

Interdisciplinary Team Toolbox

The Interdisciplinary Team Toolbox is a method collection to support interdisciplinary teamwork. These methods are organized by four key aspects of interdisciplinarity:

- * they structure the **#onboarding** time,
- * favor the development of **#commonalities**,
- * enable **#cooperation**,
- * and help deal with **#differences**.

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Team Profile Matrix



Mapping profiles of each team members on a twodimensional matrix.

Goal: Mapping the diversity of team profiles and introducing individual profiles. **When:** Onboarding, at first encounter of a team or new project.

Preparation

- (1) provide whiteboard or flipchart
- (2) based on participant information and later intended project work, identify two relevant binary parameters of distinction [e.g. prev. experience "Academia/Industry" vs project role: "Designer/Developer"]

Instructions

- (1) facilitator draws a 2-parameter orthogonal matrix on whiteboard
- (2) ask each participant to introduce themselves and
- (3) position themselves on the matrix

Sources/Inspirations: Superdot Team Matrix, superdot.studio. Image: Stable Diffusion.

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Extended Team Contract



Teams jointly complete an „Extended Team Contract“ template, discussing on their purpose, goals and responsibilities. They agree on procedures for information sharing, decision making, problem solving and relationship-buidling. **Goal:** shorten the time teams spend forming and storming by clarifying purpose and process. **When:** To be completed by the whole team initial to the collaboration. It can be preceded by the Team Story method, to start with a common vision of the process.

Preparation

[1] print one template per team

Instructions

- [1] provide enough time for teams to discuss and jointly complete
- [2] all members sign the vision statement
- [3] define a later date for a review of the charter, as a living document

Sources/Inspirations „Team Charter“ by <http://uab.ca/viper>; numerous team contracts

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Team Story



This method allows different team members to retrospectively look at their joint process. **Goal:** build a joint narrative of team process. **When:** in retrospect at the end of group process.

Preparation

- [1] Provide wide format, wall-scale paper and markers

Instructions

- [1] In group: draw a simple timeline, indicating the start and end dates
- [2] In group: further structure the timeline, e.g. into project parts, organizational levels, or process phases.
- [3] individually identify key events (even those that hindered the process)
- [4] based on the individual elements, the group jointly creates a storywall picture of their process, representing their group's collective understanding.
- [5] [optional] add the main lessons learned

Sources/Inspirations Wülser G 2020. Storywall. td-net toolbox profile [10]. www.transdisciplinarity.ch/toolbox. licensed under CC BY 4.0 by Andres Wanner. Image: Stable Diffusion.

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Reflecting Team



A method allowing for having and witnessing open conversations **Goal:** critical reflections in teams. **When:** During ongoing team projects, or in situations of conflict. Also in retrospect, at the end of a project.

Preparation

- [1] Organise an undisturbed space
- [2] Explain procure, obtain consent from all involved

Instructions

- [1] Group splits into 2 sections, according to disciplines
- [2] The reflecting team [section 1] sits in a circle. The others [section 2] turn their back to the circle, so that they can listen, but not interfere.
- [3] Section 1 share their thoughts about the group process.
- [4] Section 2 process their thoughts about section 1's reflections.
- [5] Both sections come together to debrief.

Sources/Inspirations: Cox et al (2003). Use of the reflecting team process in the training of group workers. Image: Stable Diffusion. Cardset version 0.9 Andres.Wanner@hslu.ch

Playful Fiction



This method uses roleplay and improvisation techniques to (re-)enact relevant team situations **Goal:** to stimulate conversations among different perspectives. **When:** During ongoing team projects, used to explore a personal dilemma, replay a live experience, or prepare for an upcoming conversation.

Preparation

- (1) Prepare a scenario and situation to be explored (replay or preparation)
- (2) Define two to several roles for acting out this situation.

Instructions

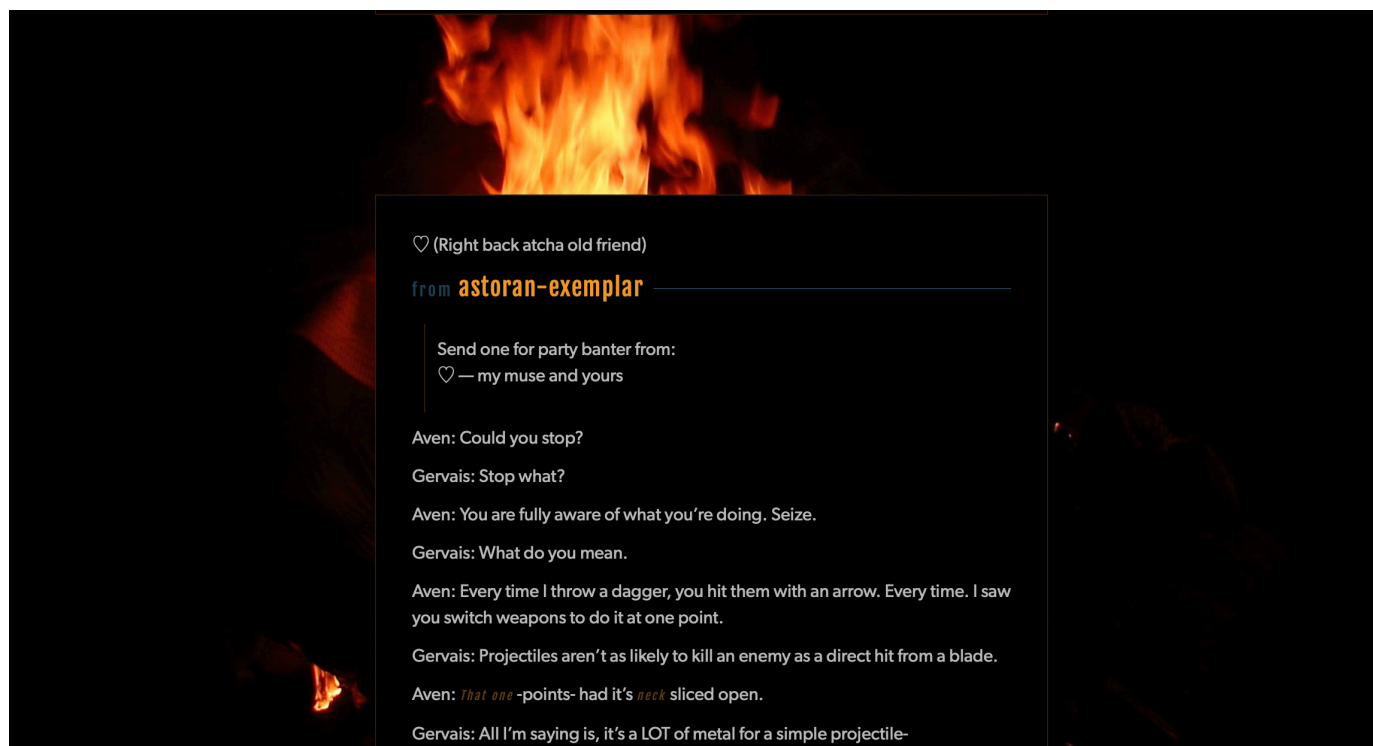
- (1) Ask participants to take a role. Give them 5-10min to prepare it.
- (2) Give people a name tag. Ask them to sit or stand. Use props, lighting etc
- (3) start acting in first person.
- (4) Stop when something significant has happened. Reflect in the group.
- (5) When a suggestion comes up, ask the person to play out the suggestion.

Sources/Inspirations: Larsen & Strøbech [2018]. Innovation Theatre; Larsen & Friis, P. [2018].

Improvising in Research: Drawing on Theatre Practices. Image: Buur&Larsen 2010.

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Novella Play



This method stimulates conversation among different perspectives. It allows exploring a constellation of different stakeholders. **When:** at the beginning, or during an ongoing collaboration

Preparation

- [1] Prepare a scenario and situation to be explored.
- [2] Create a people card for each stakeholder, with attributes and intentions.

Instructions

- [1] Each player receives a people card and prepares to play their character.
- [2] Write a prose description of how your character enters the scenario.
- [3] Then pass the turn to the next person who will continue writing the story from their own character's perspective. Describe impressions and thoughts. What do they notice? How do they interpret what is said?
- [5] Reflect on the dialogue in the group, when completed.

Sources/Inspirations: Use with reference to online roleplay communities, method via Anne Louise Ejlersen, SDU, Denmark. Picture: from Anne Louise Ejlersen's archived rp blog.

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Nomadic Concepts



A heuristic tool for exchanging understandings of concepts across disciplinary, professional and cultural boundaries. **Goal:** Getting a broader conceptual apparatus for problem framing and knowledge production.

When: before or at an early stage of a collaboration

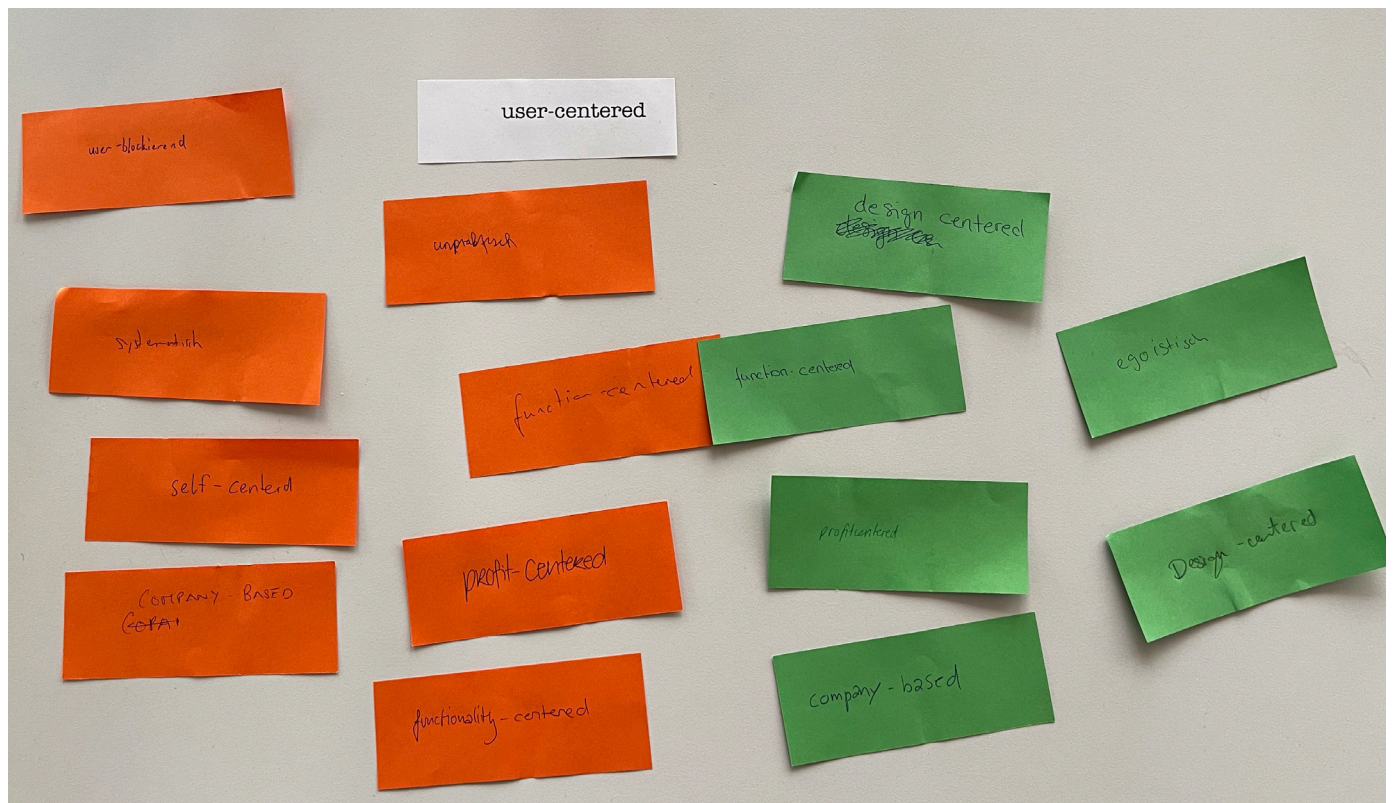
Preparation

- [1] identify concepts relevant to the participants, broad enough to be of importance to all disciplines represented. e.g. „digital“, „virtual“, „data“, „idea“, „prototype“, „creative“.
- [2] select and print core texts on respective concepts

Instructions

- [1] In groups of 2-3, articulate your respective definition of the concept, discuss differences and reflect on its use in various communities.
- [2] read a short provided text, defining or referring to the concept. Discuss again. Pay attention to new insights.

Opposites



A playful approach for exploring concepts across disciplines. **Goal:** Insights into how widely concepts can be understood within and across disciplines. **When:** early stage of collaboration, ideally in a class or in a group of several project teams.

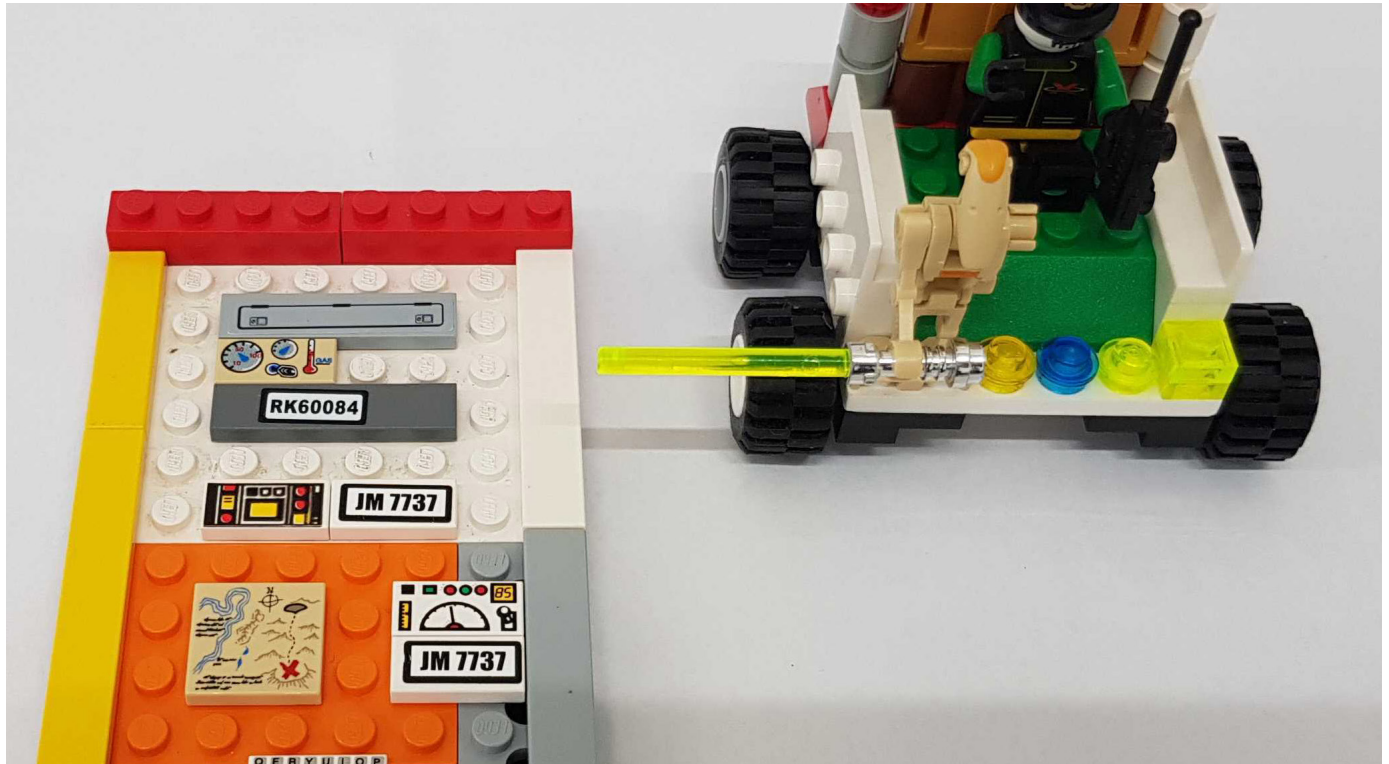
Preparation

- (1) identify 6 relevant adjectives, that may have ambivalent meaning (e.g. user-centered, virtual, interactive, immersive)
- (2) print copies of the adjectives on small strips of paper. Colour-code the papers for respective disciplines (e.g. green for developers).

Instructions

- (1) facilitator hands out 6 different paper strips per participant
- (2) articulate the opposite of the adjective, write it on the back of the strip.
time pressure, 20 secs per adjective.
- (3) all: cluster responses, grouped by adjective and colour/discipline
- (4) all: review the clustered responses, discuss surprising findings

Project Builder



A hands-on approach, using bricks to represent the same project work from different angles, and reflect on possibly different understandings of the common endeavour. **Goal:** Insights on different disciplinary perspectives on a current project. **When:** Intermediate stage within a project collaboration, during an ongoing project.

Preparation

[1] Provide a box of assorted building bricks

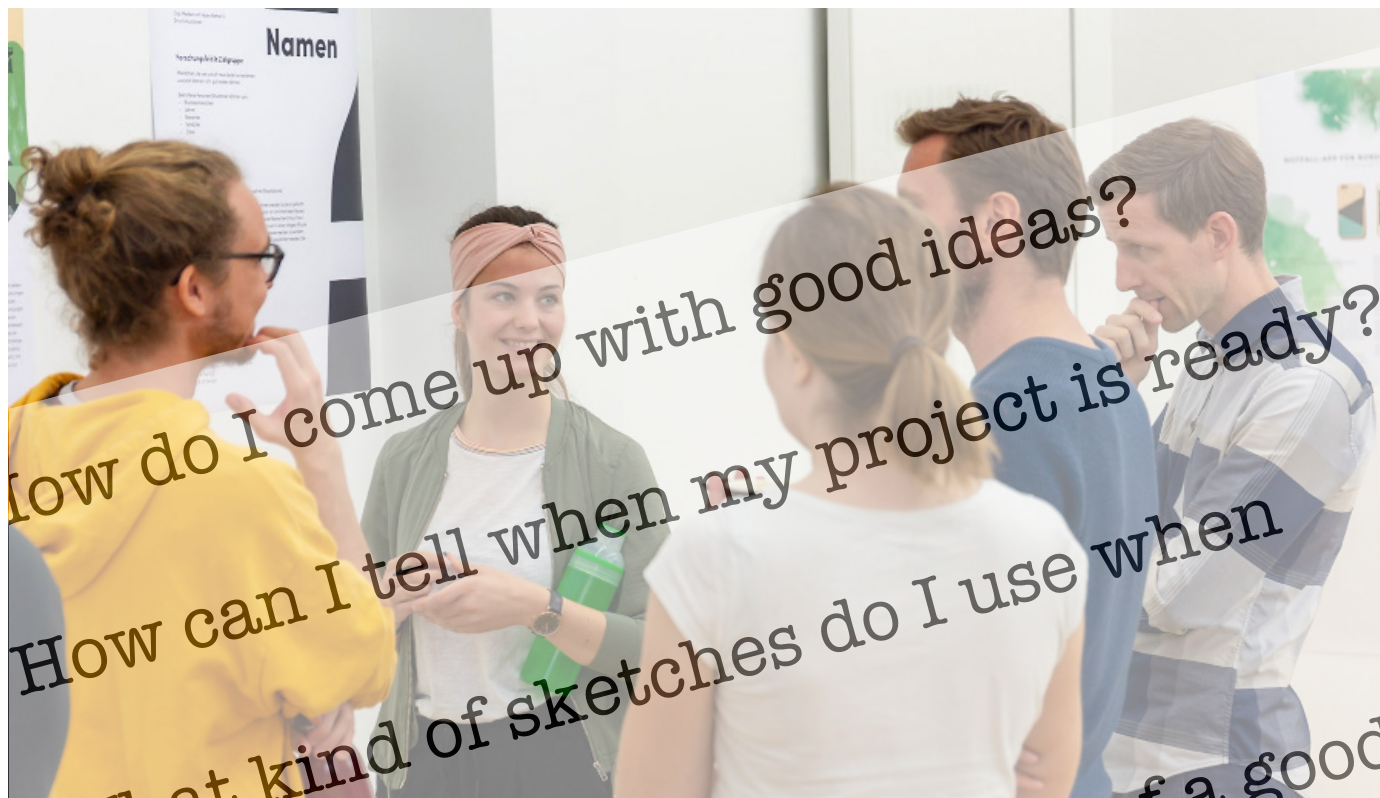
Instructions

- [1] team members split up, and spatially separate
- [2] individually build your current project out of bricks
- [3] after 20 minutes, the teams rejoin and mutually present their constructions. They are encouraged to discuss different perspectives and framings of the same project, seen from different angles.

Sources/Inspirations: Inspired by Antonio Scarponi

Image: Andres Wanner. Cardset version 0.9 Andres.Wanner@hslu.ch

Dialogue Approach



The approach consists of a set of questions and statements used to evoke dialogue in a workshop format. **Goal:** Participants become aware of their own disciplinary thought style and the disciplinary thought style of their collaborators. // about different assumptions and positions. **When:** before / or at an early stage of collaboration

Preparation

- [1] prepare relevant, open ended questions
- [2] print each question on one sheet, as handout

Instructions:

- [1] in disciplinary mixed groups of 2-5, discuss your question.
- [2] present your discussion to the plenum, rephrase other positions.

Sources/Inspirations: Schnapp et. al "How to talk t to strangers"; Pohl, "Toolbox dialogue approach" doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3717505; Image: Digital Ideation, conversation in class, by Raphael Andres.
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