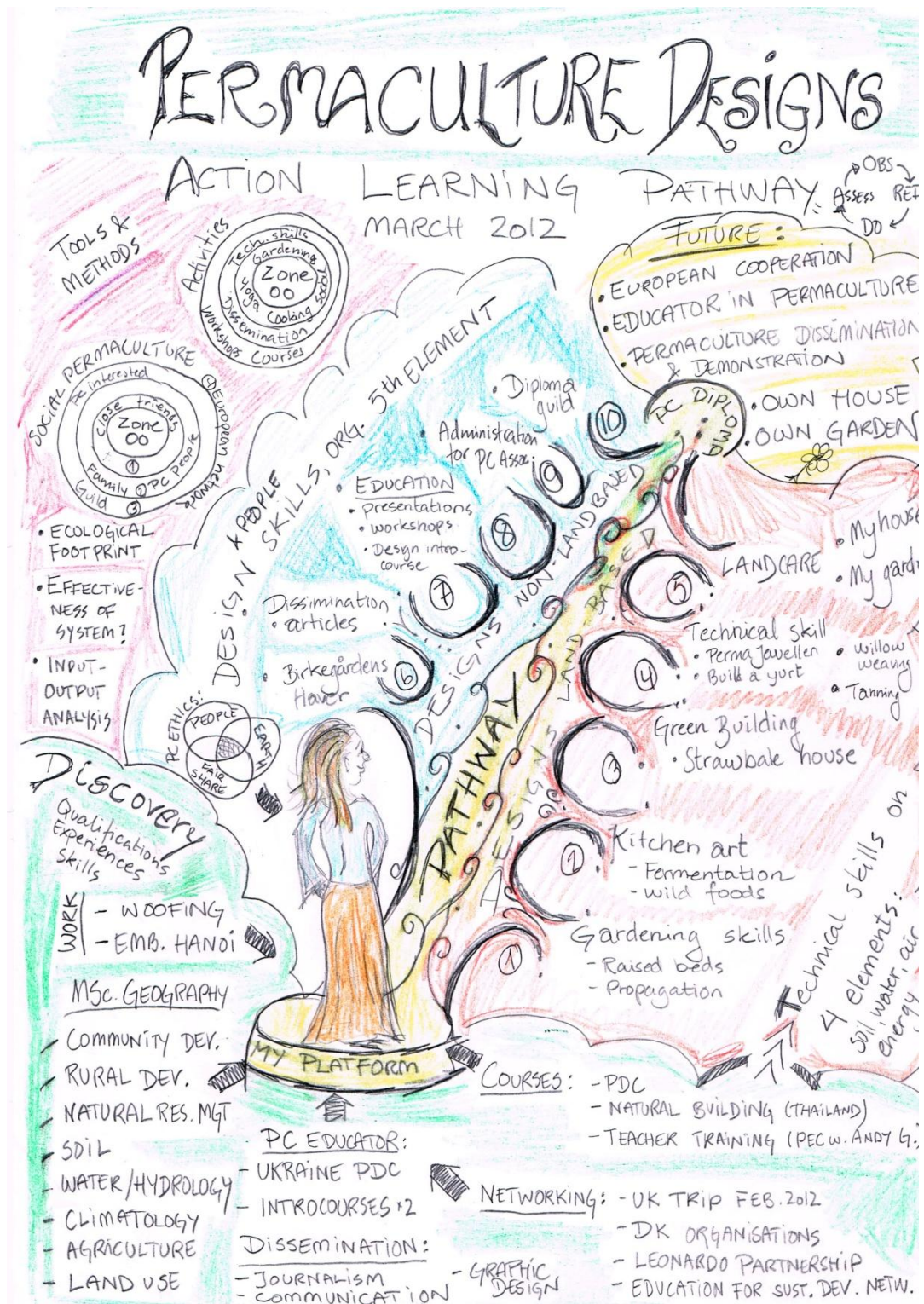


Designing the Action Learning Pathway



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Diploma in Applied

Permaculture

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Designing the Action Learning Pathway

Design Brief

This design aims at defining the action learning pathway from the start of the diploma apprenticeship until the accreditation. The action learning pathway is based on permaculture ethics, principles and tools. Its task is to bring answers and actions about the vision of Quality of Life found below.

Designing from patterns to details using Appreciative Inquiry

Inspired by a range of people, most notably Andy Goldring, George Sobol, Klaudia van Gool and Hedvig Murray my diploma journey started in 2012. I learned about Permaculture UK's "Diploma in Applied Permaculture, system 5.1" and that instantly sparked passion about how to work with permaculture in a structured and incremental way. This brought me to look at the patterns of my life and how I could design a pathway using design from patterns to details. But first I wanted to clarify to myself some guiding questions, formulate my long term goals, future resource base, personal vision and quality of life statements. At the point in my life where I did this, I really needed this structure and goals. The process was inspired by the author of "Holistic Management" Alan Savory.

I also used my background in Appreciative Inquiry, an organisational philosophy and method, to ask questions that would enable me to first **Discover** what my core competencies are; what my innermost wishes are; what motivates me to keep going; and what works already that I should build on. The next stage in Appreciative Inquiry is to project a vision into the future, the stage of **Dreaming**. The exercise is to imagine yourself (or the project, the organisation) in the future, here in 2-3 years ahead. What would the best possible future look like? This vision is illustrated or written down. The Design stage take its point of departure in the time of vision and looking back over the years, back to the present moment and asks: What **did** I need to do to achieve the vision? What actions, plans, and designs did I go through with to be here today, at the fulfilment of the vision? The fourth stage is to fulfil the **Destiny**, to Do and implement the design.

This design uses:

Appreciative Inquiry – the 4D model

1. **DISCOVER:** The identification of organizational processes that work well.
2. **DREAM:** The envisioning of processes that would work well in the future.
3. **DESIGN:** Planning and prioritizing processes that would work well.
4. **DESTINY (or DEPLOY or DO):** The implementation (execution) of the proposed design.

Discover

*The first phase of designing the Action Learning Pathway was about **discovering** what I really want and what has worked well for me, so that I can build on the successes and avoid failures. It is about discovering my motivation, my passion and strengths, my assets, qualifications and competencies.*

When I first started to ask myself the guiding questions below, I was on a beach in Thailand, The Sanctuary, pondering whether to quit my well-paid and prestigious job as a diplomat counsellor for the Foreign Ministry to pursue a life that my consciousness and heart would be more satisfied with.

Guiding Questions

The guiding questions are questions that have kept asking themselves for almost as long as I remember. They intensified when I did a lot of soul searching yoga and at every cross road in my life. Some have been added along the way, as I was closing in on the target of doing permaculture. I will not attempt to answer the questions in detail, but reflecting upon them has informed my designs, my choices and my learning pathway. The answers are formulated in condensed versions in the Long Term Goals and Quality of Life below.

- What is my mission in life?
- What am I good at?
- What do I like doing?
- What is the world in most need of?
- Why am I moving in the direction I'm moving?
- What other options are available to me?
- What are my highest aims?
- What intentions do I set for myself?
- What do I want most for myself?
- What do I want most for the world?
- What is the most effective thing I can do with my time?
- Am I being the most help to the greatest number of beings over the longest time with the least amount of effort?
- ... and how do I be more so?
- Are my actions regenerative, degenerative or neutral?
- How can I make my neutral actions more regenerative and my degenerative actions more neutral?
- What are my ethics?
- How can I continue to refine my ethics?
- In what ways can I more fully embody my ethics?
- How do I avoid compromising my ethics for my aims?

For understanding of the process I will give this example: The questioning process intensified in 2008 at the beach. When answering the questions, it was clear that I needed to quit my job at the Embassy. I started looking for appropriate answers and solutions, scanning for solutions and finding permaculture. At the time of asking myself these questions again in 2010, I had lived and worked five years in Vietnam and taken my PDC in New Zealand. Coming home to Denmark was a challenge in rebuilding my network, re-connecting with Danish culture and discourses, finding a place to live,

finding a meaningful occupation. I had quit my job as a Councillor at the Embassy in Vietnam, because I had learned that to obtain sustainability on a global scale, change has to start in the developed countries – not the developing countries. Actually, I was quite angry with the global economic system, and frustrated about knowing this and not being able to do enough about it. Anger and frustration are emotions that carry a lot of energy, and this is where **Appreciative Inquiry is an effective tool in turning the energy of negative emotions into motivation for positive action.** By asking the right questions, looking for solutions to the problems behind the emotion itself, and letting the energy channel into a positive design, it was possible for me to move on in a constructive way. This happened when I decided to focus on permaculture and more effectively when I decided to do the diploma. The illustration below, the diploma pathway, is my path from anger and frustration into constructive action.

For this new course in my life I needed a new personal vision, goals and what quality of life I was interested in. The diploma pathway inspired me to make permaculture my meaningful occupation and mission in life and to let permaculture inspire the path I would embark on into the rest of my life.

But before we get into this story, I want to discover more of my background and patterns. I chose to do a River of Life because it aptly presents dense information.

River of Life – pattern for the action learning pathway

Sometimes working with patterns to understand the overall structures of life, thoughts and actions can be helpful. An effective way of illustrating the pattern of life is like a river, a pattern that most people can identify with and easily understand. The pattern of a river flows from the source at birth to the present moment – and maybe onwards. There can be tributaries with energy coming from outside, rapids with fast life changing experiences, pools with clear or muddy water of times in life when energy is calm or stagnating.

Evidently the study of geography has many aspects and is considered a holistic science. Like permaculture it covers all aspects of life – however, true sustainability, in the sense that I wanted to understand it, was a theory more than a practice.

I got educated into unemployment, because of a change in the government and its priorities. I went travelling to Nepal and India. Then I got a good idea: I wanted to integrate Geography and development work with my interest for yoga and Hinduism. I had found a tool, Appreciative Inquiry, that could do it in a non-intrusive way in poor communities in Nepal and India. I went to the international non-profit organisation CARE and sold my idea. They sent me to Nepal and later Vietnam to work on community development and natural resource management. I later got employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to administer and develop an agriculture and rural sector program. That brought me to live in Hanoi.

Here comes the turning point in my life – and on the River of Life. I had discovered a place called The Sanctuary in Thailand by total chance ... and it was here I made my decision to quit my Embassy job and start being more creative. Following I developed skills as a photographer and I went off into the mountains to document ethnic minority groups. I also worked for CARE occasionally on documenting their project with the ethnic minorities, work that I adored. However, I was on my way home, having realised that to change the world to a better place, change had to come from the developed world. A side trip to New Zealand got me the PDC that I had wanted for more than 10 years, and I attended natural building workshops in Thailand.

In Denmark I acquired qualifications through work and further education within Journalism, Photography, Management and organisation and Communication.



Back in Denmark, I met Andy Goldring on the Permaculture Educators' Course in 2010, and he set me off on the permaculture teaching pathway. I also joined George Sobol in Ukraine 2011 to co-teach on the first PDC here along with Joe Atkinson. I visited England in 2012 and some LAND centres, got inspired about the diploma and LAND, and was an intern at the permaculture association in 2013. I moved around far too much in these years to different eco-villages, before I finally settled in the place where I felt the most at home in the world: the heart shaped island Orø.

Patterns that I have observed in myself: I usually like to work well up to deadlines. I seem to be quite effective this way, when a task is set within a deadline. I also like to break tasks down into smaller bits. I can get overwhelmed with too big a task. For example in my house – I sometimes find myself getting stuck because I don't know where to start. Making a plan, a design, a strategy mostly helps. Or getting a friend to help out and get started.

I also like to achieve something. It is nice to be able to let go and rest, celebrate and appreciate the results. Working with this diploma system, where the whole diploma is broken down into

manageable parts, is much easier than one big thing. I like to build structure and making things orderly – at least to myself.

Dream

During this stage I imagined my action learning pathway and its result at its best in relation to the affirmative topic. The affirmative question being: “How can I be the most help to the greatest number of beings (including myself) over the longest time with the least amount of effort?”, as identified through the discovery stage. An attempt was made to identify the most meaningful aspirations and to symbolize this in some way. The dream phase resulted in the first Action Learning Pathway Design below, a symbolic, graphical representation. The dreaming also resulted in statements to support the Action Learning Pathway and answers the guiding questions. These are the Personal Vision, Long Term Goals and Quality of Life, which we will look at first.

Personal Vision

Developing a personal vision for the world and what I want to contribute to it was the next step and it turned out as follows.

I envision a world of abundance, meaningful occupancy, personal freedom, economic equality and deep compassion. I see permaculture informing and guiding the path toward that vision.

Long Term Goals

The Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design is a pathway to integrate learning, skills, goals and passion towards this personal vision. Using the diploma pathway to develop a body of work that increases the capacity, availability and quality of permaculture dissemination and education allows my efforts to be shared and expanded upon, thereby benefiting the whole as well as the individual and sharing the surplus.

The affirmative question: “How can I be the most help to the greatest number of beings (including myself) over the longest time with the least amount of effort?”, seems to be the most central question that creates an overarching guidance. To make the question more specific I took a look at my competences, vision and goals to create my three long term goals:

Long term goal 1:

To incorporate permaculture ethics and principles into all aspects of my life and continually refine them and integrate them into my decision making process.

Long term goal 2:

To be an effective agent in expanding and disseminating education in and knowledge of permaculture as a means to make regeneration of the resources of the Earth possible.

Long term goal 3:

To provide options for increasing happiness and contentment of people and myself within the limits of our biological resources.

Quality of life

I would like provision of my basic needs done in a sustainable way – socially, environmentally and economically. My house and my garden can accommodate my needs and the needs of the community around me when they visit – there's enough space for guests, a friendly atmosphere and educational activities.

The house should be retrofitted to be healthier and less energy consuming. The garden should be a diverse green space that provides food (50%), play space, relaxation and nature connection. Economically, I have no mortgage and I only need to work part time in meaningful jobs promoting a more sustainable and happy lifestyle and permaculture.

Tangible targets

Looking at the future, at the end of the diploma journey I dreamed about reached some more tangible targets as well as the long term goals: Achieving the Diploma in Applied Permaculture, European cooperation, Educator in permaculture, Disseminating permaculture and Own house and garden.



Design

The first diploma pathway design

I want to look at my first design for the diploma pathway that I did in 2012 after visiting UK and meeting people who had great influence on me. The first design discovers what it is that I have with me at the time of starting the diploma. It also shows the first dream of what could be at the end of the diploma journey. It identifies actions and learning that I wanted and needed and was thereby instrumental in designing a process for what I had to do to reach my goal.

Identify skills and needs in the light of achieving my long terms goals

Based on my skills and my interests I started looking at the different designs I wanted to do and skills I wanted to obtain. Initially they included “gardening skills”, “kitchen art”, “building skills”, “tech skills”, “LAND care of my own house and garden”, “communication and dissemination”, “teaching”, “administrative work with the permaculture board”, and “running a diploma guild”. These are mostly skills I wanted to obtain and later the designs were identified.

Analysing the areas that I wanted to improve, I realised that I should improve my design skills, technical skills, dissemination skills, people skills and “5th element” skills (organisational skills) to be more permaculture influenced and include the ethics more fully. Working with the ethics and the other skills helped to satisfy my long terms goals.

The effectiveness of permaculture systems was a point that I wanted to include, together with the ecological footprint and input/output analysis, especially in connection to building skills. I also worked with zoning for social design and activities. Since then the toolbox has been expanded, see below.

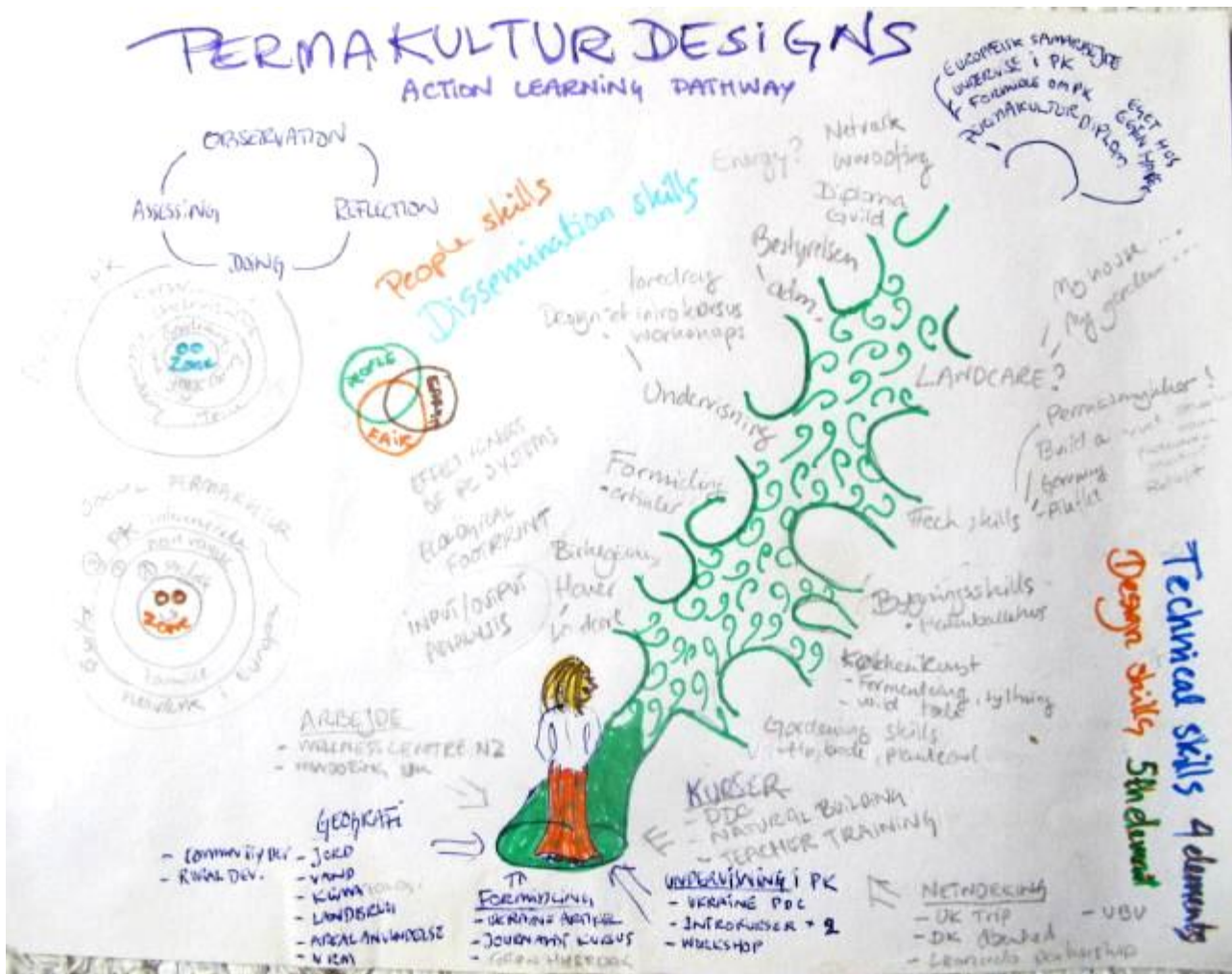
The illustration shows me looking ahead on my pathway towards my long term goals, vision and quality of life. It is an illustration of the discovery, dreaming and designing stages of my Appreciative Inquiry process.

Discovery: I am standing on my platform of skills, education and resources already acquired (blue writing). I identified and analysed my “intrinsic characteristics”, i.e. previously obtained skills, formal qualifications, life experiences and social competencies. These characteristics are basic to how I choose to apply permaculture in my work and personal life.

Dream: Seeing myself in the future, a couple of years ahead when the diploma was achieved, what would it be? What is the dream? This relates to my Long Term Goals, Personal Vision and Quality of Life. It is the writing in the upper right corner of the illustration. The dream became more nuanced over time.

Design: The learning and actions I wanted and needed to do on my path are the green spirals integrating knowledge from different design elements into my pathway.

Destiny or Do: Implementing the design. Here it means getting to that future in the dream are some of the designs in this diploma portfolio.



My first design of my diploma pathway, in March 2012. To me, all the essential parts of my action learning pathway are shown in this illustration, but I realise that it may only make sense to me, being a very personal illustration. This is the design that has guided me all the way through. A new version translated into English was created for ease of understanding. It is on the front page.

Design or Deciding which learning elements to bring into the action learning pathway

In 2012, I was ready to start the diploma. As a support to the diploma pathway, I embarked on my pathway by getting together with a couple of friends to set up a diploma guild. I contacted all the diploma holders in Denmark. It took some time before I had the first meeting with a diploma holder because of lack of availability. The cooperation with the diploma holder turned out not to work very well, because of big differences in what we perceived permaculture and the diploma to be.

The education design: I knew I wanted to teach permaculture, so I looked for different opportunities to teach. George Sobol and the PDC in Ukraine had given me confidence to get more teaching experience. There were no courses to teach on with experienced teachers in Denmark, so I got

together with my diploma guild friends and we set up a series of “Introduction to Permaculture” courses of 2 days based on Joe Atkinson’s off-the-shelf intro-course.

I was so fortunate as to assist Andy Goldring on the Permaculture Educators’ Courses which meant getting my methodology very clear. I started to design own session plans and courses based on this knowledge. Then followed the EPT and all the learning here within.



Photos: Left: Teaching together with Andy Goldring on the Permaculture Educators’ Course, October 2014. Right: Organising and taking part in the building of the “flex oven” at “Birkegårdens Haver”, October 2012.

The communication design: I like working with communication, especially writing and photography, so I wanted to use these skills to increase permaculture knowledge in Denmark. I started writing about the LAND projects I had visited in England, about eco-building and about ecological farming in Ukraine and Montenegro because I was there for other reasons. In the beginning, I was happy just to get an article published. As I got further along I became pickier with the media I choose for my communication. A communication strategy was forming. I chose here to write about the creation of a generic piece of work, as this probably has more value to more people and allows me to get more in detail, than with a whole communication strategy.

The natural building design: I was employed by the tourist attraction “Birkegårdens Haver”’s permaculture project to build a strawbale house. I had a little experience and some skills from the natural building course in Thailand and as a volunteer for 6 months at Svanholm eco-collective. I had the very experienced eco-builder Steen Møller as my life-line, while designing a strawbale house.

Administrative work with the Permaculture Denmark board: The LAND project was a natural consequence of the situation in Permakultur Denmark, the national permaculture association and a project that I proposed as the way forward for permaculture in Denmark. I was ready to take it on and applied for money and got it.

Kitchen art and Tech skills: I wanted to know more about wild food, fermentation, preparation, conservation and other nice skills in the kitchen. That was changed to 12 little designs that reflected my desire to become more familiar with my surroundings, nature and sustainable ways of living. However, the designs were getting too ambitious and I had to limit myself in what I wanted to have

accredited. So I chose two smaller designs to focus on, the Seaweed Mulch design and the Universal Tea design.

Gardening skills and Landcare design: I was renting a house and moving around a lot, thus it was quite difficult to do any meaningful design work on the land, apart from at my parents place. But I really did want to obtain more skills, because food growing is so central to permaculture and fulfil so many principles and the ethics. Later, when having bought a property opened up possibilities that I needed to fulfil my long term goals and the last designs aimed at making this a LAND centre with sustainable economy.

Some of the other initial designs became something else or incorporated in another activity. E.g. administrative work with the permaculture board became the LAND project and LAND care of my own house and garden, resulted in me buying a property and doing a Homestead design for my new old property “Kattekærhus”. I lost my energy on the design on “**Running a diploma guild**” with the difficulties I encountered in the system.

Implementation of the action learning pathway through the other 9 designs

Since my life is focused around permaculture, I use designs as an integrated process for the different elements and functions I want to have in my life. The diploma designs I have chosen are designs that I would have done anyway and they follow my life story. I.e. when moving house, the house is naturally viewed upon with a permaculture design focus and how to retrofit it to become more energy efficient and suit my needs better. Likewise for the garden and the smaller designs to improve quality of life and sustainability.

Working with the action learning pathway has been, and still is, a great way of challenging myself, setting goals and staying true to my ethics. It makes permaculture more achievable to me, because I can work in different directions without losing my way, because I have fitted the activities into an overarching design. I can pick activities up and work on them for a while, leave them and come back and it still makes sense. And the action learning places emphasis on practice supported by theory and theory improved with practice.

Diploma designing as a forest garden

I sometimes see the designs, projects and tasks as an eco-system in my forest garden. Some projects grow fast, some get too little sunlight and I have to prune other activities. Nutrients and care can be given to some plants and sometimes a whole undergrowth of little young trees and projects try to make their way into the sunlight, but have to be thinned out. Some plants flower every year and have abundant fruits, while others produce a rare treat. They all live together, some in harmony and some in competition. If I can make the design elements support each other's functions and needs, then I have built a fertile and nourishing garden of mutually beneficial relations and an abundance of surplus for me.

Adaptation of the pattern of design – Holmgren's flower

Since the initial design of the action learning pathway I've been more inspired by and consequently structured my projects for the diploma using the Permaculture Flower developed by David Holmgren. This was a step on the pathway that I had not foreseen, but given the Danish context this was necessary step to make myself understood.

Using the Permaculture Flower is using a framework which is uniquely permaculture, but at the same time encompassing all other disciplines giving a holistic understanding of our spheres of action in permaculture. The Permaculture Flower gives a theoretical background and a practical focus which is respected and recognised as valid by all permaculturalists.

Furthermore, following the logic of the evolutionary spiral path in the Flower, projects start with one self and may evolve to a collective and global level. Each 'petal' of the flower represents different domains in which the ethics and principles can be applied. This approach fits perfectly with how I perceive my life and work. It makes sense to me to use permaculture in all areas of life to change for more sustainable. This is a realistic approach as I live in a world with much existing infrastructure, a cultural setting and economic preconditioning that will be the point of departure for my permaculture practice. Only in the ideal world can we start on a totally clean slate.

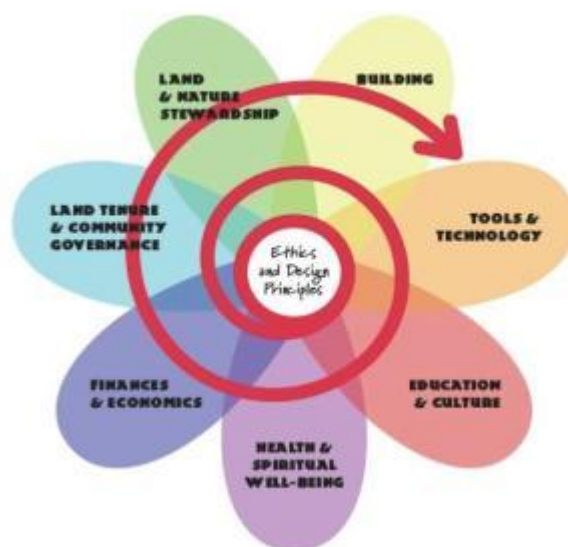
Focus

Like the first Action Learning Pathway design, the point of departure for the Holmgren based action learning pathway is myself – Zone 00.

By using myself, zone 00, (and not a piece of land) as the key element in designing a life where permaculture ethics, principles and designs are integrated, I want to ensure that I am living an increasingly sustainable lifestyle. This approach allows me to use my skills and previous experiences fully and to design and develop a pathway that will lead the way towards achieving the desired quality of life and my long term goals and vision. I hope this can also inspire others who want to strive for an ethical lifestyle.

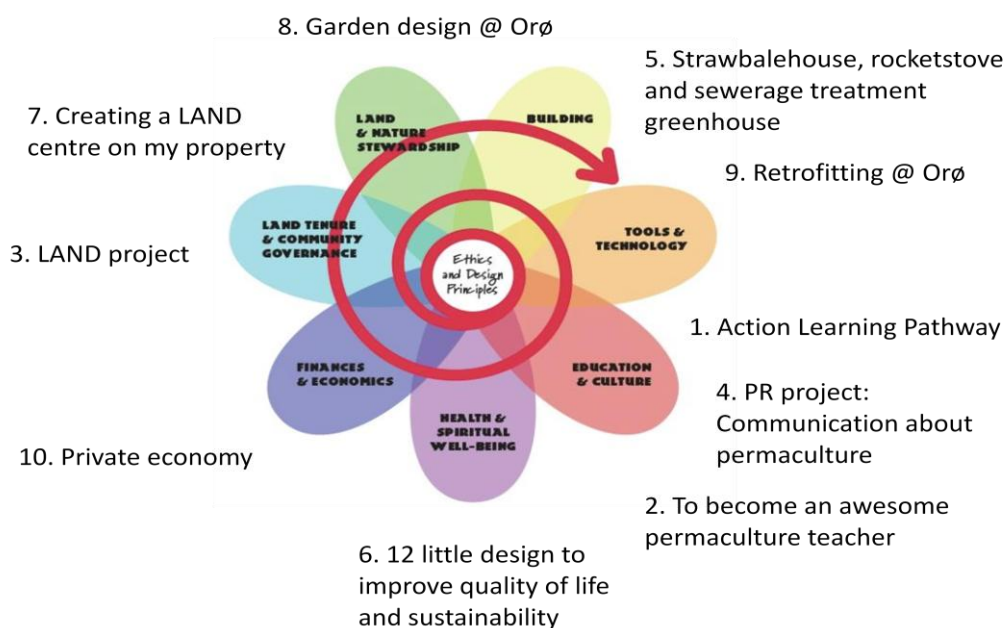
- “The permaculture journey begins with the ethics and design principles. We apply this thinking to the seven different domains required to create a sustainable culture. The evolutionary spiral path connects these domains, initially at a personal and local level, and then proceeds to the collective and global level.” (David Holmgren)

I have not designed projects in all of Holmgren's domains, but chosen to do more designs where skills and opportunity pave the way or where impact is assessed to be greatest. A general observation is that in areas where I have previous experience and/or education I am able to apply permaculture design on a collective or even global level.



The illustration depicts how the diploma designs I chose fill into the domains of Holmgren's flower. I wanted to have a balance between Life projects and Work projects, so that every sector of my life would benefit and my actions have a beneficial effect in the collective sphere as well.

The private economy design became design nr. 10 with connections to all the other designs. This was a meaningful, but very complicated design to do in a new house with a lot of unknown factors.

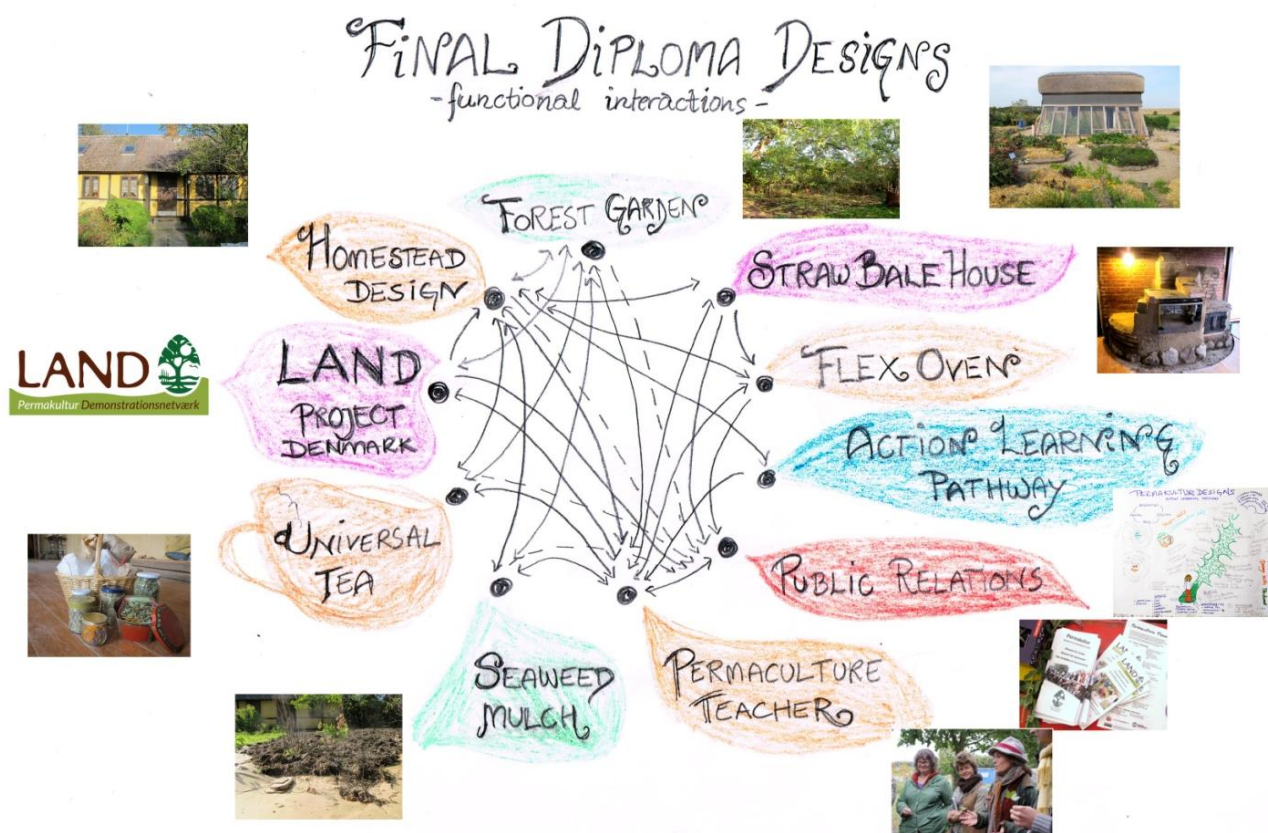


Figur 1 The 10 first design ideas and how they relate to Holmgren's domains.

The final diploma designs selected for the Action Learning Pathway

Following the process of Appreciative Inquiry the design of the Action Learning Pathway should be achieving the vision. Part of the vision was to obtain the Quality of Life and to work for the Long Term Goals. Another part of the vision was to obtain the diploma in applied permaculture in its own right. I wanted to achieve the diploma within a timeframe that would allow me to move on with the reasons for doing the diploma, which was to advance permaculture in Denmark in the most effective way. Firstly, to become a diploma tutor to help others focus and advance on their permaculture pathway. Secondly, the diploma gives a greater credibility and trustworthyness with most people and that is useful for disseminating permaculture and getting beyond the limitation of permaculture in Denmark with only 2-3 active diploma holders and no diploma tutors. I made a plan for finalising the diploma to get the diploma tutor training and the accreditation to be able to start as soon as realistically possible. This meant aiming to finalise by November 2014. Realising that I needed to speed up designing I adjusted the vision which meant being a little less ambitious with the size of designs, but more ambitious in reaching the vision within a shorter time. This meant that the private

economy design was postponed and replaced with a more down to earth design, the Universal Tea design.



Designs and functional interactions

The designs have several functional interactions, i.e. they support each, become input or output for each other.

All designs have more than three connections to other designs. Three of the designs have connections to all the other designs, namely Permaculture Teacher, Homestead and Public Relations design.

The Permaculture Teacher design is related to all because all of the designs help me to perform better as a teacher through practising permaculture. The teacher who has a lot of practical experience has a lot of knowledge to draw on, the “rest of the iceberg”. It is very valuable to me as a teacher, trainer or facilitator to have the resources on my land, in case I set up courses at Kattekærhus, but also just drawing from experience about working with the different elements.

The Homestead Design is linked to all. This is where most activities happen. The building of the Straw Bale House has given a lot of knowledge and skills around buildings, green design, materials and energy efficiency that I will use at Kattekær. The LAND project has given direction to the Homestead Design and I aim for Kattekærhus to become a LAND centre in the future.

The Public Relations design is also connected to most other designs, because I use my knowledge obtained to write articles about designs, innovations, projects. Each of the designs could therefore make a nice piece to be published either as a blog, in a magazine or as a story on a homepage. The articles I have already written are drawn with a full line and the articles that are potential I have drawn with stippled line.

The Action Learning Pathway is of course connected to all designs, but especially to the homestead and teacher designs. Working on the Action Learning Pathway and the setting of goals and quality of life, made me think hard about where I wanted to live. I have been a global nomad for more than 10 years and this lifestyle did not suit me anymore. However, when you have the whole world to chose from, how can you possibly chose? So I chose to go to the place where I feel the most at home. It was partly because of the Discovery through the guiding questions and the Dream stage of this design that gave me the clarity and courage to finally choose Kattekærhus. This was not an easy process, because I also had to give up many beneficial things and a lot of freedom to achieve the Quality of Life that was part of my vision.

The Action Learning Pathway is also very connected to the Teacher design. I wanted to focus on designs that would help me become a better teacher, with a broad range of experiences from both garden, house, social and organisational designs to cover as much as possible.

Seaweed mulch, Universal Tea, Flex Oven and Forest Garden designs are designs that are really useful to me and that I needed to figure out when I moved in to Kattekærhus. They are the most tangible, classical permaculture designs and have been implemented already, at least partly.

The very big designs Homestead, Straw Bale House and LAND project are designs mostly on pattern level with fewer details described. It would be beyond the scope of this diploma to describe for example the whole building process of the straw bale house in detail. However, I have included a lot of photos, where many of the details can be studied often more efficiently than words.

Design Tools, Methods and Skills

Part of the action learning pathway is learning how to use the right tools, methods and technology. Looking backwards from the point of achieving the vision, I knew that I needed to master a range of permaculture design tools, so I decided to do my own collection of these tools. Some of them I knew already from before the diploma, especially Appreciative Inquiry, communication strategy and project management tools.

A design skill is the experience with design tools. They are used throughout this diploma application, sometimes explicitly and sometimes in more subtle ways. The design tools area kinds of patterns that aid the unfolding of information in a logical and consistent way. Different design tools are used everywhere in schools, businesses, engineering and research, to name a few areas, and create patterns of learning and dissemination throughout society. Design tools are generally quite alike, but have different areas of emphasis or use of different words that may be better understood in some walks of life.

For example, I use a variety of design processes and techniques, and aim through the process to develop my own tools. I have used appreciative inquiry, input-output analysis, SADIM, OBREDIM, PRIME, 4Ps, SWOT, PMI, sector analysis, zone analysis, flow analysis, communication design, The Design Web and the ethics and principles as guidance and design tools in their own right. I have also worked with “learning how to learn” using Kolb’s learning cycle (see Permaculture Teacher design).

Ethics

Working with permaculture ethics can sometimes be a cumbersome path to walk on. Many consideration and doubts and sometimes guilt pop up: Should I take the car? Is it healthy? Was it produced by child labour? Has it travelled around the Earth in a plane? Do I hurt somebody by saying this? Is it really mine to use? Could I give more?

What I need to concentrate on in this design is however: How do I meet the ethics by doing my diploma?

Earth care: By practising more and more sustainability in daily life, in work and in my home, I reduce my footprint, my carbon pollution and save on precious resources for future generations. That includes improvements in all the seven domains.

People care: If we all practised permaculture, our environment would be nicer. But we all come from different backgrounds and understand things differently, also how to apply permaculture. Diversity is what makes humans resilient and unique. Information, education and organisation help us to make informed choices about our future. This diploma in permaculture has helped me to focus and to work systematically to improve my skills. It will aid me in getting the message across and the credentials to teach and tutor.

Fair share: Coming from international development and working against poverty, fair share or sharing the surplus is something very tangible to me, and behind the fair distribution of wealth is fair organisation. But fair share is also about sharing knowledge and skills, seeds and games, time and space. With the diploma comes thus a responsibility to share what I know and what I can.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) attempts to use ways of asking questions and envisioning the future in order to foster positive relationships and build on the present potential of a given person, organisation or situation. This is a design philosophy and method that I learned in 2004 and that I have been very inspired by ever since. I have used it in my work as a community developer in third world countries. It is also the design basis of this action learning pathway as it emphasises dreaming and action. The most common model utilizes a cycle of four processes, a 4D model, which focus on what it calls:

1. DISCOVER: The identification of organizational processes that work well.
2. DREAM: The envisioning of processes that would work well in the future.

3. DESIGN: Planning and prioritizing processes that would work well.
4. DESTINY (or DEPLOY or DO): The implementation (execution) of the proposed design.

The aim is to build – or rebuild – organisations and projects around what works, rather than trying to fix what doesn't. AI practitioners try to convey this approach as the opposite of problem solving.

Problem Solving	Appreciative inquiry
Felt need, identification of problem(s)	Appreciating—valuing “the best of what is”
Analysis of Causes	Envisioning what might be
Analysis of possible solutions	Engaging in dialogue about what should be
Action Planning (treatment)	Innovating what will be

Source: Wikipedia

Appreciative Inquiry was termed so by D. Cooperrider in 1987. It has developed into different forms and hybrids, including “Dragon Dreaming” and “Asset Based Community Development” (ABCD model).

Appreciative Inquiry is about the co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives “life” to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential.

To me, this is an organisational philosophy that has People Care in its centre and works with what is human nature. I value it as a good tool for developing and designing within especially organisation and social permaculture. More information about Appreciative Inquiry can easily be accessed on the internet. An introductory article with an example of Appreciative Inquiry in practice is here:

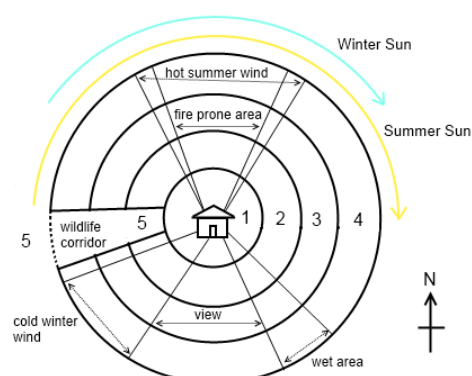
<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/uploads/whatisai.pdf>

Sector analysis

Sector planning is concerned with energies external to our site, the elements and forces of Nature, that come from outside our system, and pass through it.

These energies include:

- hot summer winds
- cold winter winds
- winter and summer sun angles



- salty or damaging winds
- water flow and flood prone areas
- unwanted views
- fire danger areas

Since these wild energies come into our system from outside, we can strategically place elements in our design to manage or take advantage of these incoming energies.

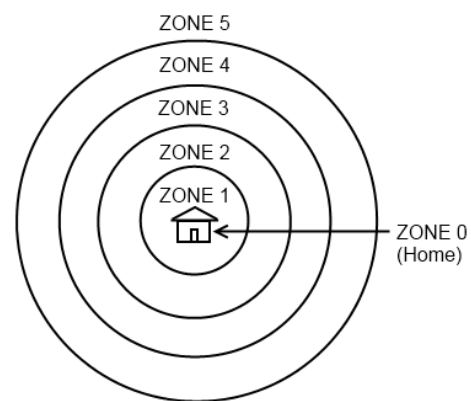
Sector analysis can also be extrapolated to social designs, where the energies coming from outside can refer to the context of the design, e.g. the energies can be from people outside the project, legislation, news, politics, funding and much more.

Zones analysis

Zone planning is a system where the location of an element in a design is determined by:

- How often we need to **use** the element
- How often we need to **service** the element

This is a basic logical principle, whereby the things you use most often, and the things you have to pay the most attention to, are placed closest to the house in the design.



Zones are **abstract conceptual** boundaries around the home which help us to work with distance to plan efficient energy use.

The areas around a house are divided up into zones numbered **0** to **5**, based their accessibility and frequency of use in relation to the location of the house. The lowest number denotes the most frequently accessed areas, while the highest number indicates the areas least accessed.

Flow analysis

Analysis of flow is shown as lines of increasing thickness or intensity with increased flow. The flow can be for example activities, water, wind, traffic and wildlife. See the Homestead design for an example.

Input-output analysis

Input looks at the an elements inputs or needs. Output looks at the elements output or product. Intrinsic characters of the element is also taken into consideration. This should help to point out concepts such as pollution, extra work, multiple functions for each element, importance of relationships, relative location, cycling, automatic systems.

SADIMET - this is an acronym for...

- Survey – Surveying the land, boundaries, soil, people, resources
- Analysis (Assess) – In depth understanding of how the observed can be explained theoretically and the theory can be manifested in practice
- Design (Decide) – Placing elements and creating beneficial relationships
- Implement – Considering how your plans can be made real
- Monitor (Manage) – Reflect upon or look after your design and see if it has the intended outcome
- Evaluate
- Tweak

SADIM(ET) has its roots in landscape architecture.

OBREDIM - this is an acronym for...

- Observation - Surveying land, soil, people and wildlife.
- Boundaries - Exploring the boundaries of the site and the project.
- Resources - Taking stock of what you can use in your design.
- Evaluation - Reviewing the information and priorities to find patterns.
- Design (Decide) - Placing elements and creating beneficial relationships.
- Implementation - Considering how your plans can be made real.
- Maintenance - Ensuring you will be able to look after it properly.

OBREDIM is adopted from industrial engineering.

CEAP – this is an acronym for ...

- Collect site information
- Evaluate the information
- Apply permaculture principles
- Plan a schedule of implementation, maintenance, evaluation and tweaking

PRIME – this is an acronym for...

The PRIME design cycle is a process which will assist you in designing anything you want. PRIME is an acronym which stands for Problem, Research, Idea's, Manufacture/Make and Evaluate.



Problem: This is the situation you are faced with at the start of your design process, this needs to be solved through design. Also called the Design Brief.

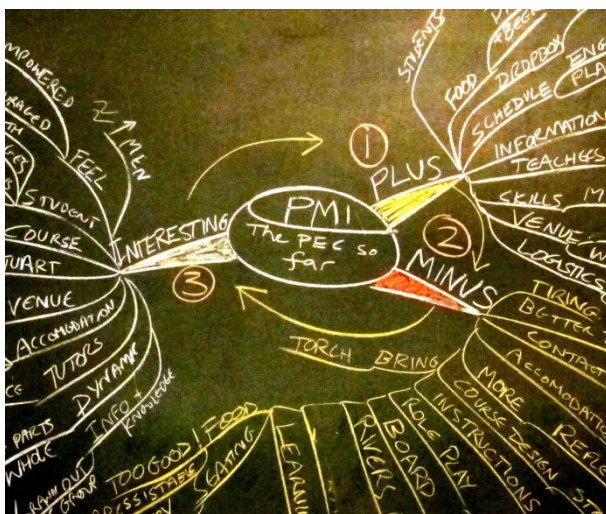
Research: What is needed to research in order to gain knowledge of your new problem.

Idea's: Your own ideas you have come up with to do with your design, these ideas should sprout from your research.

Manufacture/Make: The stage in which you make and manufacture your design, this will take a while.

Evaluate: This is where you reflect on your work and evaluate what you have created and see what you have done right and wrong, you also must discuss whether it solved your problem.

The four methods mentioned: SADIMET, OBREDIM, CEAP and PRIME basically tell the same story; first observe, second make sense of it, third make a plan, fourth **DO IT**. Then it's just about improving here and there. I personally advocate that we do more doing and bother less with theory and acronyms. However, the tools do help to not forget anything essential and are useful when starting out in design.



PMI – this is an acronym for...

Plus, Minus, Interesting – a thinking tool from Edward de Bono.

PMI helps you make decisions quickly by weighing the pros and cons of a decision. It's also useful for widening your perception of a problem or decision, and for uncovering issues that you might not ordinarily have considered. It is often used as a tool for evaluation.

SWOT – this is an acronym for...

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

A SWOT analysis (alternatively SWOT matrix) is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (or challenges) involved in a project or in a business venture. A

SWOT ANALYSIS



SWOT analysis can be carried out for a product, place, industry or person. It involves specifying the objective of the project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable to achieve that objective.

- Strengths: characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others.
- Weaknesses: characteristics that place the business or project at a disadvantage relative to others
- Opportunities: elements that the project could exploit to its advantage
- Threats: elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project
- internal factors – the strengths and weaknesses internal to the organization
- external factors – the opportunities and threats presented by the environment external to the organization

4Ps – this is an acronym for ...

Process:

1. What would you have done differently?
2. Did my time plan work?
3. Did I budget enough?

Product:

1. Are you happy with your product (solution)?
2. Did it meet the need outlined in the Design Brief (problem)?
3. Good and bad points.
4. Things to improve.

Personal: (individual)

1. Was I happy with my effort? Were you motivated?
2. What things did I do well?
3. What things could I have improved?

Peers:

1. Ask others for feedback, this can include friends, colleagues and experts for their feedback.

Communication strategy

A communication strategy in its simplest form sets out to answer the following questions and perform the resulting actions:

1. Terms of the communication and stakeholders?
2. Who do we want to communicate with – target groups?
3. What do we want to communicate?
4. When do we want to communicate about it?

5. What kinds of communication do we want to use?
6. What resources do we have and do we want to use?
7. What are the success parameters?
8. Evaluation – did we reach the target?

DAFOR – this is an acronym for ...

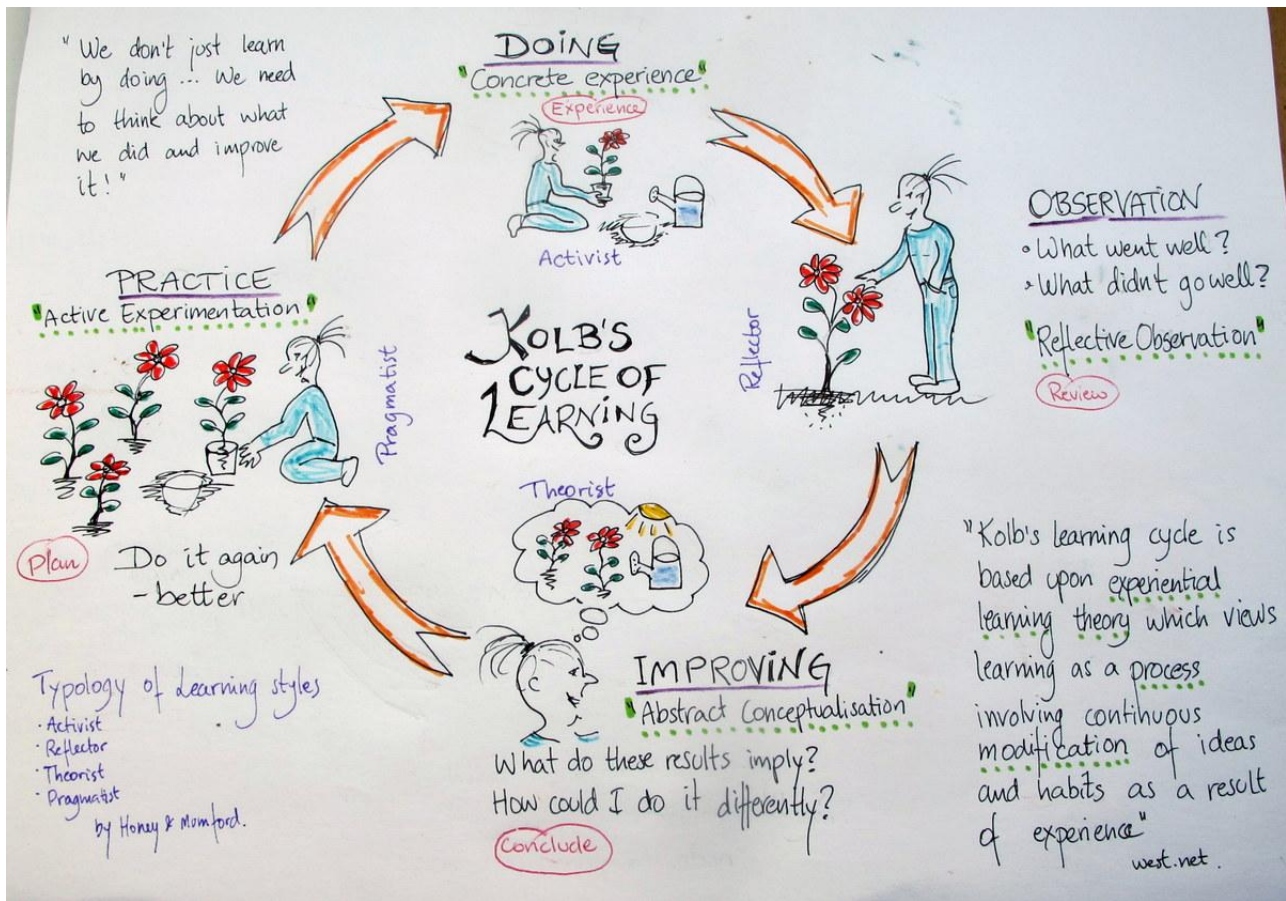
- Dominant species
- Abundant species
- Frequent species
- Occasional species
- Rare species

PASTE – this is an acronym for ...

Plants	Animals	Structures	Tools/Technology	Events

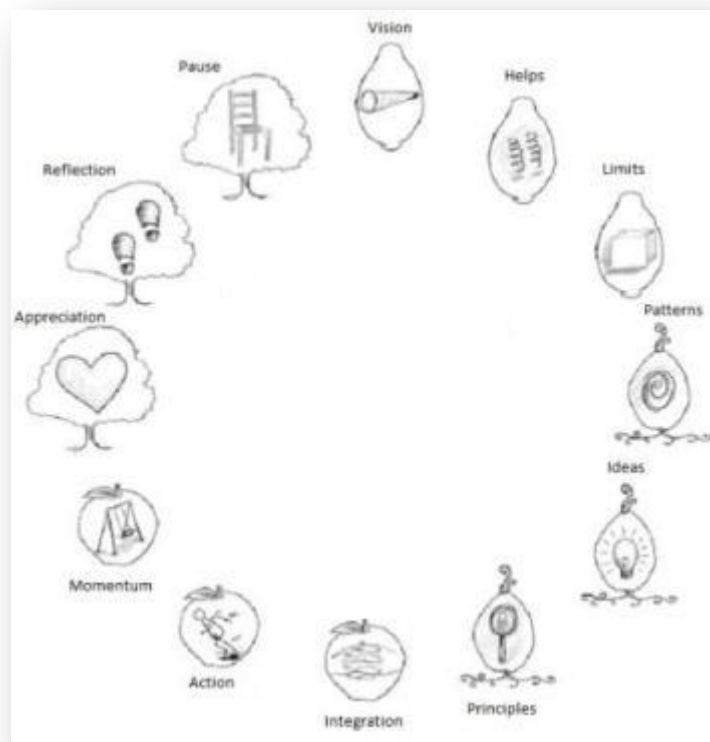
It is often used within permaculture land-based designs to gather information in a systematic way.

Kolb's Learning cycle



The Design Web

For social designs, I am very inspired by The Design Web by Looby Macnamara as this tool is comprehensive and useful to me in its focus on the mature stages of a design. The design Web consists of 12 anchor points. I find it useful to think in a web like structure, reiterating decisions, tweaking solutions, rechecking limits, reflecting upon my path as I go along, rather than a linear or even circular approach to design. In comparison with Kolb's learning cycle or SADIM and OBREDIM it allows the user to jump between the anchor points – which is probably a more realistic way of describing a design process. The Appreciation, Reflection and Pause anchor points are often forgotten in project management.



For a description of the anchor points in the design web and how to use the design web in detail, I refer to Looby MacNamaras book "People and Permaculture". For a practical application of the design web please see design no. 2 on "How to become an awesome permaculture teacher".

Principles

There are many principles in permaculture by different scholars and I will not mention them all here, although they are important. As design tools they are instrumental in designing patterns. They have been used throughout the diploma designs to make designs better and ultimately to achieve the vision. The most central to me are:

Work with nature rather than against: Probably the most fundamental principle to permaculture and especially useful in the garden. In social or organisational designs, like this one, it is about human nature and observing and designing with our patterns and habits – in the present case we work with human nature to discover negative energy and channel it towards positive action.

Each element performs many functions: Always a good rule-of-thumb to have each element perform at least three functions. Methods, principles and tools can be elements in a design. Getting to be confident with a tool, principle or a method allows me to make it perform many functions.

Each important function is supported by many elements: Whether we're talking about economic design, energy supply, food availability or human resources it's always better to have options and multiple flows.

Observe and interact: I observe the context that I want to act in, adjusting my actions to my surroundings both environmentally, socially and economically. In this design, discovery is another word for observation.

The problem is the solution: Many of the designs have identified “a problem” and continues to find “a solution” to that problem. Most of the designs on my action learning pathway have a statement about the problem and the solution to give the design direction. The solution also works as a goal to aim for which ties in with the quality of life, the long term goals and the overall vision. In Appreciative Inquiry, we generally do not talk about problems, but about envisioning what should be. However, this is also the essence of this principle in permaculture.

Use and value renewable resources and services: I try my best to use natural resources and consistently choose objects made from recyclable and organic materials rather than new plastic items. In terms of energy, I also do my best to use renewable energy sources and reduce consumption based on fossil fuels.

Produce no waste: when using mostly biological resources, waste production is greatly reduced. Recycling of nutrients in my house and garden is a high priority, as is salvaging food and things that would have contributed to municipal waste.

Apply self-regulation & accept feedback: Naturally, when working with nature, people and economy, adaptation and tweaking of systems must take place in order for projects and production to be efficient and beneficial. In education, this principle is key.

Design from patterns to details: When starting to design anything, looking at the bigger picture or getting an overview of the situation is always a good point of departure. Then we discover the flows of energy and our thoughts can be aided by understanding the pattern. This Action Learning Pathway is a study of such patterns to arrive at the most beneficial one at the end.

Destiny - Implementation

The implementation of the Action Learning Pathway started in 2012 when I got the opportunity to develop my skills within green building with the strawbale house in Birkegårds Haver.

I have also been working on my permaculture teacher design since before I started the diploma process officially. Likewise with the Public Relation elements design. Communication PR and journalism are within a domain and professions that I have worked with for years.

The strong focus on design and documentation through the diploma process made implementation more effective and accelerated activities. The LAND project was a very conscious design almost right from the beginning using Appreciative Inquiry and OBREDIM as main tools.

I did an assessment of the Action Learning Pathway in the summer of 2014 as I bought Kattekærhus. I realised that the designs were too ambitious and I decided to cut some of them to

manageable size and scope. This does not mean that have stopped working with the other designs, but it means that I realised that I could not fit my whole life into 10 designs in an acceptable way.

Destiny is really about the implementation of the diploma designs, so this section refers to the realisation of the 9 other designs in this portfolio.

Evaluation of the Action Learning Pathway

Achieving the goals: The goals set out in the beginning are in the process of being achieved. They have permaculture ethics as their base and are guiding the designs. They will continue to be relevant in the foreseeable future, especially in my work on setting up “Kattekærhus” as a LAND centre.

Achieving Quality of Life: Yes, this is strongly underway too. The action learning pathway design was very effective in identifying the designs needed to obtain the described Quality of Life. Especially it helped the decision on buying the property and designing the “Homestead at Kattekærhus”, my home. The supporting designs on the flex oven, forest garden, seaweed mulch and Universal Tea could not have been achieved without the decision to buy “Kattekærhus”. Many other elements, functions and actions are part of the Quality of Life and vision, but have not been described in the this diploma presentation.

Other targets in the Action Learning Pathway were: Achieving the Diploma in Applied Permaculture, European cooperation, Educator in permaculture, disseminating permaculture and own house and garden.

I am confident at the moment of writing that the **Action Learning Pathway** was a design successful enough to lead to the accreditation to the Diploma in Applied Permaculture.

As for **European coordination**, it did not become a diploma portfolio design, but the cooperation is going on several levels: The European Permaculture Teacher’s partnership flowered, a European wide LAND project has been born, collaboration with Permaculture Association UK happens on a regular basis and I’m involved in communications group for the IPCUK. So this target has very much been fulfilled.

Educator in permaculture became a design and has been achieved in reality to some extend, i.e. I feel confident to teach introduction courses, teacher trainings and some topics, but not yet a whole PDC. My aim was to become an awesome permaculture teacher and I believe there is still some way to go.

Disseminating permaculture has also happen through the Public relations design and the LAND project.

Finally, **own house and garden** also happened!

Afraid to dream: I realise that I am not comfortable in dreaming big and detailed dreams. This is because life always turns out differently and it can be perceived as a failure not to reach the dreams once they are detailed and specific. However, without direction we tend to go around in circles (in a bad way). Accepting that a design or a pathway never turns out exactly as planned, is part of accepting life. We strive for control and can achieve it in certain areas, but never in all. As a consequence, I am reluctant to plan and design too much. I like incremental designs, taking a step and seeing what new opportunities this brings. The reluctance to design big sometimes leads to procrastination, but more often I achieve a lot by starting in one corner and working my way through the terrain, seeing what needs to be done as I go along and finding the resources where I am. Intuitively, I stop when I come across an item that potentially could be useful. I save it, sometimes to the great wonder of my peers.

Using Holmgren's flower as a design tool: In the Nordic Diploma system, the focus on designs and doing 10 of them is not really accepted. This is something I have been working with and become frustrated with. Using Holmgren's flower to illustrate my pathway and how it integrates ethics, principles and domains, gives some credibility to my action learning pathway in the Nordic system. It is in its own right a very powerful illustration of how to obtain a more and more sustainable lifestyle. It has inspired me to break free of the way permaculture is perceived in my country and has encouraged me to pursue my Quality of Life with strength.

Adapting the Action Learning Pathway: Working towards the interim project assessment I realised that my designs were much too ambitious for the diploma pathway. I have basically taken a whole domain of my life and made it into a design. This is fine and I will integrate permaculture into my life this way. But, describing the design processes in any detail on a whole domain of life is beyond what I wanted to do in this diploma. I have instead given a context to the designs I chose and got more into depth with the details of minor designs nestled within the bigger designs.

Most of the designs are ongoing and will keep evolving as they adapt to my life situation. They are activities that will continue to be central to my quality of life, except the design of the strawbale house, which was a client job.

In the form this diploma has turned out, I had to limit the size of designs and not be too ambitious. I have a tendency of wanting to include everything, because everything is related. Because of my background as a geographer studying a holistic science, I have encountered this challenge often. But the diploma is not a description of my life, but a selection of a few of the designs I will do in my life.

Missing from this picture is the European Permaculture Teachers' partnership, which has had great impact on the teacher pathway and the LAND project. The design behind it is not mine, although I could have chosen to document the design for the convening of the meeting at Friland.

Also not visible are the communities that I'm a part of, which have a lot of impact in the form of inspiration, connections, contacts, network, help, knowledge etc. Being on the board of Permakultur Danmark greatly impacts on my decision making, activities and opportunities.

Reflecting upon the design process

It is interesting to be at this point in the design where the dream and the future scenario now has been achieved. I have walked the path through 2-3 years and have arrived at that point in the future – and it doesn't look at all as what I had in mind. But all the targets set out have been fulfilled.

Life situations change often as a result of actions taken. A major life change for me was the choice of where to live and thus put my roots down. I lived in several eco-communities before I made the choice of moving to Orø, a place where I was brought up and that I have a special connection with. My earlier designs are thus more non-land based while the last designs are land-based reflecting the strive for my vision, quality of life and long term goals set out in the beginning of designing the action learning pathway. Now I have already seen results of my design work that I started 2 years ago. I have the house and garden, I was describing in my Quality of Life!

When I did the guiding questions, the appreciative inquiry dreaming and the first action learning pathway more than two years ago, these techniques helped me to create a vision that I could strive for. This has been a great success. Writing up the design, I forgot about the initial appreciative inquiry process and why I had made the structural choices of the design. Fitting the design into a different model was not really successful, whereas being true to the original plan seems to work better. Merging the work inspired by Alan Savaory with the work done with Appreciative Inquiry created a beneficial harmony.

I like doing the design drawing and discovery and found this very useful and guiding and setting this focus aids me in achieving the Quality of Life that I strive for. Writing up the process, the evaluation and reflection was however not very productive for me and I feel mostly that I have spent a lot of time on sometime quite redundant. I do recognise the value of being meticulous about designs and learning from the pathway and it would be worth looking into more fruitful was of harvesting this learning. Perhaps video recording or photo documentation could have a larger role. After all, our actions and doings are what really make a difference and I've spent so much time writing about my forest garden and writing about the Universal Tea design that I haven't had time to enjoy either and pick new tea. This is not sustainable in the long run.

There were a number of designs that were rejected and looking back over the years, choices were made that supported a new direction in life and thus an action learning pathway that was adapted to new opportunities. Most notably the design of a new eco-village with 100 inhabitants was in the pipeline and the vision and goals were already described when I decided to leave the project. The reasons for this decision are beyond the scope of the present document, but the lesson remains: life, its ideas and challenges, are constantly changing and while the vision remain the same, the paths to reach it are sometimes long and winding and may include a cul-de-sac. Using a design tool makes it easier to analyse alternative pathways and focus on a long term goal while iterations are made to the designs.

Bringing us back to the analogy of the forest garden, we sometimes see big trees or projects fall in a storm and they can be like old friends. But this also leaves room for new growth, and we get to have a conscious choice in what plant or project should replace the old one.

How designs fit in Holmgren's domains and the 12 diploma categories

I have linked Holmgren's domains with the Areas/Categories used in the Diploma Accreditation system to increase coherence between these systems. See the table.

	Project	Holmgren's domain	Areas in Diploma system - categories	Main application
1	Action Learning Pathway	CULTURE AND EDUCATION	Education	Personal life & Work Personal level
2	Becoming an awesome permaculture teacher.	CULTURE AND EDUCATION	Education	Work Personal level
3	Setting up a LAND project in Denmark.	CULTURE AND EDUCATION	Education/ Administration/ Community Development	Work Collective level
4	Public Relations project	CULTURE AND EDUCATION	Art, Media, Culture and Communications	Work Collective/global level
5	Strawbale house at Birkegårdens Haver.	BUILDING	Architecture	Work Personal/collective level
6	Seaweed mulch design	LAND AND NATURE STEWARDSHIP	Site design	Personal life Personal level
7	Homestead design Kattekærhus	CULTURE AND EDUCATION	Education/Community Development/Finance	Work and Personal life Personal/collective level
8	Forest garden design	LAND AND NATURE STEWARDSHIP	Site design	Work and Personal life Personal/collective level
9	Flex Oven design	BUILDING, TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY	Architecture	Work and Personal life Personal/collective level
10	Universal Tea	HEALTH, SPIRITUALITY & WELL-BEING	Other	Personal life & Work Personal level

Accreditation criteria

Demonstrating Design Skills	Applying permaculture in my own life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design from Patterns to Details - Appreciative Inquiry - Action learning - River of Life 	Definitely. The Action Learning Pathway has been my main guideline over the last 2-3 years and has helped me make some difficult choices.
Learning from and developing your permaculture practice	Applying permaculture to my work and projects
I have found it useful to work with an overall plan and targets. It gives some peace of mind to know that nothing is forgotten once it is in the plan or design. I have had the original illustration hanging on my wall and that helped to be on track with why I wanted to do the diploma and what direction this would give me in life.	Using Holmgren's domains this project is mainly within Culture and Education, while in the 12 categories the Education category would apply.

