

# REFLECTION

## – Essential tool in soft skills development

### WHAT IS REFLECTION?

- Reflection is a conscious pause to examine one's own and others' emotions, thoughts, and actions.
- Its purpose is to learn from past experiences and continuously improve processes.

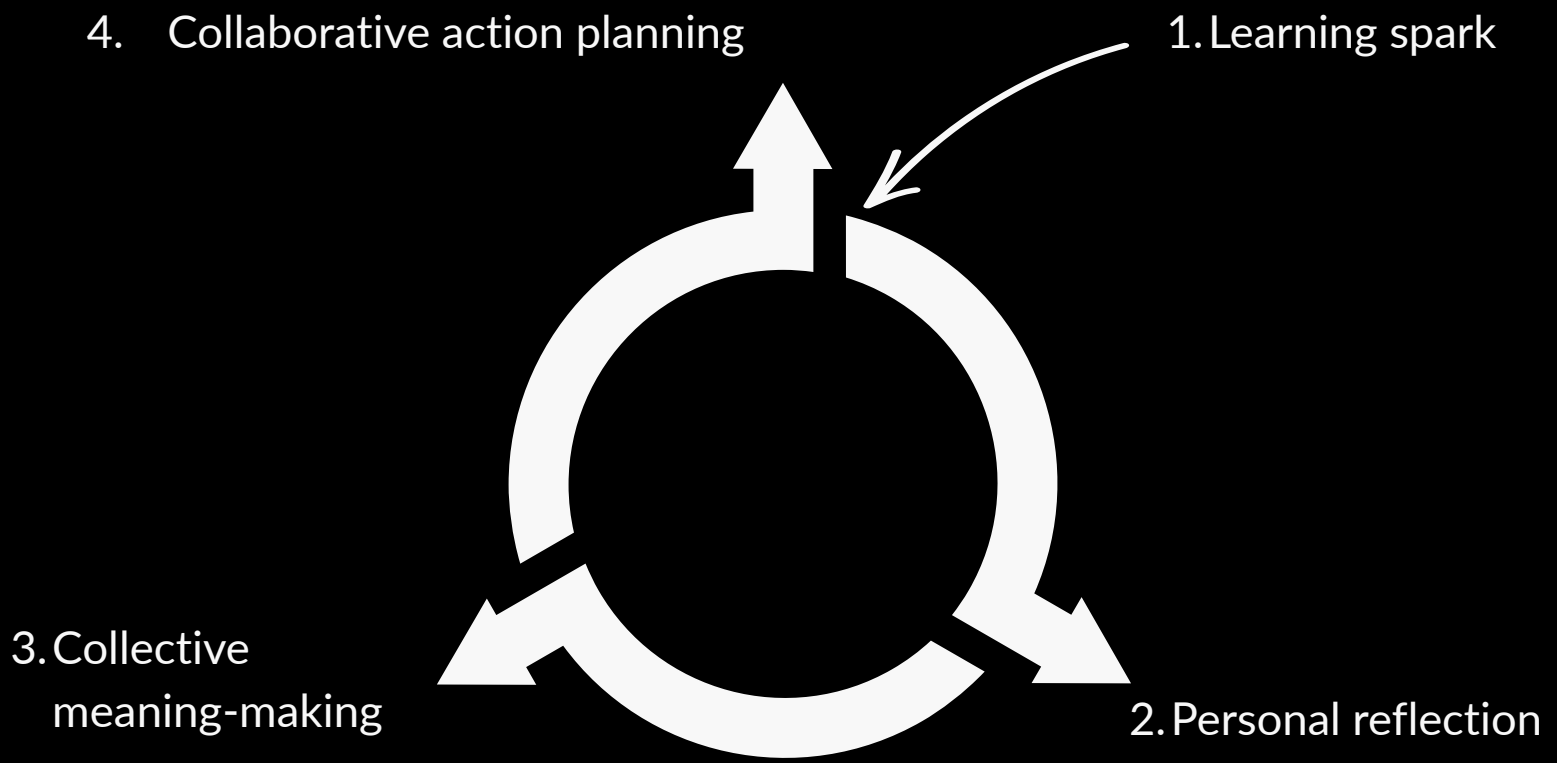
### WHAT RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT LEARNING COMPLEX SKILLS?

- The brain contains specialized systems that enable individuals to understand and simulate the intentions, emotions, and actions of others
- Research in *social neuroscience* has shown that interaction between people activates neural processes related to empathy, perspective-taking, and behavioral simulation.
- Through these mechanisms humans learn complex behaviors by observing, interpreting, and engaging with others.
- In these processes learning is not simply the transfer of information from one person to another. Rather, meaning is co-constructed through interaction.
- This dynamic is particularly important for soft skills, which involve interpreting social situations and responding appropriately within them.

### WHY REFLECTION IS THE KEY FOR SCALABLE SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT?

- For new behaviors to become stable patterns, the brain must repeatedly activate the neural processes associated with them in meaningful contexts.
- Simply understanding a concept is rarely enough. Instead the brain must engage in reflection, emotional processing, and action repeatedly in real situations. Attention, emotional engagement, and repeated activation all play critical roles in strengthening neural pathways and supporting lasting behavioral change.
- Learning approaches that activate these mechanisms therefore have a much higher likelihood of producing durable change than approaches based primarily on information delivery.

# The Reflective Cycle



<p><b>Learning Spark</b></p>	<p>It's typically a short microlearning stimulus such as a video, scenario, or story introducing a relevant theme. The aim is not to deliver complete instruction but to trigger curiosity, attention, and emotional engagement.</p>
<p><b>Personal reflection</b></p>	<p>Participants consider their own reactions, experiences, and assumptions related to the topic. Reflection strengthens self-awareness and encourages individuals to observe their own behavioral patterns.</p>
<p><b>Collective meaning-making</b></p>	<p>Next comes collective meaning-making, in which participants engage in dialogue with colleagues. Through conversation they share perspectives, compare experiences, and gradually develop a deeper and more shared understanding of the topic. At this stage the social brain becomes strongly engaged and neural synchronization within teams can begin to emerge.</p>
<p><b>Collaborative action</b></p>	<p>Teams translate insights into concrete behavioral experiments or commitments that can be applied in daily work. This step ensures that learning moves beyond reflection into observable behavioral change.</p>

## KEY REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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SCIENCE OF SOFT SKILLS LEARNING

Real Science  
Real Learning  
Real Results.