

## **Let's Start Thinking: A Guide to Starting Effective Professional Learning Sessions**

See our videos about how to start effective professional learning sessions: [Let's Think About This](#) and [What Does Learning Feel Like?](#)

### **Wander and Wonder**

As soon as they cross the threshold into the presentation room, participants in Beyond the Apple's Professional Learning Sessions put on their thinking caps. A series of chart boards offer invitations to think, to question, and to share responses. Each chart board has a "task" and post it notes for a response.



### **Wander (around the room) and Wonder (about what you see)**

Here are some examples of tasks in a Wandering and Wondering activity:

- Why are most pencils in the world are yellow? Record your ideas on a post it.
- Go outside for one minute, close your eyes, listen to the sounds, and concentrate on what the sounds mean. Record your ideas on a post it.
- This squiggle is a part of something larger. Complete the squiggle on the post it. (See [What Does This Squiggle Mean?](#))
- Punctuate this sentence: Look out Bill said Mom a car is coming
- This is an ambiguous image - what do you see? (See [What Does Learning Feel Like?](#))

Wandering and wondering is a welcome relief from the traditional ice breaker format, where participants engage in a “getting to know you” activity.

Been there . . . done that . . . too many times!

With a Wander and Wonder format, participants not only get to know each other, they think and have conversations about thinking. What better way to set the tone for learning?

After 10 – 15 minutes, participants are invited to chat about learning, what it feels like, and how that feeling leads to new discoveries.

Here are some of the points that come forward:

- the wondering activities create a feeling a dissonance
- the feeling of dissonance can lead to “I don’t know!” or “I don’t really care!”  
OR  
the dissonance leads to searching for an answer
- the search for an answer begins with background knowledge  
AND  
expands to questions directed at other participants
- when an answer becomes evident, there’s a searching process to ensure the answer matches all elements of the question

So, the stage is set, let’s start learning!

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