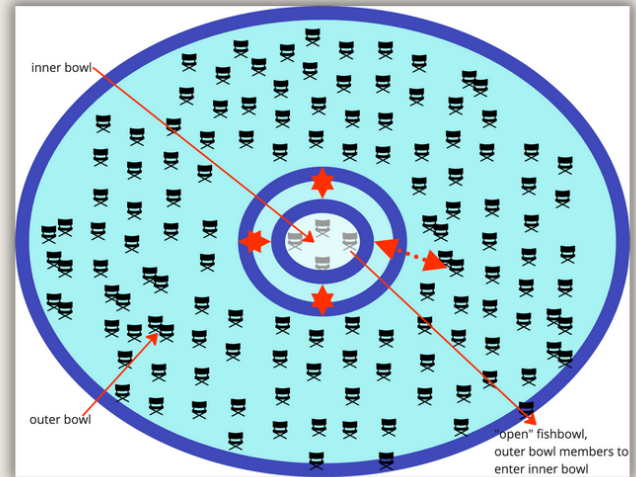
Rules of Engagement

Entering the Bowl

- Rotating Position: To facilitate dynamic discussion and diverse perspectives, one seat in the inner bowl is designated as the rotating position. This allows participants from the outer bowl an opportunity to join the conversation directly.
- Lineup for Participation: Individuals interested in occupying the rotating position must take a seat in the lineup of chairs designated for this purpose. This arrangement ensures an orderly and fair process for entering the fishbowl.
- Time Limit: Participants occupying the rotating position will have a maximum of 10 minutes to be part of the inner bowl conversation. Moderators will keep track of time to ensure adherence to this rule.

Outer Bowl Comments

- Mentimeter: This tool enables outer bowl members to submit questions/comments real time via mobile device.
- Submission: Outer bowl participants are encouraged to use Mentimeter to engage the conversation.
- Moderation: Moderators will weave outer bowls insights and inquiries into the fabric of the discussion.

ENTER THE CONVERSATION

SCAN HERE!

We look forward to a fruitful and engaging fishbowl discussion. Thank you for your commitment to making this a positive and productive experience.

Session 5 - Measures

Topic: _____

Discussion Listening Notes:

_____

Reflection:

Submit

Session 6

Topic: _____

Discussion Listening Notes:

_____

Reflection:

Submit

SYMPOSIA RESOURCES

Air University Library hosts and archives symposia documentation. This resource ensures our growing body of knowledge has a home that is accessible to all Airmen and Guardians. As we journey through the nine-year strategy of this gathering, key resources will continue to populate and will become a reference point for future gatherings. If you would like to contribute or link resources, please reach out to the AU Library staff.

https://fairchild-mil.libguides.com/LearningSymposium

All Partners Access Network (APAN): Your gateway to global collaboration! Connect and share with defense partners worldwide. Scan the QR code to access resources, get information, ask questions, and interact with Symposium attendees!

https://community.apan.org/wg/air-force-learning-collaboratorium

Symposium Networking

No	Name	organization	Phone	Email
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Feedback Form

https://forms.osi.apps.mil/r/rAtjnW4msX

Special Thanks to the 2024
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UB
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RADIUS

studio rh