As we are gathering…

1. Introduce yourself to the people at your table

2. Finish this sentence: "I am here today because…"

Creating Connections: Meaningful Meetings and Great Gatherings

Kelly Conforti Rupp, Office of the Provost

Shelly Strom, Nelson Institute and UniverCity Year

Jen Erickson, Office of Strategic Consulting

Today's gathering

Agenda

- Connection activity
- The business case
- Leveling up
- A case study
- Next steps

Connection before Content

https://weand.me/

The Business Case for Creating Connections

Leveling Up: Planning the Meeting/Gathering

1. Purpose
2. Group values
3. Modality
4. Space/location/layout
5. Day/time
6. Attendees
7. Attendee needs
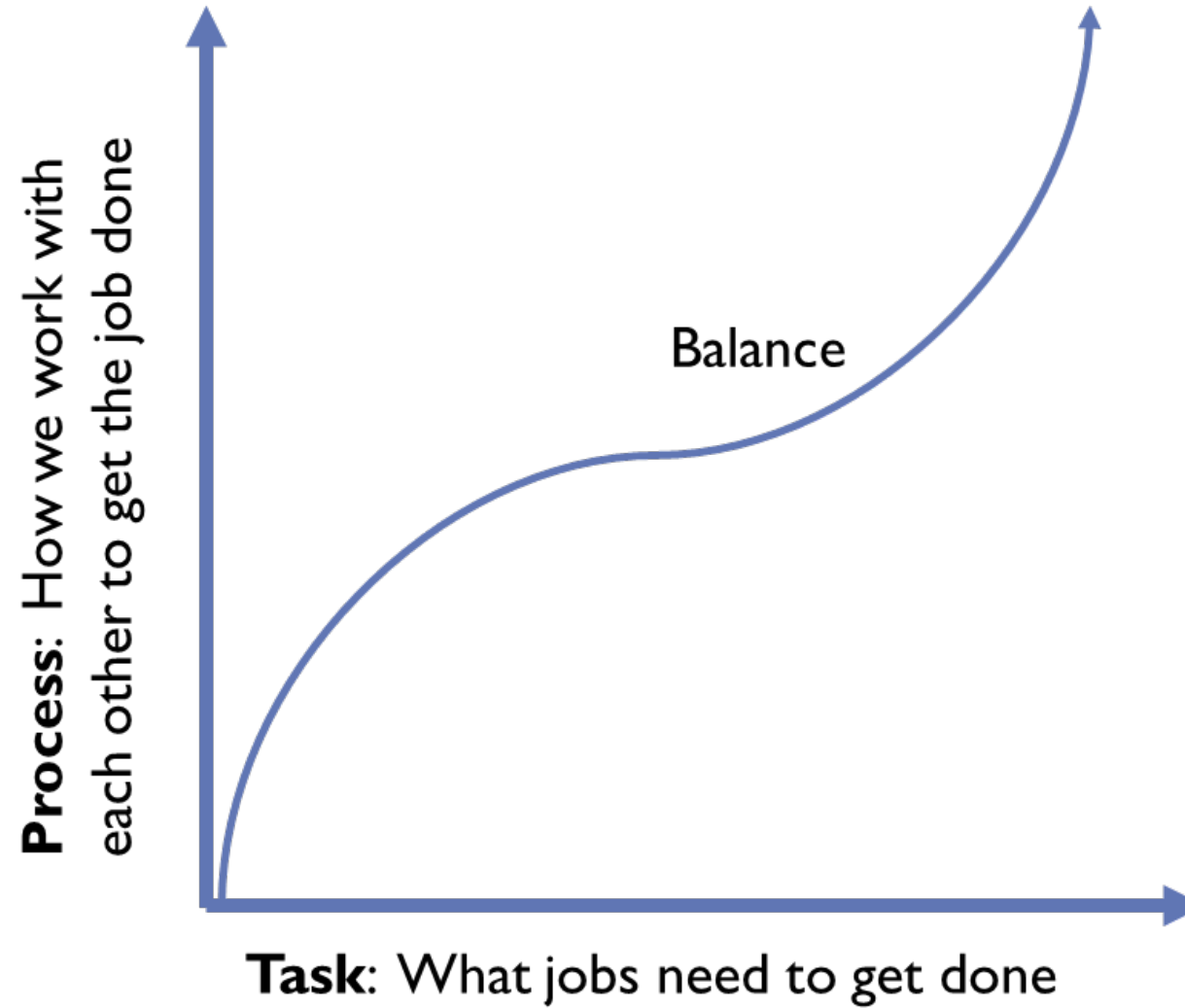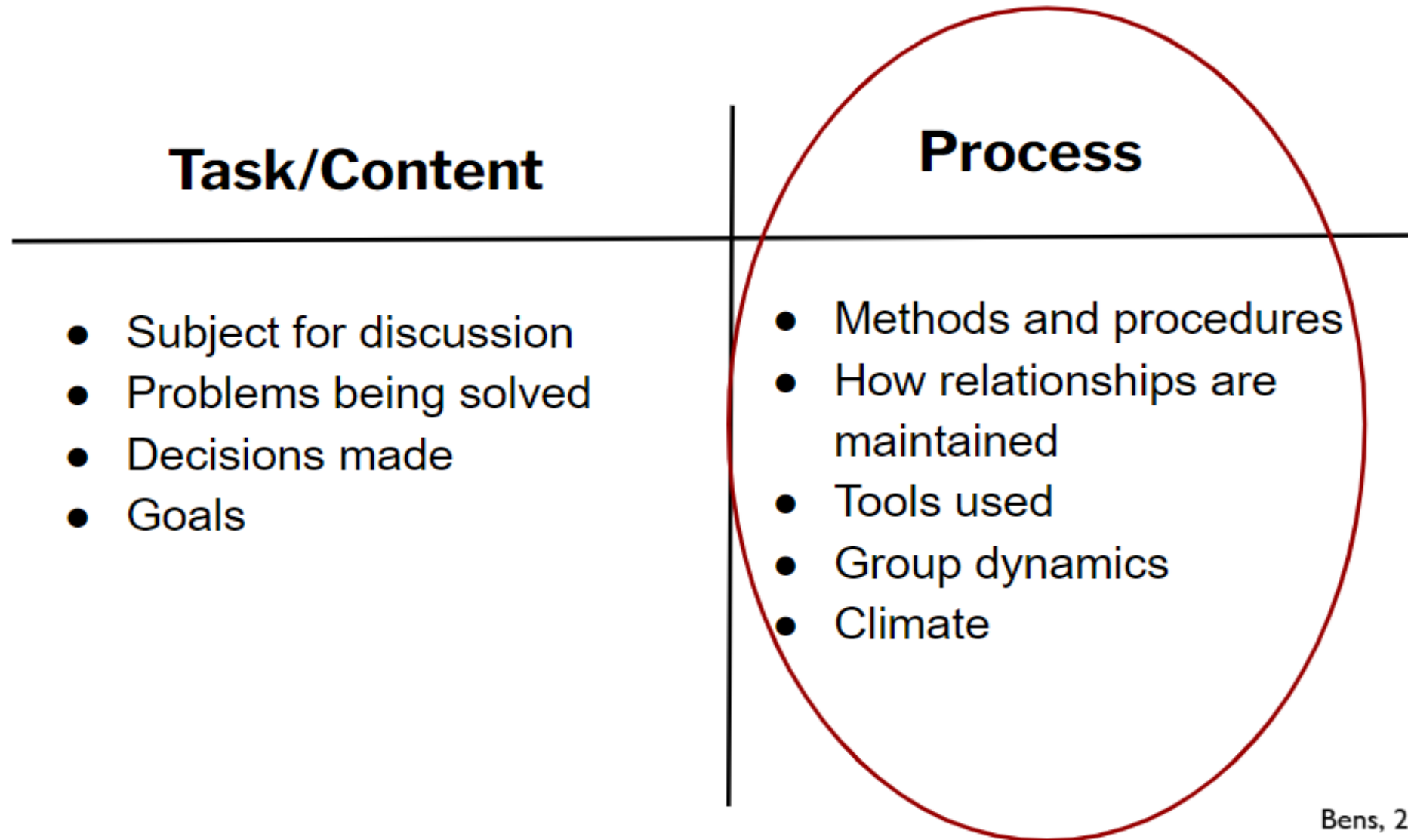8. Guidelines
9. Invitation
10. Welcome

Leveling up: Conventional vs. Participatory Meetings

Balancing Task & Process

Task/Content

- Subject for discussion
- Problems being solved
- Decisions made
- Goals

Process

- Methods and procedures
- How relationships are maintained
- Tools used
- Group dynamics
- Climate

Bens, 2005

Topics
What are we here to discuss?

Outcomes
What are our desired results?

Processes
## How do we engage all group members?

Agenda Design Worksheet

Identify Agenda Topics What topics do we want to address?	Clarify Outcome What outcome do we want for each topic?	Chooses Process What activity (or set of activities) will best support the group to achieve each desired outcome?	Time Needed
	Share information Generate and analyze data Make a decision Continuous Improvement	Brainstorm Visioning Categorizing Establish criteria Pros vs. cons Small group discussions Reflection Multi-voting	

Liberating Structures (www.liberatingstructures.com)

33 Liberating Structures

Source: "The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures" by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless
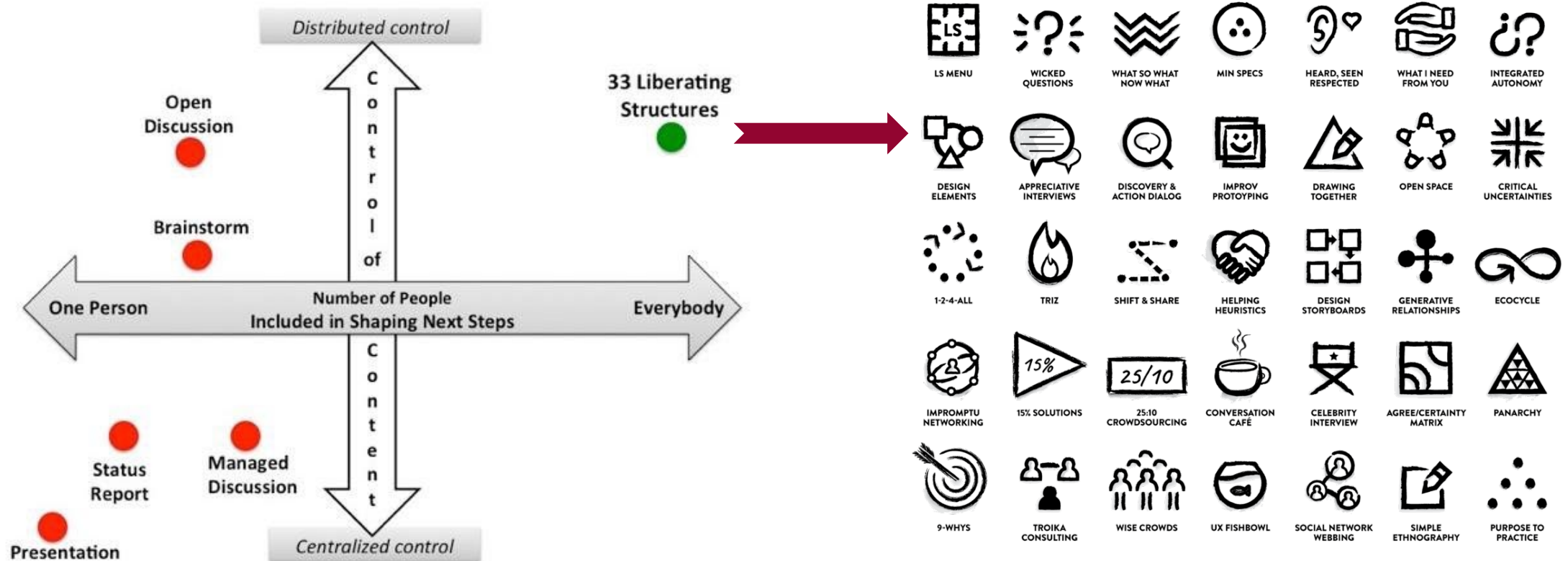
Leveling Up: Case Study

1. Nelson Institute Staff Meeting
   a. Liberating structures
      i. Everybody invited, expanded invitation
      ii. Distributed control and flexibility in style
   b. Collectively determined purpose, structure, style and content
   c. Collectively determined content in advance (tied to time of year)

Nelson Institute All-Staff Meetings: Leveling Up

OLD WAY	NEW WAY
Dean-led and Dean-focused	Staff-led & managed by rotating teams* (space for Dean)
No agenda	Structured agenda, shared a week ahead
Limited to Science Hall staff	Broader Nelson cross-campus staff
Crowded conference room (max cap. 25)	Bigger room, now Zoom (Covid & beyond)
Spontaneous or random topics	Curated topics tied to time of year and focused on staff interests and needs
Monday mornings, 9 AM	Monday mornings, 11 AM
Disconnected community	Warm-up activities, shout-outs, break-outs, and "extra-credit" engagement beyond monthly meetings

Evolved from 6-person team who organized all meetings to 4-person rotating, inter-unit teams

Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Nelson Staff Meeting Agenda [TEMPLATE]
1. Team members and roles
2. Location, date, time
3. Purpose: Promote community, connection, and collaboration. Stay updated on Nelson news and priorities. Have fun.
4. Ground rules: Focus on connection before content. Share the air.
5. Theme
6. Structure
   a. warm-up activity
   b. flow, time management
   c. guest speaker support
   d. Dean's update
   e. administrative refresher
   f. shout-outs, work anniversaries
   g. Wrap-up, preview next month and highlight extra-credit activities

Leveling Up: Discuss at your Tables

At your table discuss the following questions below. Please capture the ideas on the worksheet.

1. What meeting guidelines can you set to encourage connection?

2. How can you create a space where attendees can be vulnerable and even wrong?

3. How can virtual meetings be ideal spaces for connection?

In Closing…

1. Reflection
    a. What is something you can do this week to create connections with colleagues in your meetings?
    b. Who can you partner with to help you transform your meetings?

1. Next steps
    a. Share attendance list with contact information
    b. Make a connection
    c. Find your person!