



A Facilitator's Guide

A strategy for getting to the heart of what matters most

UNPLUG'D

Canadian Education Summit

AUGUST 5-7, 2011

The first UnPlug'd event was planned for Canadian Educators. The summit, its stories and powerful essays are touching the lives of participants and educators across Canada due to the committed efforts of a core group of planners and facilitators:

Zoe Branigan–Pipe
Alec Couros
Tom Fullerton
Ben Hazzard
William Kierstead

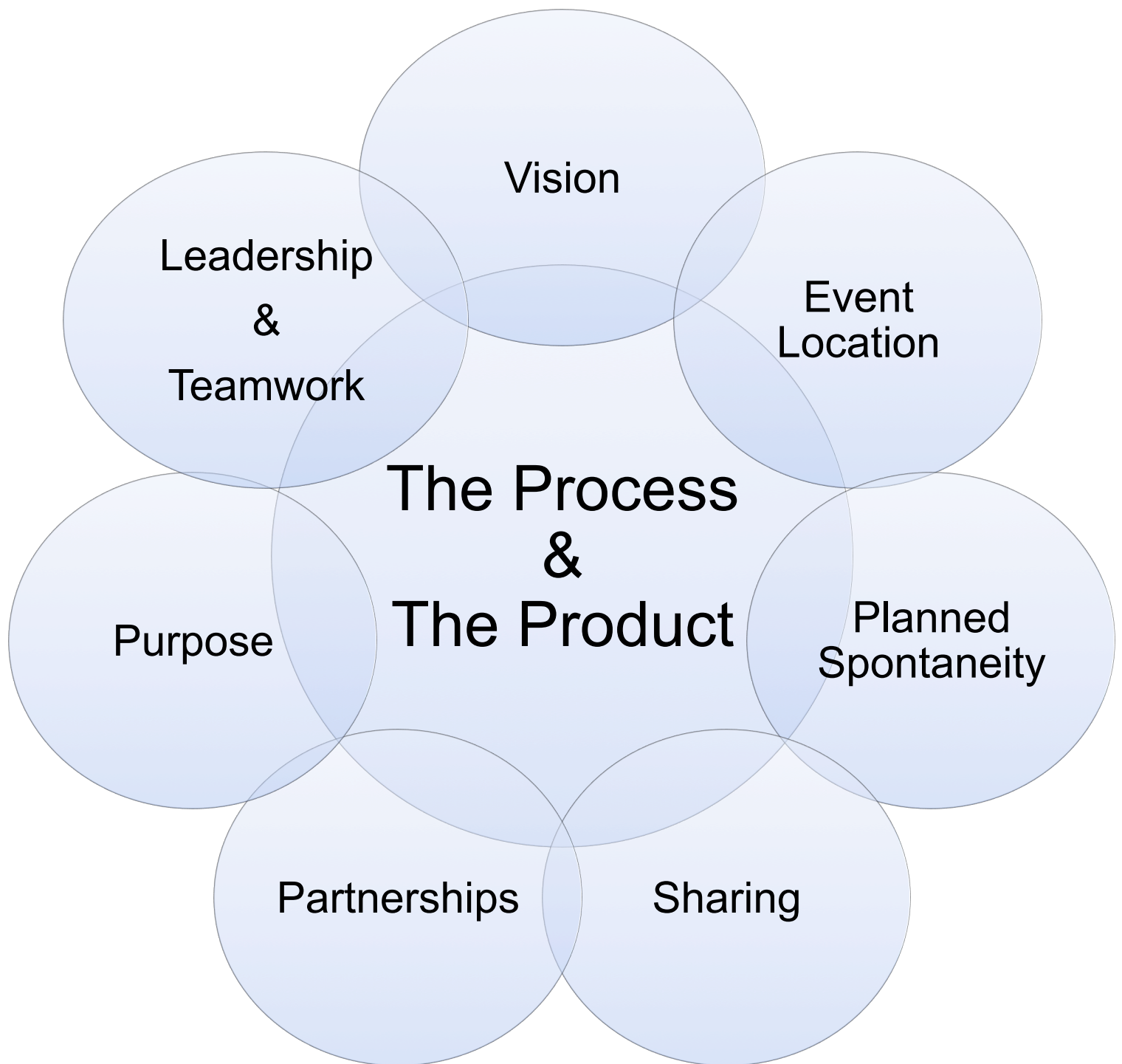
Darren Kuropatwa
Rodd Lucier
Todd Lucier
Kelly Power
Dean Shareski

Collaborative authorship sits at the core of the UnPlug'd experience. Invited participants brought with them diverse backgrounds, knowledge, professional experience and personal stories to share. We created a framework for celebrating the wisdom of the collective.

Our UnPlug'd experience led participants to write, edit, and publish “*Why BLANK Matters*”, a document focused on what matters most in education.

We designed a PROCESS to bring this PRODUCT to life, but the very PROCESS is a PRODUCT itself.

This guide is our attempt to share our PROCESS as a PRODUCT.



Vision



The vision of the innagural *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* held during August, 2011 evolved to include:

- **Bringing together** networked Canadian educators, who through their professional practice demonstrated wisdom, passion and a deep concern about what it means to be a teacher, a learner and a change agent;
- **Disconnecting** from the Internet, cell phones while forging deeper connections with one another;
- **Sharing** stories, essays and personal insights;
- **Recording**, posting videos of attendee stories;
- **Publishing** the collected works of the group and sharing it widely with professional educators;
- **Having fun**, getting to know one another in a natural environment enjoying recreation and social activities: laughing, singing, embracing and

*"If a teacher thinks in the forest,
does he/she make a sound?"*

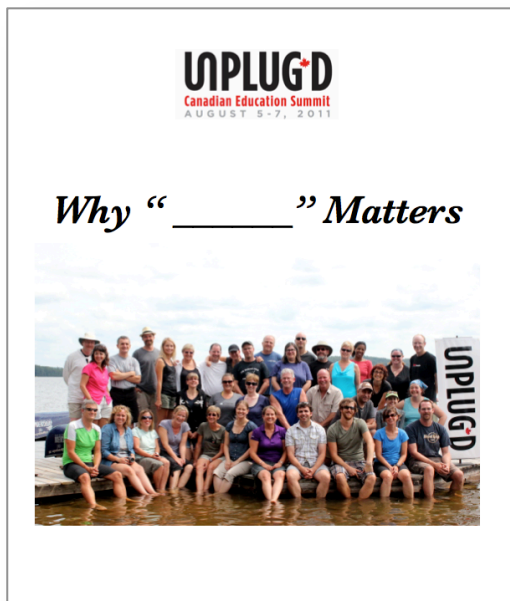
Key components in establishing a vision:

- Think deeply about things you are passionate about
- Share your ideas with others
- Reflect on barriers to sharing
- Engage collaborators by understanding their motivations and skills

Items for reflection:

- What is your vision?
- Can you clearly articulate your vision to others?
- How does your vision meet the needs of your professional associates?
- Are there trusted others who might help refine your vision and help carry it forward?

Purpose



The main purpose of an *UnPlug'd event* is to create the conditions that allow inspired professionals to share stories and personal experiences; to consolidate thinking about what matters most in your profession; and to share the outcomes widely.

At the *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* participants shared their passionate views through story-telling and writing. Each participant came prepared with a 200-400 word essay on “*Why BLANK Matters*” as well as a 3-5 minute personal story related to the theme chosen. Essays were peer-reviewed and revised during the summit.

The edited essays and video recordings of stories were published in a collaborative publication and made widely available on the World Wide Web.

Key components in establishing purpose:

- Reflect on personal and professional learning
- Establish connections with others
- Share stories of small scale innovation with colleagues
- Transform relationships and strengthen ties
- Go deep with ideas
- Appreciate what it means to be part of a larger professional group
- Publish the collective wisdom of the group

Items for reflection:

- What is your main purpose for bringing people together?
- Who needs to be there – What voices need to be heard?
- What will your theme be?
- How will you facilitate the sharing of passion & knowledge?
- How will the group's thinking and learning be collected and distributed?

Leadership & Teamwork



An *UnPlug'd* event requires bringing together a planning team with an inspiring shared objective, to work in harmony making use of the skills, talents and abilities of each individual to the ultimate benefit of your professional association.

The *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* engaged a committed team for a full year. Monthly meetings took place on-line. Meetings became more frequent closer to the summit date.

An *UnPlug'd* event happens through deliberate planning and teamwork.

Key components in establishing an effective team:

- Establish a project lead
- Decide on sub-committees related to the event
 - Communications & Media
 - Transportation & Accommodations
 - Product development
 - Facilitation
 - Participant registration
 - Finances
- Hold monthly e-meetings to share progress on group goals
- Document all meetings in a collaborative online environment

Items for reflection:

- How will you develop a team with varying strengths?
- What are the skills needed by members of your team?
- How will information be shared?
- What format will be used for meetings and how will you track the group's progress?

Event Location



An *UnPlug'd* event ideally takes place without the distractions of technology and outside communications.

The *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* took place at [Northern Edge Algonquin](#), an award-winning off-the-grid nature retreat near Algonquin Park in Ontario where 3G cell service is unavailable and Internet access is used for emergencies only.

Disconnect to Connect: The name of the event made it clear that the expectation was for participants to unplug. The focus was on spending quality time with educators from across Canada sharing the experience and the learning that bubbled forth.

It takes little time for most people to adjust to being unplugged, and it makes a distinct difference.

Key components in establishing an effective location:

- Choose a location that is “off-the-grid”(no Internet access, no cell service)
- Encourage participants to leave their Internet connected devices at home
- Find a setting that can foster relationship building through recreational and social activities

Items for reflection:

- Which setting can best provide participants with rich experiences?
- How will you ensure “unplugging” leads to engagement?
- How will emergency communication be made available to/from participants?

Participant Engagement



An *UnPlug'd* event invites participation from a committed group of change agents.

The *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* included a geographically diverse group of Canadian educators spanning elementary, secondary, post-secondary, administration and parental roles.

Gender, age, ethnic diversity were also considered.

Each attendee invested time and effort in the completion of pre-event homework:

- Creating a participant profile page as a way to introduce themselves to one another.
- Preparing a 3-5 minute personal story related to their written theme. Stories were later shared in small groups and some were retold and recorded for sharing online.
- Writing a 200-400 word essay filling in the blank in “Why _____ Matters”. At UnPlug'd, each essay was offered for peer revision in a small group prior to its inclusion in the group's culminating publication.

Key components to establish participant engagement:

- Invite committed change agents from your professional group who would be willing to embrace new opportunities to think, learn and share
- Provide the opportunity to co-author a publication and consider other opportunities for each individual to contribute to outcomes
- Include team-building, recreation and social activities that provide opportunities for creativity, adventure, reflection

Items for reflection:

- Who will you invite? How will you invite them?
- How will you ensure diversity among participants?
- How might you involve attendees in co-authorship?
- How will you incorporate shared experiences to support the emergence of dynamic groups?

Planned Spontaneity



UNPLUG'D 2011 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS		
Thursday, August 4th 2011	Saturday, August 6th 2011	Sunday, August 7th 2011
5:30 pm MindShare Learning UnPlug'd Tweetup (Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto)	7:30 - 9:00 am Recreation Opportunities	7:30 - 9:00 am Recreation Opportunities
7:00 pm Official Welcome (Westin)	8:30 - 9:30 am Breakfast	8:30 - 9:30 am Breakfast
Friday, August 5th 2011 SUMMIT BEGINS	9:45 - 10:15 am Large Group Meeting #2	9:30 - 11:30 am Large Group Meeting #2
8:00 am Arrive at Union Station, Toronto	10:15 - 12:00 pm Home Group Meeting #2	11:30 pm Baggage Loading
8:30 am Ontario Northland Train Departs for South River (Lunch provided)	12:00 - 1:00 pm Meal Time	12:00 - 1:00 pm Meal Time
12:40 pm Arrive South River	2:00 - 3:30 pm Home Group Meeting #3	1:00 pm Transportation to Toronto
1:20 - 2:00 pm Arrive Northern Edge Algonquin site	4:00 - 6:00 pm Recreation Opportunities	
2:00 - 3:45 pm Tours & Unpacking	6:00 pm Mealtime	
3:45 pm Group Photo	8:00 - 8:45 pm Large Group Meeting #3	
4:00 pm Large Group Meeting #1		
5:00 pm Home Group Meeting #1		
6:00 pm Mealtime		
7:30 - 9:30 pm Recreation Opportunities		



What to bring:

- bring your Why 'Blank' Matters (12 paper copies and on a USB drive)
- bring your Personal Narrative
- camera
- long sleeves and long pants
- bug spray
- sunscreen
- 2 pairs of comfortable, outdoor shoes
- rain gear
- clothes for activities you may choose to participate in (biking, swimming, yoga, canoeing/kayaking, running...)
- toiletries (no hairdryers)

In case of emergency, friends and colleagues can leave messages for you at 888.383.8320 or via email to NorthernEdgeAlgonquin@gmail.com

An *UnPlug'd* event requires a flexible plan and structure.

The *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* began with a hotel reception on Thursday evening. Friday morning attendees met at Union Station to board a conference rail car on Ontario Northland Train en route to Algonquin Park. Ice-breaking discussions were facilitated en route. At [Northern Edge Algonquin](#) site tours, unpacking, recreational and creative activities were shared. Our first whole group gathering set the tone for the sharing of narrative stories over dinner followed by an evening paddle and campfire.

Saturday involved a full day of collaborative small group discussions as teams worked to revise participant essays. Sunrise yoga, solo paddling, and whole group meetings rounded out the day.

Sunday allowed for a wrap-up of events as well as one final group sharing session.

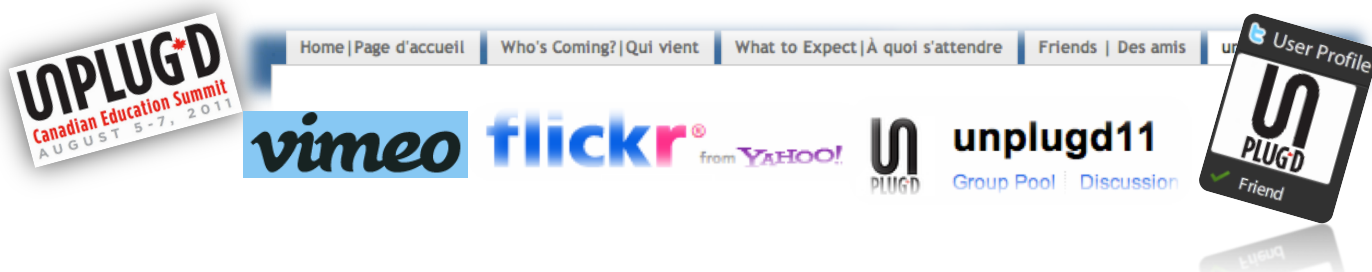
Key components in a flexible structure:

- Plan every moment paying attention to time required for each activity
- Make participants aware of the schedule of events prior to and during the event – Encourage healthy choices by participants (I.e., breaks matter!)
- Take advantage of sharing opportunities during mealtimes
- Stay true to the schedule of events, but allow for serendipity and opportunity.

Items for reflection:

- How much time is available? How much of the time will be structured?
- Will your timeframe allow the completion of a culminating product?
- How will you leverage recreational activities for team building?
- What outside facilitation/hosting of activities is required?

Sharing



An *UnPlug'd* event provides the opportunity for many conversations, stories and ideas that will resonate with participants from the UnPlug'd experience.

During the *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* the online publication validated the deep thinking of all participants. The collective wisdom of the group will live on through the release of the Creative Commons licensed publication "*UnPlug'd: Why BLANK Matters*".

Throughout the summit, participants took photographs, made journal entries, recorded videos and captured audio to document key summit activities. Participants later authored blog posts and hosted live online meetings, providing participants and outside observers with the opportunity to reflect and share in the *UnPlug'd* experience.

Key components in archiving the learning:

- Consider the different ways participants might capture and archive the UnPlug'd experience
- Consider what might be shared and whether or not a Creative Commons license will be useful in making your work more accessible
- Decide how the work of the group might be collected (I.e., Group blog, Flickr, tags)
- Encourage attendees to share their photos/videos after the event
- Create a common tag to be used for published content

Items for reflection:

- How will you tell the story of your event as it unfolds?
- Who will capture audio, video, photos, words?
- How will your online media be found by participants?
- Will other professionals with a shared interest be able to discover your work?

Partnerships



An *UnPlug'd* event benefits from the identification and involvement of suitable sponsors and partners.

The *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* was coordinated by a team of volunteers, limiting the costs for participants for transportation and accommodations. The generous participation of sponsors made it possible to offer a high quality experience at a reasonable rate for individuals. Ideally, we would have been able to offer support in funding transportation for our most distant colleagues.

Involving suitable sponsors for an *UnPlug'd* event makes such an event economically viable.

Key components in establishing partnerships:

- Consider the costs for the participants of event
- Contact sponsors who may have a vested interest in your group
- Some partners may be able to offer in-kind services in place of finances
- Ensure partners and sponsors fully support your Unplug'd agenda and intended product(s)

Items for reflection:

- Do you feel the need for sponsors?
- How might sponsors benefit from participation?
- What existing relationships might you access?
- How could you include sponsors?

Appendices

These items are being provided as samples from the *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit*.

- A year in planning
- Schedule of Events Brochure
- Principles of Unplugging
- Planning organizer for your event

Appendix 1: A year in planning

1 year before event

- Establish team with common vision (3-4 members)
- Establish identity: Unplug'd: Canadian Education Summit
- Begin outlining details of event
- Establish a domain and logo
- Begin online documentation in a shared environment (e.g., Google Docs)
- Establish roles
- Decide on end-product (artifacts)
- Establish subcommittees
 - Budget (sponsorship, funding)
 - Facilitation (summit events, schedule, group leaders)
 - Transportation / accommodation
 - Liaison, partnerships, sponsors (consider attendee welcome packages)
 - Communications (web & database)
 - Content development (whitepaper framework, template for contributions, licensing and permissions)
- Discuss engagement of participants
- Short term goals listed and long term goals listed

3-6 months before event

- Monthly Team meetings held online (E.g., Skype)
- Sub-Committee reports
- Selection of participants according to criteria
- Online-call for participants sent out
- Online registration/payment procedures established
- Community account established
- Develop itinerary, schedule of events
- Confirm website details for communication purposes
- Short term and long term goals listed

1 month before event

- Sub-Committee reports
- Registration finalized
- Accommodations / transportation confirmed
- Update website details
- Update sponsor details

2 weeks before event

- Sub-committee reports
- Participants grouped according to theme/topic
- Location logistics confirmed
- Itinerary, schedule of events finalized
- Roles and responsibilities further refined
 - Project Lead
 - Hotel Arrangement
 - Hospitality
 - Communication / Media
 - Product Development
 - Signage
 - Transportation
 - Facilitation of groups
 - Funding
- Online meeting for participants to update participants (E.g., Elluminate):
 - Homework for participants
 - Create personal profile page
 - Prepare 3-5 minute narrative related to their written theme
 - Write a 200-400 word essay on theme
 - Principles of Unplugging explained
 - Accommodations/Transportation clarified
 - Recreation activities explained
 - Questions answered

During the event

- Stay true to the concept of being “unplugged”
- Brief team meetings to stay focused on tasks
- Adjustments to schedule as necessary
- Develop communal activities (structured conversations and recreational activities)

After the event

- Publish quickly
- Encourage blogging and sharing of reflections publicly
- Use the event tag/hashtag to allow conversations to continue

Appendix 2: Schedule of events

Thursday, August 4th 2011

5:30 pm
MindShare Learning UnPlug'd Tweetup
(Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto)

7:00 pm
Official Welcome (Westin)

Friday, August 5th 2011 **SUMMIT BEGINS**

8:00 am
Arrive at Union Station, Toronto

8:30 am
Ontario Northland Train Departs for
South River (Lunch provided)

12:40 pm
Arrive South River

1:20 - 2:00 pm
Arrive Northern Edge Algonquin site

2:00 - 3:45 pm
Tours & Unpacking

3:45 pm
Group Photo

4:00 pm
Large Group Meeting #1

5:00 pm
Home Group Meeting #1

6:00 pm
Mealtime

7:30 - 9:30 pm
Recreation Opportunities

Saturday, August 6th 2011

7:30 - 9:00 am
Recreation Opportunities

8:30 - 9:30 am
Breakfast

9:45 - 10:15 am
Large Group Meeting #2

10:15 - 12:00 pm
Home Group Meeting #2

12:00 - 1:00 pm
Meal Time

2:00 - 3:30 pm
Home Group Meeting #3

4:00 - 6:00 pm
Recreation Opportunities

6:00 pm
Mealtime

8:00 - 8:45 pm
Large Group Meeting #3



Sunday, August 7th 2011

7:30 - 9:00 am
Recreation Opportunities

8:30 - 9:30 am
Breakfast

9:30 - 11:30 am
Large Group Meeting #2

11:30 pm
Baggage Loading

12:00 - 1:00 pm
Meal Time

1:00 pm
Transportation to Toronto

What to bring:

- bring your Why 'Blank' Matters (12 paper copies and on a USB drive)
- bring your Personal Narrative
- camera
- long sleeves and long pants
- bug spray
- sunscreen
- 2 pairs of comfortable, outdoor shoes
- rain gear
- clothes for activities you may choose to participate in (biking, swimming, yoga, canoeing/kayaking, running...)
- toiletries (no hairdryers)

In case of emergency, friends and colleagues can leave messages for you at 888.383.8320 or via email to NorthernEdgeAlgonquin@gmail.com

Appendix 3: Principles of Unplugging

Participate Fully

- Create a personal profile page that can be linked to the event site before the summit date
- Prepare a 3-5 minute narrative related to a written theme and be ready to present it to a small group at the summit (videos can be captured for those who choose this option)
- Write a 200-400 word essay on “Why _____ Matters” and bring enough copies to the summit for sharing and peer revision in small groups

Disconnect to Connect

- Alert your family and friends that you are ‘going dark’ for the weekend

Pack to Unpack

- Bring ideas and materials ripe for massaging and reconsideration and polishing

Be yourself

- Authentic, real, vulnerable

Assume positive intent

- Consider suggested document edits in positive light

We > Me

- Recognize that the work of individuals at UnPlug’d belongs to the collective

Share

- Commit to giving your best
- Our work will be licensed to reflect openness, inviting further development

Stories matter

- Be prepared to share stories from your past as a student and as a teacher

Listen to learn

- Beyond telling stories, participants will have a richer experience if they quiet themselves to be fully attentive to what others have to share

Appendix 4: Planning Organizer

Vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your vision? • Can you clearly articulate your vision to others? • How does your vision meet the needs of your professional associates? • Are there trusted others who might help refine your vision and help carry it forward? 	
Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your main purpose for bringing people together? • Who needs to be there – what voices need to be heard? • What will your theme be? • How will you facilitate the sharing of passion & knowledge? • How will the group's thinking and learning be collected and distributed? 	
Leadership & Teamwork: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you develop a team with varying strengths? • What are the skills needed by members of your team? • How will information be shared? • What formate will be used for meetings and how will you track the group's progress? 	
Event Location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which setting can best provide participants with rich experiences? • How will you ensure “unplugging” leads to engagement? • How will emergency communication be made available to/from participants? 	
Participant Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will you invite? • How will you ensure diversity among participants? • How might you involve attendees in co-authorship? • How will you incorporate shared experiences to support the emergence of dynamic groups? 	
Planned Spontaneity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much time is available? How much of the time will be structured? • Will your timeframe allow the completion of a culminating product? • How will you leverage recreational activities for team building? • What outside facilitation/hosting of activities is required? 	

Sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will you capture the story of your event as it unfolds?• Who will capture audio, video, photos, words?• How will your online media be easily found by participants, as well as other professionals who share your interest?	
Partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you feel the need for sponsors?• How might sponsors benefit from participation?• What existing relationships might you access?• How could you include sponsors?	
Other considerations: <div></div>	



Go Ahead... Unplug!

This guide attempts to capture the key components that brought the *UnPlug'd: Canadian Education Summit* to life. We believe that an unplugged experience can yield positive outcomes in any field where ideas and relationships matter.

Feel free to contact the organizers at unplugdca@gmail.com if you have questions, or if you would like support in planning your own UnPlug'd event.

Rod

Zoe

Kelly

Ben

Todd

Creative Commons License

Re-distribution, or other use of the content in this document, should be attributed to UnPlug'd 2011.

The UnPlug'd Logo is licensed for use only within the context of sharing this work.

The UnPlug'd Logo is not licensed for the creation of derivative works.

In all cases, use of the material in this document must include a link to unplugd.ca

You are free:



to Share — to copy, distribute and transmit the work

to Remix — to adapt the work

Under the following conditions:



Attribution — You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).

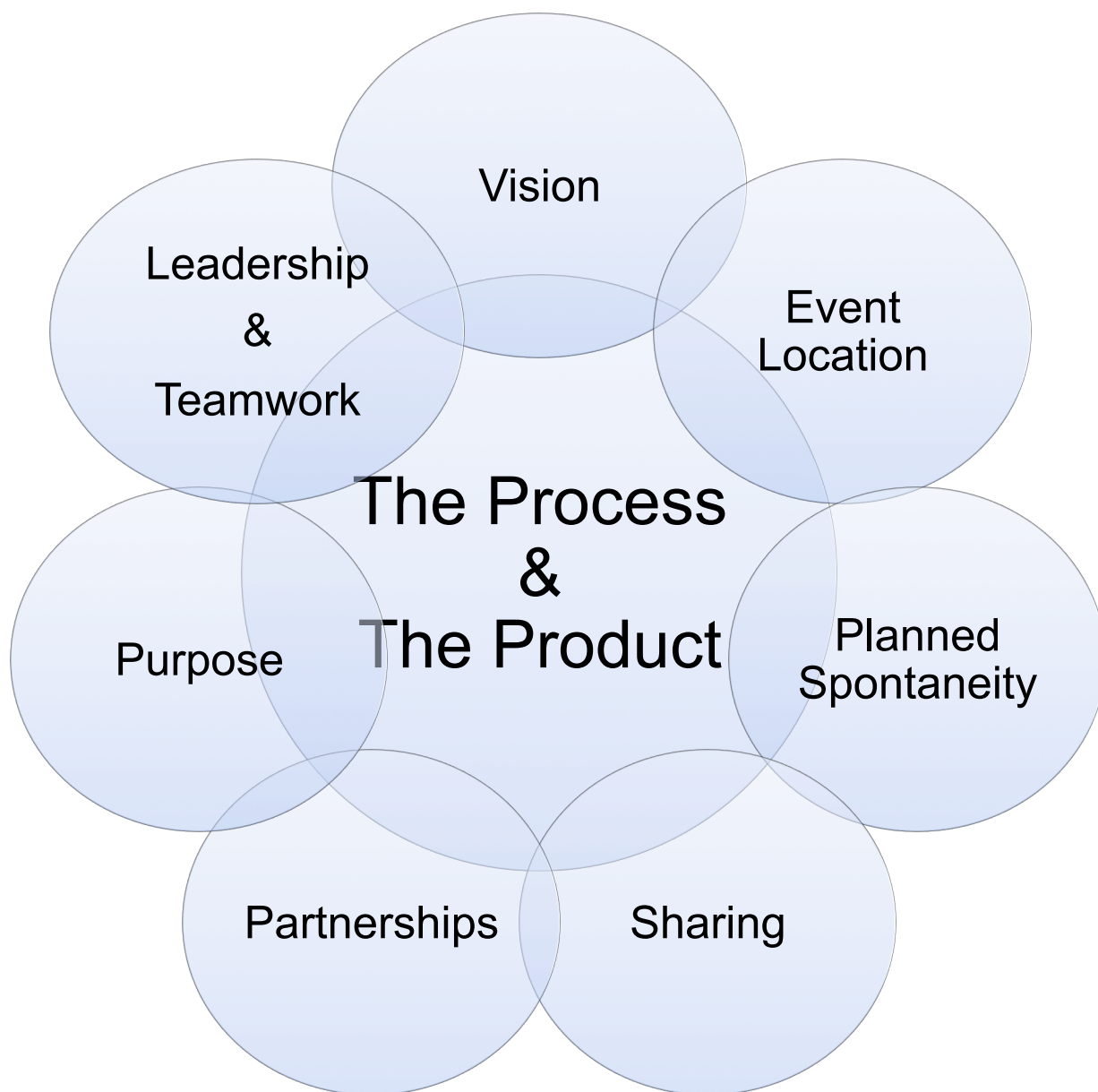


Noncommercial — You may not use this work for commercial purposes.



Share Alike — If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar licence to this one.





Envisioned, Created, and Published in Canada.

First Printing: November 2011