



VYTAUTAS MAGNUS  
UNIVERSITY  
— M C M X X I I —

*How to be well with pens in hand: A collaborative project in understanding.*

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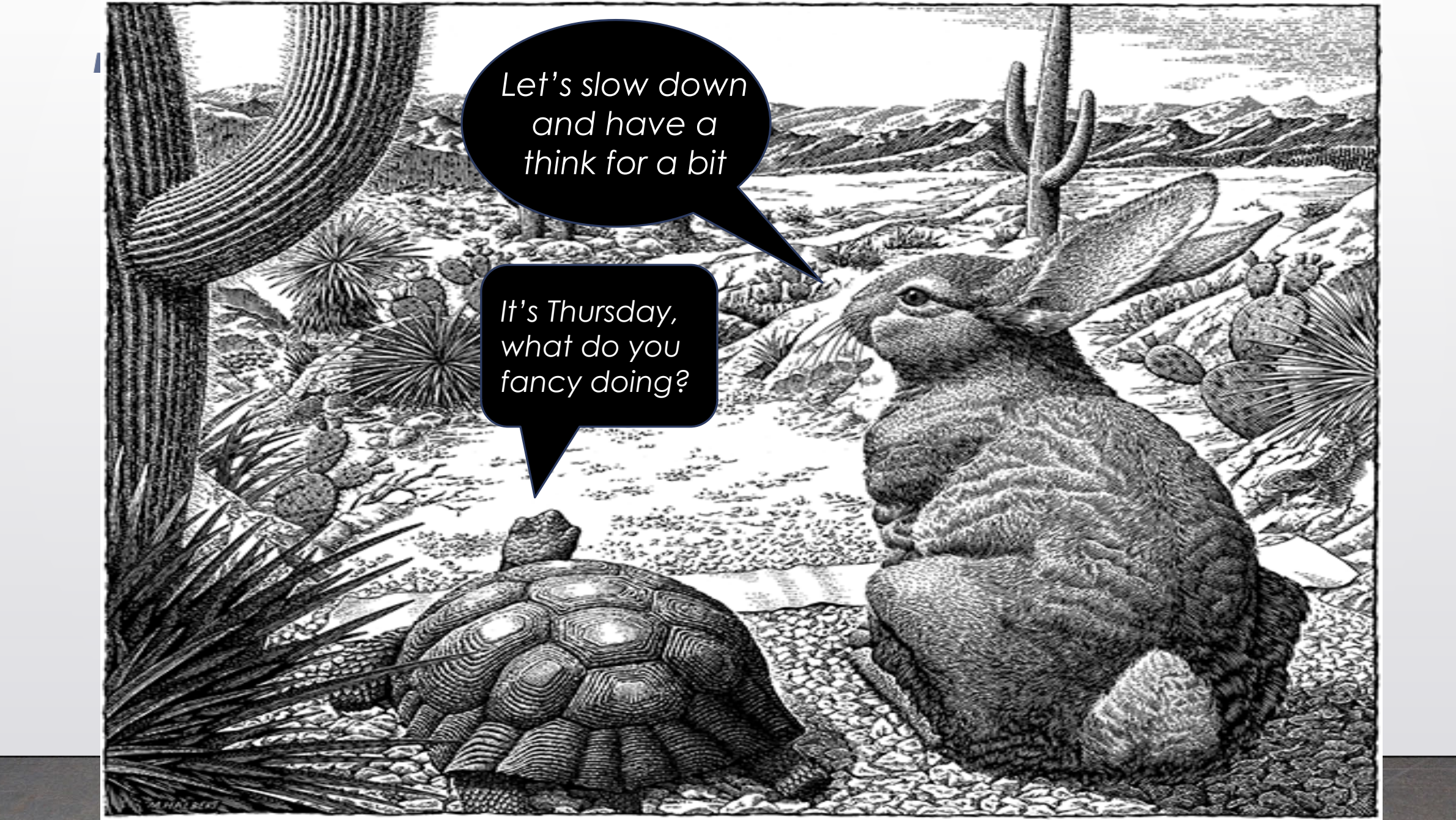
# The Internship/Summer School

As part of their academic journey, PhD candidates from the Education Academy at Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania were required to undertake a minimum of one 28-day internship at one of the partner universities in Europe, of which Edge Hill is one.

Nine students participated in the internship which was delivered in two two-week blocks. Block one was held in June 2022 and block two in September 2022. The internship included structured taught sessions and (un)structured writing time. Outside of this, PGRs were encouraged to spend time reading, thinking, writing and exploring. The emphasis of block one was on core research skills and block two focused on the writing process and publication game.

At no point in the planning phase did we intend to write about PGR mental health. In fact, it was the third day of the internship when such an idea was born...





Let's slow down  
and have a  
think for a bit

It's Thursday,  
what do you  
fancy doing?

# A deliberate (collaborative) technique



## **Four Principles\* –**

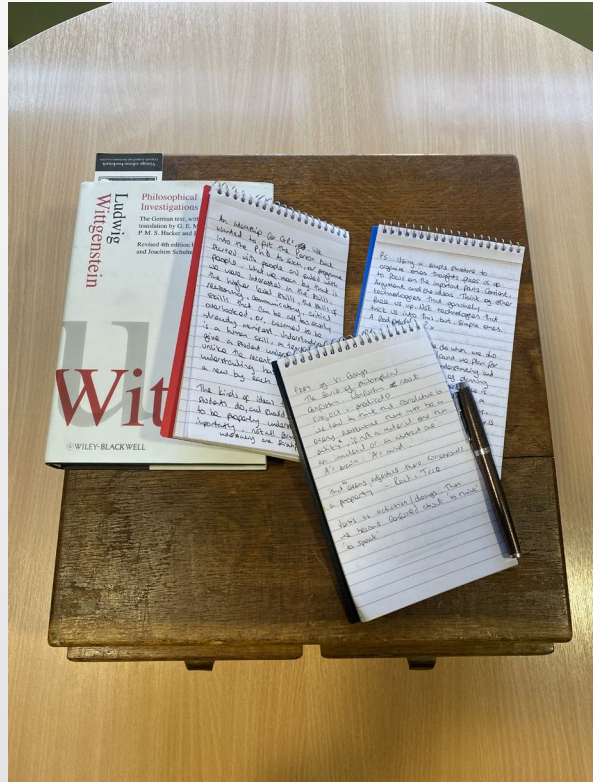
- 1) Writing is the only thing that matters
- 2) Simplicity is paramount
- 3) Nobody ever starts from scratch
- 4) Let the work carry you forward.

## **Six Steps\* –**

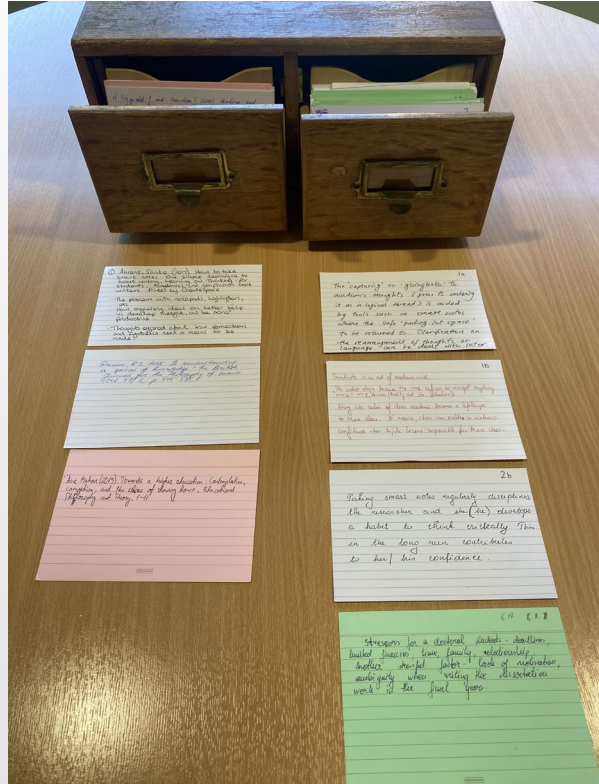
- 1) Separate the interlocking tasks
- 2) Read for understanding
- 3) Take Smart Notes
- 4) Develop ideas
- 5) Share your insight
- 6) Make it a habit.

(Luhman, 1992; ideas developed by Ahrens, 2017, 2022)

# A deliberate (collaborative) method



1) Read and take  
Fleeting Notes



2) Take  
Literature  
Notes



3) Take  
Permanent  
Notes

REPEAT

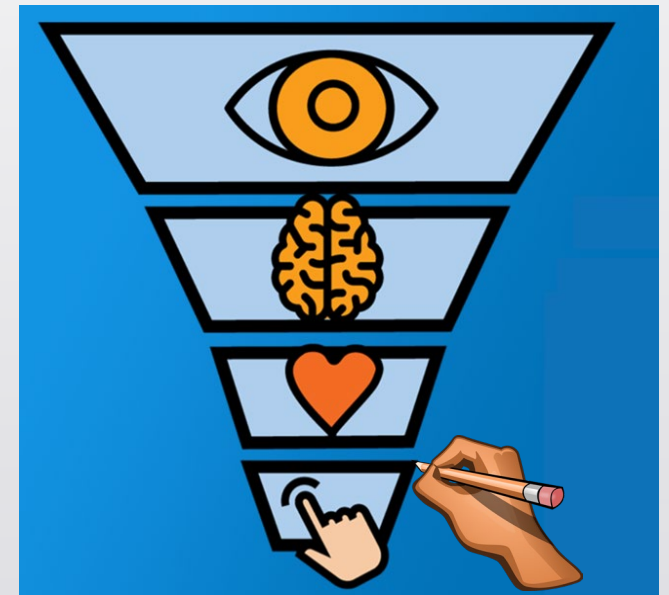


Think inside your box. Use  
the box as your 'idea  
generator' or 'creativity  
machine'

# Smart Notes: A technique for thinking in/with Language

The initial workshop, and subsequent use of the technique over the summer, resulted in the group seeing that Smart Notes provide -

1. An articulation process of working with functional language.
2. An indicator of thinking through functioning language.
3. A method of capturing/extracting/ express ideas.
4. A vehicle to present ideas.
5. A space for temporary parking.
6. A way to generate network of ideas.
7. Allow a personal voice, enhance researcher identity.



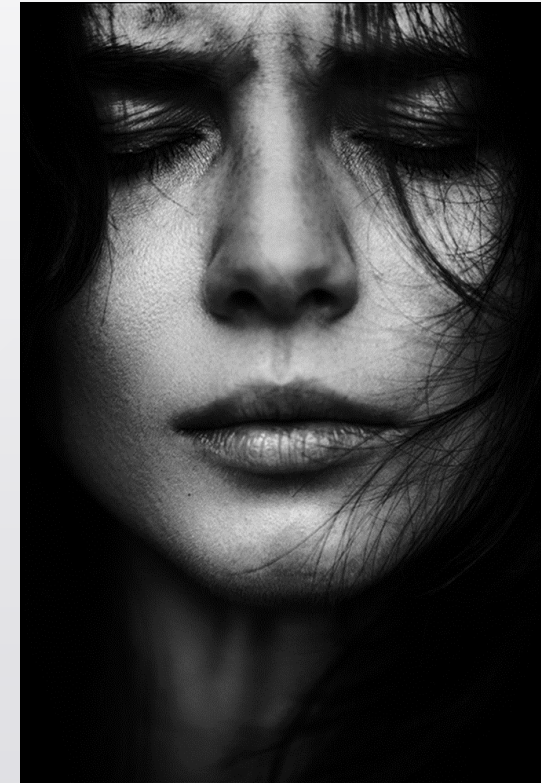




# CONFIDENCE



- SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT RELATIONSHIP
- ACADEMIC / PHD STUDENT COMMUNITY
- ACADEMIC PROGRESS
- HIGHER LEVEL SKILLS
- MENTAL HEALTH



A method not only for capturing ideas, but also a vehicle for presenting ideas and a way to **generate** networks of ideas. By J.G. And Jc., 2022

Allows temporary "**parking spaces**" for ideas. By J.G. And Jc., 2022

A method that makes you think and rethink and **discover new conections** between ideas. By I.R., 2022

Forming the **habit of working** with SN is not easy. By J.G. And Jc., 2022

SN are manageable units of thoughts that can be arranged within the existing **researcher's mindset**. By I.R., 2022

**Reading, thinking and linking, collaborating, reflecting and writing have strong connections for researcher's wellbeing**  
By I.A., 2022

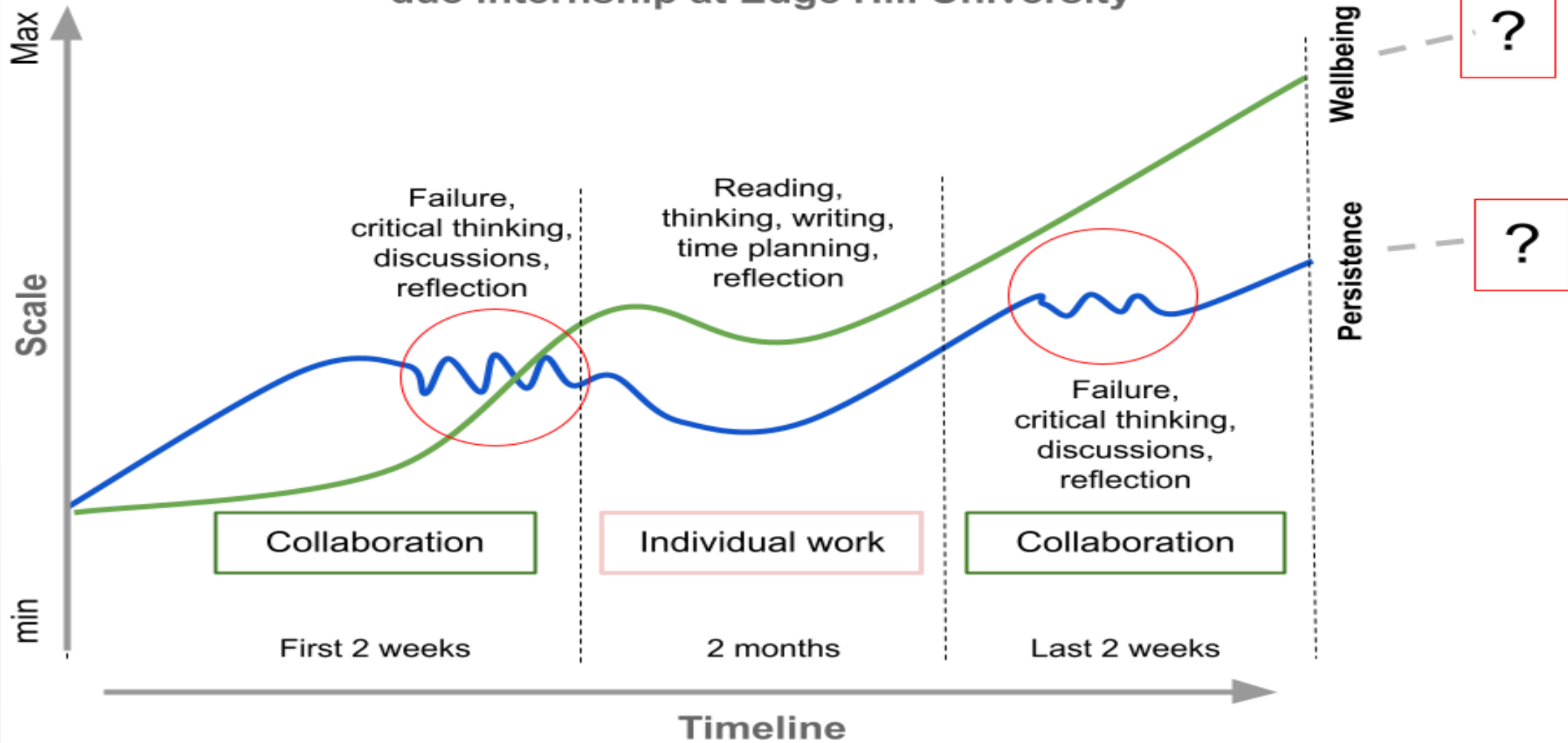
Gives **opportunity to slow down** and develop a **network of ideas**, which you can use in your academic work. By M.D., 2022

Working in a group, I **felt a bit uncomfortable** when others read my thoughts on the card. By A.D., 2022

The cards create a **network of ideas** that allow for a **broader view and analysis**. By J.M., 2022

When using the SN method in group work, it is very important to **hear, and respect, team agreements**. By M.S. and M.Š., 2022

## Persistence and wellbeing correlations due internship at Edge Hill University



# A Conclusion



*What are we to do with what we have written down? Certainly, at first, we will produce mostly garbage. But we have been educated to expect something useful from our activities, and soon lose confidence if nothing useful seems to result. We should therefore reflect on whether and how we arrange our notes, so they are available for later access. Niklas Luhmann*

- + Confidence in ability
  - Worry about 'forgetting things'
  - + Productivity
  - Crooked spines and sore shoulders.
- The sum total is that participants are healthier for spending time slowing down and thinking harder.

The workshop has developed such that all PGRs at Edge Hill can attend as part of their core training.

The international summer school will run again next year for a larger group.



# References

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