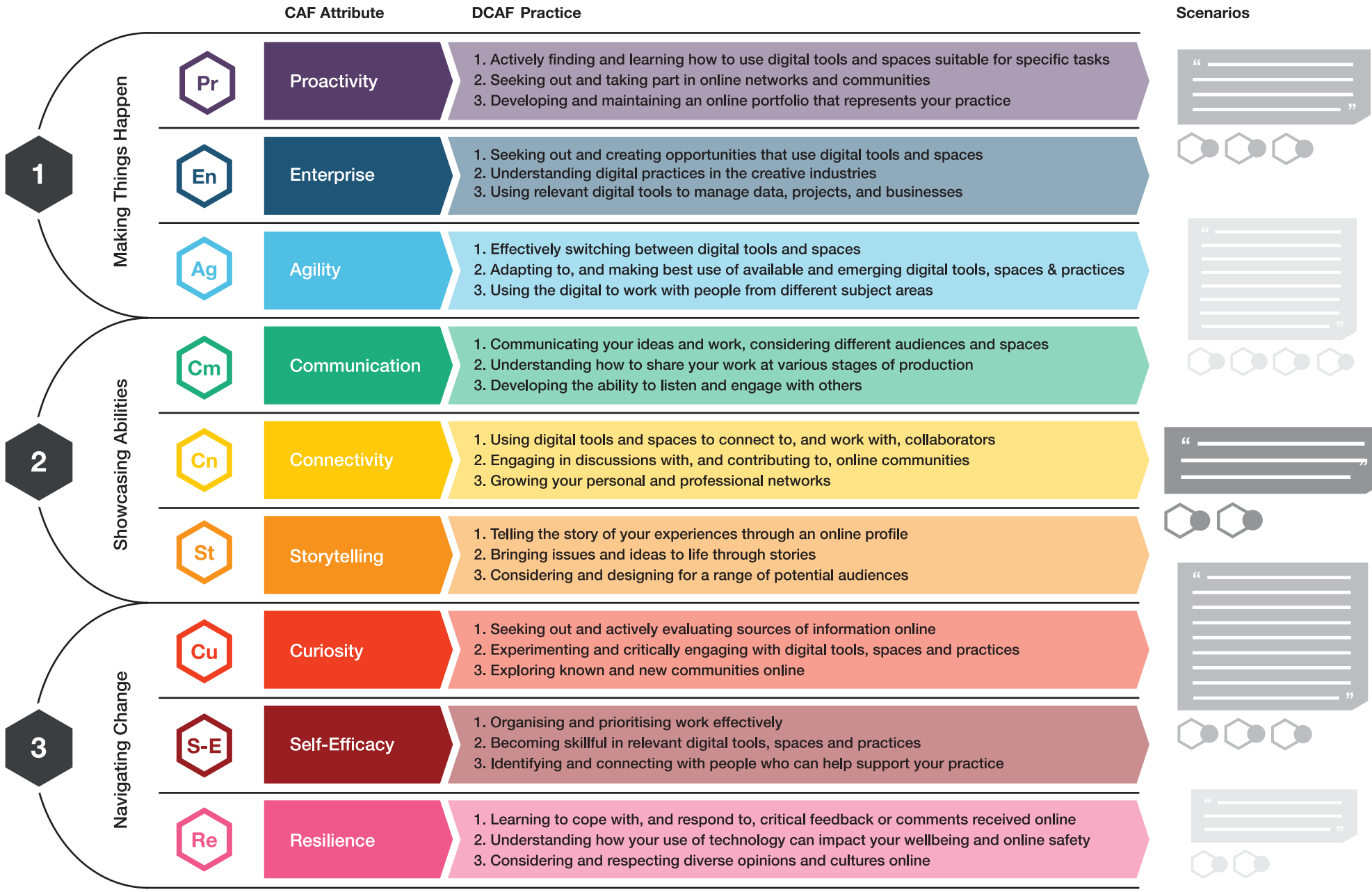
ual: university of the arts london

Digital **Creative Attributes** Handbook

A staff guide to using the DCAF for teaching and learning

dcaf.myblog.arts.ac.uk

Digital Creative Attributes Framework



Digital **Creative Attributes** Framework

The Digital Creative Attributes Framework (DCAF) is an expression of the UAL Creative Attributes Framework (CAF), which can be found by searching for 'CAF' on arts.ac.uk. It has been developed by the Teaching and Learning Exchange through workshops and focus groups with a range of UAL staff and students. The DCAF provides a shared language around digital which can be used across colleges and subject areas. The framework focuses on how we support the development of creative and collaborative practices in the digital environment. Importantly, it is a tool to develop teaching and reflect on learning, not a policy or a check-list. You can find a glossary of DCAF terms at the back of this handbook.

Technologies change quickly, but the attributes we develop through creative and collaborative work in the digital are more stable. The DCAF provides a set of digitally inflected attributes that are valuable for students to develop during their time at UAL. It is underpinned by a firm belief in the importance of criticality for understanding and making best use of digital technologies, which should not be understood as neutral tools and spaces, but as part of the fabric of our social and political lives.

The DCAF can be used to:

- design teaching
- evaluate and articulate the value of teaching
- reflect on learning and digital practices

This handbook and associated website provide examples of how the DCAF can be used for these different purposes.

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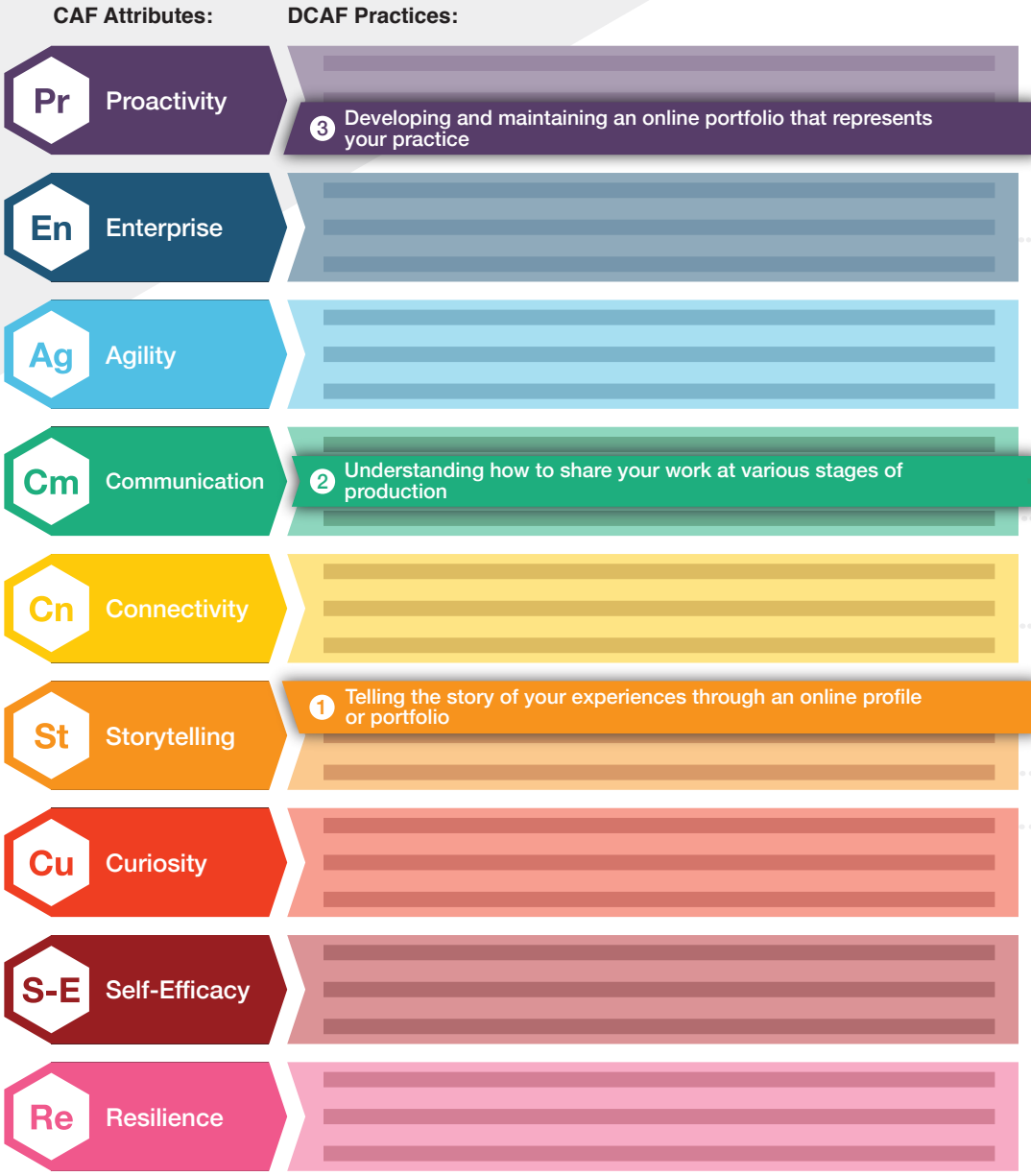
Using the DCAF



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Designing Teaching

Using the DCAF as a guide when designing your teaching will help you:

- make it clear which digital attributes your teaching aims to develop
- communicate the value of engaging with the digital aspects of your course
- facilitate the development of digital practices that resonate with students and will be useful for years to come

When using the DCAF to design teaching, you can start by identifying the attributes you want your students to develop and designing activities or teaching scenarios to facilitate this.

UAL staff members have provided some example teaching scenarios for this handbook, but please remember they are just examples! We know everyone's teaching is different, and hope you will generate scenarios that make sense to you. There is no fixed length for teaching scenarios - they could range from a compact format similar to a Learning Outcome or a longer description, like a unit brief.

"As part of their assessment, a student has to tell the story of their working process through a portfolio or sketchbook. It must make sense to an audience that is not familiar with their work."

- Jessica Saunders,
Programme Director. Fashion Programme, London College of Fashion

Using the DCAF

Evaluating and Articulating Teaching

When using the DCAF to evaluate and articulate teaching, you can start by thinking of a current teaching scenario and mapping it to relevant DCAF practices.

"A student is doing a project about a contentious topic. They need to be sure they're not drawing on misleading information, and are representing diverse perspectives through their research."

- Tobias Revell,
Course Leader for MA Interaction Design Communication
London College of Communication

We have also developed a simple DCAF survey that students can take before and after undertaking a project or unit. It can be used to track students' confidence and competence and highlight their progress. **You can access this from the DCAF website.**

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Using the DCAF

Reflecting on Learning and Online Engagement

We know that it's sometimes difficult for students to identify the value of what they have learned. The DCAF helps students to articulate the digital practices and attributes they have developed during their course, without getting too focused on how 'good' they are with a specific technology.

When using the DCAF as a reflective tool for students, you can start by mapping the digital activities they have undertaken to the DCAF and ask them to discuss which attributes they have developed.

DCAF helps:

- facilitate constructive discussion around the value and role of digital practices
- students identify which attributes they would like to develop further
- students build confidence in incorporating digital practices into their creative and scholarly work
- facilitate healthy reflection around identity and wellbeing in digital contexts

Take a look at the DCAF website for suggested activities to engage students in structured reflection on their learning.

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Scenarios

"A student needs to collaborate online with peers from a different course at another campus. One of the group members lives overseas. They need to meet, plan and carry out group work using digital tools."

Cm 2 Cm 3 Cn 1 Re 1

"A group of fine art students need to fund and promote their degree show. They create a Kickstarter campaign and make a Facebook event page to draw attention to the event and raise money to make it happen."

Pr 1 Pr 2 En 1

"A student wants to execute a data visualisation project in Python. They get a basic coding introduction as part of their course, but need to top this up with self-directed learning online."

Cu 2 S-E 2

Glossary

Digital tools

A digital tool is used to get a job done. It is used by an individual and has no social dimension.

Example: Microsoft Word

This is a tool used to write a document individually offline.

Digital spaces

A digital space is somewhere you go to connect, spend time or collaborate with other people. It will involve having a digital identity of some kind.

Example: Google Docs

If a student invites people to co-write with them online, the word processing document changes from a tool to a space. The student knows they are co-present with other people as they write and edit together.

Digital practices

Digital practices are the ways we use digital tools and spaces. The same digital tool or space can usually support a range of practices. It is always more valuable to describe your digital practices rather than name-check a list of technologies.

Example: Photoshop

Photoshop can facilitate many practices, including: typography, design, photography, fine art or simply processing a batch of files.

Example: Social Media

Social media can be used to connect, promote, disrupt, discuss, or we might simply use it as a source of inspiration and information without posting anything.

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- DCAF Experts Reference Group
- Student focus group participants

Produced by the Teaching and Learning Exchange, University of the Arts London

Designed by Conor Rigby

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