Method Stack

Alice Angus, Giles Lane and Hazem Tagiuri

probosis carel Agencies of Engagement

Contents

Introduction 2

Methods

Story Gathering 3
Exploration Notebooks 3
Conversations 4
Story Gathering Workshops 5
Recorded Interviews 6
Storyboards 7
Collaborative Storytelling 7
Wandering & Impressions 9
Wanderings 9
Data Capture 10
Observation 11
Encounters 12
Walking Conversations 13
Sketching & Drawing 13
Bodystorming 15
Mapping 16
Social Mapping 16
Concept Mapping 17
3D Mapping 18
Mapping Stories 19

Tools

Exploration Packs 20
StoryCubes 21
Project & Field Notebooks 22
Issue Cards 23
Maps 24

Inspiring Resources

IDEO Method Cards 25
Arup Drivers of Change 26
Rory's Story Cubes 28
Bruno Munari's + e - 28
In Studio: Recipes for Systemic Change 29

unexpected and unintended ideas for what something could mean to different people.

Bodystorming was a key technique in Urban Tapestries where we created a mock up of the proposed interaction screens on a PDA for geolocating personal stories, and a large floor map onto which people were asked to map their use of the mocked up system. We asked people to create threads of the knowledge they might like to geolocate in their neighbourhood on the map. This technique was hugely influential on the development of the final software platform, as it revealed many uses that we could not have anticipated.

Mapping

What – We have found that mapping ideas, associations, knowledge, stories, concepts, hopes and connections in different ways is one of the most useful way to both make connections with people and to capture knowledge in the moment. It might involve using large and small scale local maps, paper covered tables, diagrams, crayons, pens, paper, drawing and making models to visually explore, capture, represent and manifest ideas in a dynamic way.

Why – Visual and text-based mappings can allow people to see the connections between their experiences, contexts and aspirations and those of other participants. Mapping ideas and concepts enables participants to think outside of their professional and domestic boundaries, and is a catalyst for further conversation and dialogue. Links and associations are revealed and the map becomes a visual record of what are sometimes intangible concepts. It can build trust within a workshop and help people to feel comfortable and inspired.

Who – Requires imagination to devise and good facilitation skills to deliver but should be relatively easy for most people to utilise.

How – The following techniques show several ways to use mapping in social engagement settings.

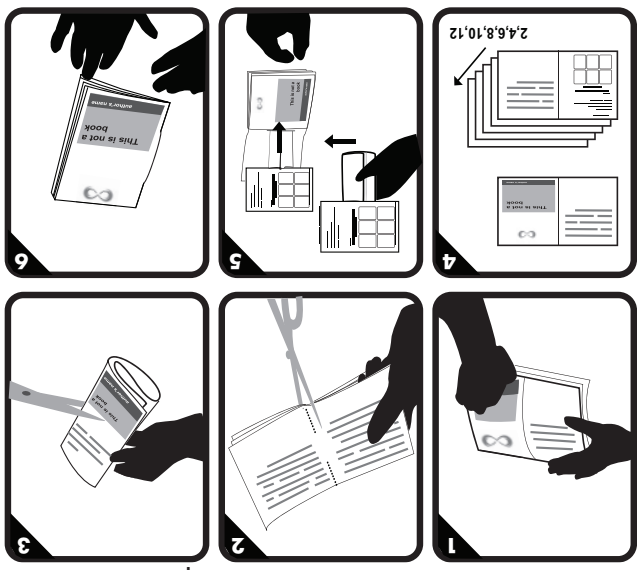
Social Mapping

To facilitate an introduction in which people discover unusual connections between each other we devised a form of Social Mapping. In this activity participants write their name, title and select some connections to the place, issue or each other on a sheet of paper. The aim is to reveal personal connections (more than professional ones) and to deepen the later conversations. Connections are described by drawing lines between each other

Agencies of Engagement

A creative thinking and doing tool - four books to inform and inspire, authored as part of a collaborative research project by Proboscis, CARET and Crucible.

proboscis.org.uk



made with **booklet**eer.com from **proboscis**

http://bkltr.it/qxi9Nk

Method Stack

Alice Angus, Giles Lane and Hazem Tagiuri

2011-11-10 & Creative Commons BY-NC-SA

Published by Proboscis

Introduction

Method Stack draws together some of our principal methods of engagement, exercises and tools to inspire dialogue, connect people and enrich the outcomes for those working together. It details *What* they are, *Why* you might use them, *Who* could use them and *How* they can be employed. It is part of *Agencies of Engagement*, a series of four books by Proboscis outlining the methods (*Method Stack*), approach (*Project Account*), observations and insights (*Drawing Insight*) and final recommendation (*Catalysing Agency*) used in a research project exploring groups and group behaviours within the context of the University of Cambridge and its I.T. systems. The project is a collaboration between Proboscis, the Centre for Applied Research in Education Technologies (CARET) and Crucible.

Alice Angus, Giles Lane & Hazem Tagiuri
Illustrated by Mandy Tang

Story Gathering

What – Story Gathering plays an important part in our work because it takes a wholly indirect, meandering approach, allowing people to tell stories that through their description of people, places and social interactions help to paint a bigger picture of the complexities of everyday life and its issues without actually asking direct questions or using impersonal, dry language.

It can involve gathering personal and local stories, experiences and thoughts from people through conversations, chance encounters, interviews, going to clubs and local events, joining existing community group sessions, setting up specific activities with groups, and ad hoc sessions to engage passers-by. The methods used are indirect and open and aim to enable people from different backgrounds, communities and situations to author their own experiences.

Why – Capturing material in this way allows unexpected ideas, thoughts and issues to emerge that, brought together, help to create a multi-layered picture. The process of story gathering is a catalyst for dialogue between people and so helps to tease out and capture a tangible record of intangible experiences; helping us to understand situations and issues from multiple perspectives.

Who – These methods require some graphic design skills coupled with good listening and facilitation skills, however they should be usable by most people without too much difficulty.

How – Below are examples of techniques and methods used by Proboscis with descriptions of how they were used in each case.

Exploration Notebooks

Notebooks and diaries are useful to connect with and elicit more detailed reflections, evidence, observations and ideas from people. In particular they help capture thoughts in people's own time, between specific dates or if they are physically far away. It is essential to devise open ended indirect questions, diagrams and prompts for answers that might be written, drawn, collaged or anything else participants choose. Prompts might ask people to describe, list, imagine, remember, visit, draw and photograph places and scenarios. They can also include reacting to a scenario or photos, to complete a diagram mapping relationships such as shared space, communities, groups, technologies etc... The

helsinkidesignlab.org/instudio

In Studio: Recipes for Systemic Change

In Studio, published by the Helsinki Design Lab, introduces their HDL Studio Model which they describe as "a unique way of bringing together the right people, a carefully framed problem, a supportive place, and an open-ended process to craft an integrated vision and sketch the pathway towards strategic improvement". Helsinki Design Lab is an initiative of Sitra, The Finnish Innovation Fund, to "advance strategic design as a way to re-examine, re-think, and re-design the systems we've inherited from the past".

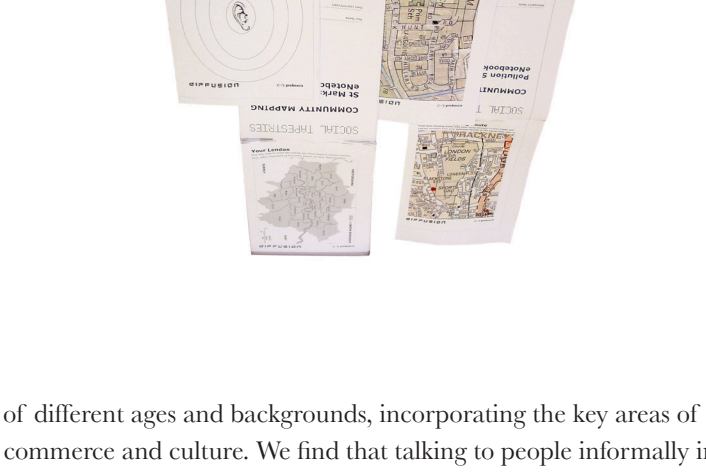
The book is a useful compendium of the theory behind the model, a "how-to" section as well as practical examples of how it has been applied to specific projects. It has many useful observations and practices for managing innovation as well as design practices, and excellent models for initiating and managing collaborative practices. The book is available as a free PDF download.

Conversations

Relaxed informal conversations in groups allows people to involve each other in the conversation which sparks deeper discussion. In our research we conduct conversations with people of different ages and backgrounds, incorporating the key areas of community, commerce and culture. We find that talking to people informally in different familiar situations where they live, work and relax allows us to make real connections to everyday lives and experiences. Conversations can happen in community spaces, social events, local clubs, parks, with local groups, passers-by or at social occasions we create. Its easy to chat informally about the local area, peoples' everyday lives, what they enjoy, their work and social life – and it sparks the deeper narratives people want to tell. Put together these conversations can build a bigger picture about a situation, scenario or issue.

In the course of connecting with people through stories on subjects as diverse as food, local history, ghost stories, memories, pubs, butchers, WWII bombers and ice skating in Sutton for our project Sutton Grapevine, we found that although people use a wide variety of communications technologies such as email, phone and SMS, simply delivering things through each others' doors or speaking in the street is more widespread. It helped us to uncover the relationship between online and physical activity for this project commissioned to investigate whether online media might be useful in rural communities with no permanent cultural spaces.

Proboscis used Exploration Notebooks for Being In Common, a project about Common Space. The notebooks allowed us to record highly detailed stories and responses from a diverse group of people in different countries who we would not otherwise have been able to include in the research.

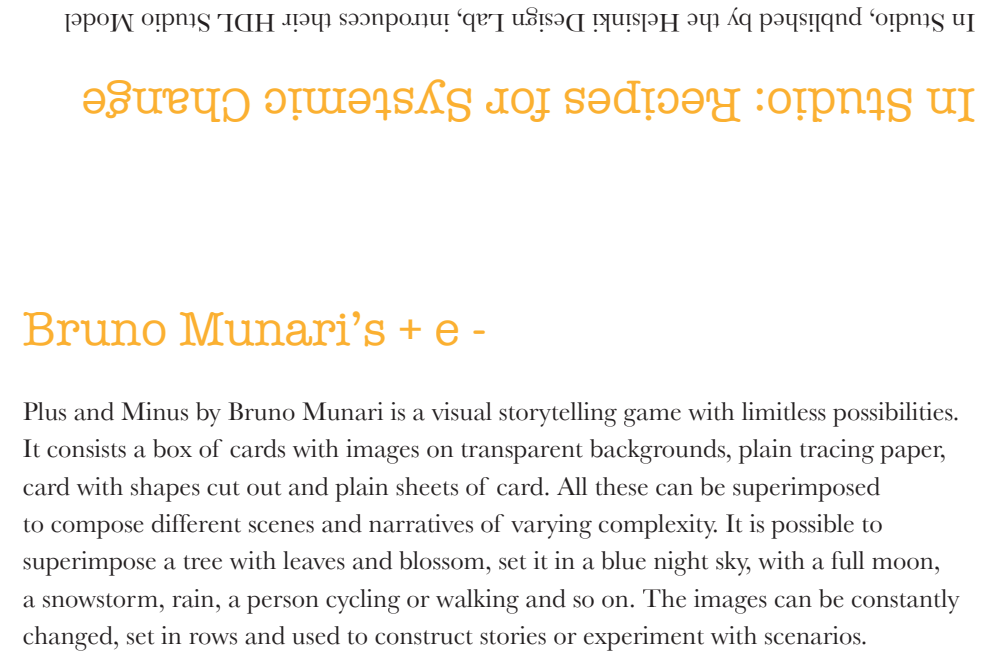


Story Gathering Workshops

Devise creative workshops with invited participants, youth groups, social clubs or others to create joint drawings, maps of experiences, collages of a community, short films or writing. The focus on the workshops is connecting with people through making the creative output, rather than asking direct questions. Through the act of jointly creating something it is possible to make a space for telling and capturing stories and experiences in order to gain a deeper picture or understanding of a place, situation or thing.

Bruno Munari's + e -

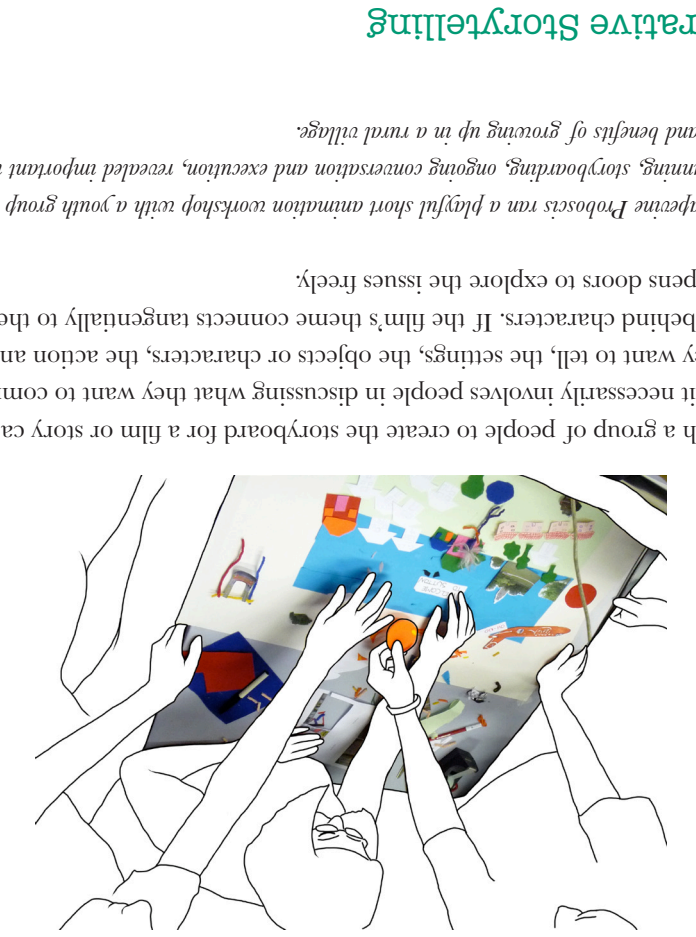
Plus and Minus by Bruno Munari is a visual storytelling game with limitless possibilities. It consists a box of cards with images on transparent backgrounds, plain tracing paper, card with shapes cut out and plain sheets of card. All these can be superimposed to compose different scenes and narratives of varying complexity. It is possible to superimpose a tree with leaves and blossom, set it in a blue night sky, with a full moon, a snowstorm, rain, a person cycling or walking and so on. The images can be constantly changed, set in rows and used to construct stories or experiment with scenarios. Although designed as a story tool for children, the cards are an inspiring and useful tool for imagining how to connect with people and work together in different scenarios and settings.



Collaborative Storytelling

For Sutton Grapevine Proboscis ran a playful short animation workshop with a youth group that, through the creative planning, storyboarding, ongoing conversation and execution, revealed important insights into the challenges and benefits of growing up in a rural village.

Working with a group of people to create the storyboard for a film or story can be very revealing as it necessarily involves people in discussing what they want to communicate, the story they want to tell, the settings, the objects or characters, the action and the core motivations behind characters. If the film's theme connects tangentially to the subject of research it opens doors to explore the issues freely.



Storyboards

Listening to the stories that emerged from a workshop about pollution during the Feral Robots project (where robotic cars responded to air pollution in a public park) and in the Snout project (which combined carnival costumes with environmental sensors and a website to track pollution) led Proboscis to an understanding of how people might use and combine technologies as part of everyday activities to understand and act upon the impact of pollution in their neighbourhood. It also helped the computer scientists on the project further their research into the social application of sensor technologies.

Recorded Interviews

Conducting interviews with groups and individuals in familiar places (where they meet, play, study or work; the market, youth club, park, cafe, community halls and centres) has enabled us to tailor conversations to the particular individual or group. Where relevant we use photographs, postcards, props and maps to start conversations or to trigger more information about a certain area or issue. Recording the interview lets us listen later and focus on the moment, the flow of conversation and engaging with people in a lively way.

Recording interviews for research and visioning project With Our Ears to the Ground allowed Proboscis to talk to people face to face – outside, inside and during their activities – without taking notes and therefore participate more in a group's activities and the attendant conversation at existing events. This allowed us to join people in many different everyday situations. We were able to go back later and transcribe the conversations, finding nuances and details of memories that might otherwise have been forgotten, and draw conclusions across the many recordings which have been fed into Hertfordshire County Council's long term planning.

Arup Drivers Of Change

The Foresight group of ARUP, a design and engineering firm with a multi-disciplinary approach, created this set of reference cards to provide insights and instigate positive change.

Divided into five categories – Social, Technology, Environment, Economic and Political – each card provides facts and statistics, and asks questions that explore important issues from each realm, encouraging a diverse range of people to work together to create a better future.

2006.driversofchange.com

Rory's Story Cubes

Rory's Story Cubes are dice-like cube sets printed with evocative images for randomly generating stories. They have been used in workshops as 'warm-up' exercises to help get participants into a creative and collaborative frame of mind. The images are commonly used symbols with multiple interpretations, and the 9 cubes in each set allow for millions of permutations. The cubes can be used in different ways, not just for telling stories. For instance, a common feature of problem solving is being able to look at the problem from a different perspective – the cubes can be rolled randomly or chosen consciously to construct visualisations of the issues at hand. By working with symbols to interpret the problem in an abstract way it becomes possible to generate new perspectives or insights based on different interpretations. Discussion can then flow around re-orderings of the cubes' relationships to each other, opening up the potential for solutions to be imagined.

www.storycubes.com

www.ideo.com/work/method-cards

IDEO Method Cards

IDEO, a design and innovation consultancy, created these reference cards which detail some of the methods they use to inspire design and to engage people.

Each card shows an image that symbolises the action, which is described on the reverse, providing a succinct example of how and when to use it, as well as how it has proved advantageous for IDEO in the past.

Separated into four categories defined by the type of activity – Learn, Look, Ask and Try – the cards serve as a quick, accessible design tool which can inspire creativity, communication and fresh perspectives within your team and those you are working with.

Maps

What – Using geographic maps as a canvas, creating conceptual or utopian maps, or getting participants to create their own with personal landmarks.

Why – To trigger conversations and obtain information about certain areas or issues, geolocating the stories and opinions of a group of people, using familiarity and visual clues as inspiration. To visualise potential future developments and their impacts.

How – Participants use Post-It notes or stickers to place information, experiences and thoughts onto a large printed map. Use "triggers" – photographs, postcards, illustrations – to enable them to talk and annotate in detail. Participants create a personal map of what places, activities or people are important to them in their area – ask them what are the motivations behind their activities, and why certain places are favourable to others and for what reasons.

Who – This requires someone who is familiar with creating and manipulating pre-existing maps, or creating materials with which new maps can be made. The facilitator should be able to communicate relationships between annotations and the maps themselves to draw out the richness of the participation.

Wanderings and Impressions

What – Wandering has always played a key role in our work because getting a sense of a place, scenario or group through direct personal experience is vital to being able to engage with that place or group as a project develops. It is important to gather material using tools that suit you – writing, drawing, conversing, photography, environmental sensors and data capture. These processes can involve conversations, interviews, encounters and journeys with local people of different ages and backgrounds. On our projects Proboscis has also journeyed through townships, villages and cities by car, train, bus, bike, kayak and on foot. Impressions can be created from these wanderings as short films, audio collage, small books and drawings.

Why – It affords us a much better understanding of the participants' motivations, their influences, the places and spaces they live or work and their aspirations for the future. The result is a personal impression or record of a place, scenario or group which is part of the wider themes, as well as first-hand knowledge that enables positive collaboration. The Impressions are a key means of conveying a local sense of place to other participants (such as in workshops) in that they provide cross sections through a place or idea that can be explored individually or in association with other project materials and activities.

Who – These are common sense activities that anyone can use. They work best when individuals adopt and adapt them in ways best suited to themselves; choosing tools they are comfortable with to record and share their observations. Creating Impressions requires more concentrated creative expression but can equally be created by anyone.

How – The following are examples of techniques and methods used by Proboscis with descriptions of how they were used in each case.

Wanderings

Walking around, observing, hanging out, exploring or going for coffee are often the first things we do on a project. Walking, travelling and journeying through urban and rural places by car, train, bus, bike, boat and on foot allows you to gain a sense of place and an impression of its communities. The chance encounters we have had during these visits have often led us connect with otherwise unheard voices or less obvious communities. The process can be adjusted to suit particular locations to reveal a richer understanding of the texture and feel of a place and how people live in it.

During our projects we often set out to join existing groups of people who meet as part of their lives and community activities, rather then convene a focus group, in order to explore issues in an everyday setting. The storytelling starts when a memory or experience stimulates another and they build into a of stream of experiences. This flows best in groups who already know each other. We often take along props, photos, objects, maps and archival material. It might begin as randomly as asking how people used to do their laundry forty years ago, if they make their own clothes, or where young people go to meet. Allowing for meanders into the unexpected, it is possible to reveal a lot about peoples' lives and to discover stories that might not emerge in a one to one interview where the participant might not think they were relevant.

Our research in developing the software platform Urban Tapestries took us into discussion with a group of elders who meet regularly at our local community centre. What was originally intended as a test of scenarios quickly became a collaborative storytelling event. What we learned was vital to the project as it fundamentally shifted the emphasis away from technology towards how technology could support sharing intergenerational community knowledge. It also shifted our research practice away from using concerned test groups to working with actual communities because of the richness and complexity of the unforeseen elements they bring into the mix.

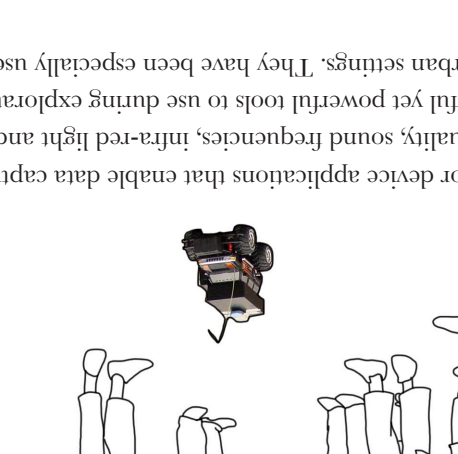
young people and the records they create have helped us to better convey a sense of space, time and human interaction with the environment.

Proboscis used roving robotic cars embedded with environmental sensors to engage school children in discussing and discovering more about their local environment. The use of the robots allowed us to connect with and work with the children in a playful and exciting way that led us to understand more of what motivates them to learn and communicate their discoveries.

Observation

Taking time to stay still and observe the geography and human activity of our own teams and collaborators, as well as of the people, activities and places we are researching has proved invaluable in shaping later research stages and outcomes. Watch how people work in your teams and collaborators – what do they enjoy and what inspires them? Observing how people behave in public areas and situations, how they communicate, move and engage with the world around them can lead to new understandings and approaches to research and design.

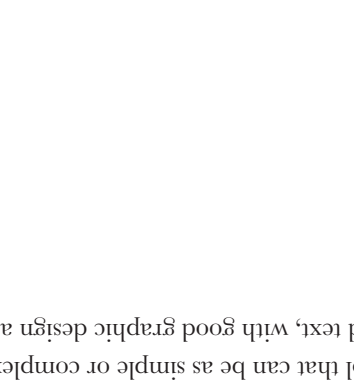
Observation of the life on the London housing estate for Conversations and Connections, along with conversations, interviews and workshops, enabled the exploration of whether communication technologies and creative techniques could enhance democratic engagement at local level. The project encountered significant issues in adoption and engagement due to complex and interwoven social, cultural, economic, linguistic, educational factors. A key outcome proved to be the ongoing evaluation of these barriers and our responses to them which we were able to understand largely because of our "on the ground" approach to observation throughout the project.



In the Perception Peterborough visioning project wanderings allowed Proboscis to discover a wider group of people than we were initially asked to engage with, which in turn brought valuable voices into the research. This underlined for the partners the importance to community participation and voices. The research subsequently led the project funders to instigate a much larger, two year project (Citizen Power) focused on the voices of people and communities.

Data Capture

Environmental sensors or device applications that enable data capture such as GPS mapping, altitude, air quality, sound frequencies, infra-red light and other imperceptible phenomena can be playful yet powerful tools to use during exploratory walks in community areas and urban settings. They have been especially useful in working with



Issue Cards

What – Postcard or Record cards with information, issues, questions, quotes or photographs printed on them. The cards might describe situations, technologies or scenarios of everyday life. They might make a series of propositions for people to respond to. Each card might pose a different question or contain a prompt, or all ask the same question.

Why – To build a snapshot, collect memories or experiences and to engage larger numbers of people, and those who do not want to stop and talk or who are just passing by.

How – The cards can be used in different ways: participants might be given a set to work with in a workshop; people might be asked to fill one in at a public site and place in a box; they might be designed to be sent back or pinned on a map or wall in a public space where a collection builds up over time for everyone to see and respond to. It is often helpful to 'place' a few completed cards to encourage other people to participate.

Who – A common sense tool that can be as simple or complex as the designer wishes. Combinations of images and text, with good graphic design are most effective.

Project & Field Notebooks

What – A custom notebook (made with bookleteer.com) containing indirect questions, diagrams and prompts for participants to answer with text or drawing.

Why – They are light, portable, can be personalised, and are extremely cheap and replaceable. Responses can be scanned, reprinted, and circulated. Participants can be asked to use them, for example, as diaries in which to detail their actions and the tools and services they use to help us to gain a better understanding of their media choices and routines. They might be included in Exploration Packs, used for Story Gathering, or to make records during Wanderings, Impressions, Conversations or when Concept Mapping.

How – You can use the free service at bookleteer.com to design, print and assemble notebooks. The notebooks should be designed so that questions can be answered with words, a sketch, diagrams, lists, or collage, triggering creative and unexpected responses.

Who – Designing custom notebooks requires flair both in setting the questions and tasks for participants to respond to, and some graphic design skills to do layouts that are engaging and easy to use.

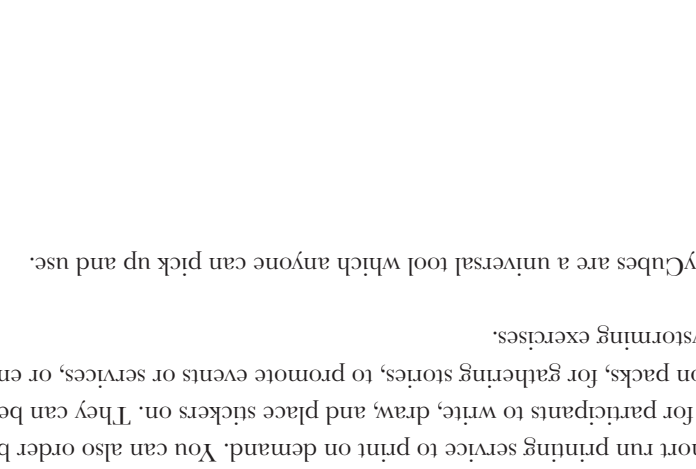
Exploration Packs

What – Exploration packs contain research probes in the form of objects and indirect questions, prompts, photographs or diagrams exploring an issue. Participants are invited to use these objects in a creative exploration, writing, drawing and responding to the contents by using the items (i.e. book of questions, StoryCube, set of photos, felt board, collage pack, camera, audio recorder, matchbox) over a given period of time. There are no right or wrong answers and the questions are guidelines not rules. The items don't all have to be completed in one go, but they shouldn't take too long to do either. Participants can respond in a variety of ways using the pack through text, drawings, stickers, craft materials, photographs, sound and video. By using a range of materials the packs can be both playful and open.

Why – People can respond and interact with the packs in a variety of ways, in detail, in their own time and in their own way. This inspires deeper thinking and a response that is richer than a simple question and answer approach.

How – Compile a self-contained assortment of questions and props relevant to the area you wish to explore as well as clear instructions on what you expect people to do, as well as how and when to return the pack. It might include, for example: an exploration notebook or diary; a set of images to draw or write on with prompts or questions to respond to; a map to mark their location, connections, memories, activities; a camera to record specific actions or activities; a felt board and craft materials with prompts to create a representation of a place, thing or activity and a StoryCube of prompts.

Who – This requires a playful imagination to put together and an interest in materials and craft practices. The questions and prompts need to be evocative rather than authoritative to elicit rich answers and responses.



StoryCubes

Encounters

It is often the unexpected encounters – stopping to chat to people whilst investigating a place, or talking to people we encounter on a journey – that have brought a rich area of knowledge into our research projects. Encounters have connected us with individuals and communities who we have returned to interview in more depth, and they have revealed places, practices, issues and situations we would otherwise have missed.

The encounters Proboscis had on With Our Ears to the Ground revealed some new communities to speak to outside of those which had been initially suggested. This in turn opened up important avenues for the research to reach diverse sections of the community that we would not have connected with through the established channels. The conversations revealed some key insights into the impact of transport infrastructures on community cohesion that Hertfordshire County Council was able to use in rethinking how its internal teams communicated in policy development.

Walking Conversations

To understand more about a situation, place or community from the grassroots level we have invited individuals walk with us, meet in a safe public place, join us to journey together on a public route they have suggested. The conversations have flowed around those places – what happens there, what their significance is to them, when and why they go there. Being in the place often stimulates many thoughts and memories that we would not have if we were not there. Discretely recording the conversation (with the participant's agreement) lets you walk without having to make notes.

Walking conversations were used for Proboscis' Lattice::Sydney workshops to support young creative community practitioners. The conversations enabled Proboscis to connect with people in local communities, hearing how they work and communicate and to understand Western Sydney's neighbourhoods through the eyes of the diverse people who live there.

Sketching and Drawing

Drawing is fundamental to much of Proboscis' work as sketching is a means to more deeply observe and understand a situation, place or thing. The quality of the sketch does not matter since the aim is to stimulate the depth of observation which drawing enables. The process of making visual marks can yield different creative and interpretative ideas from writing notes or taking photographs, and in certain situations it is not as intrusive as photography can be.

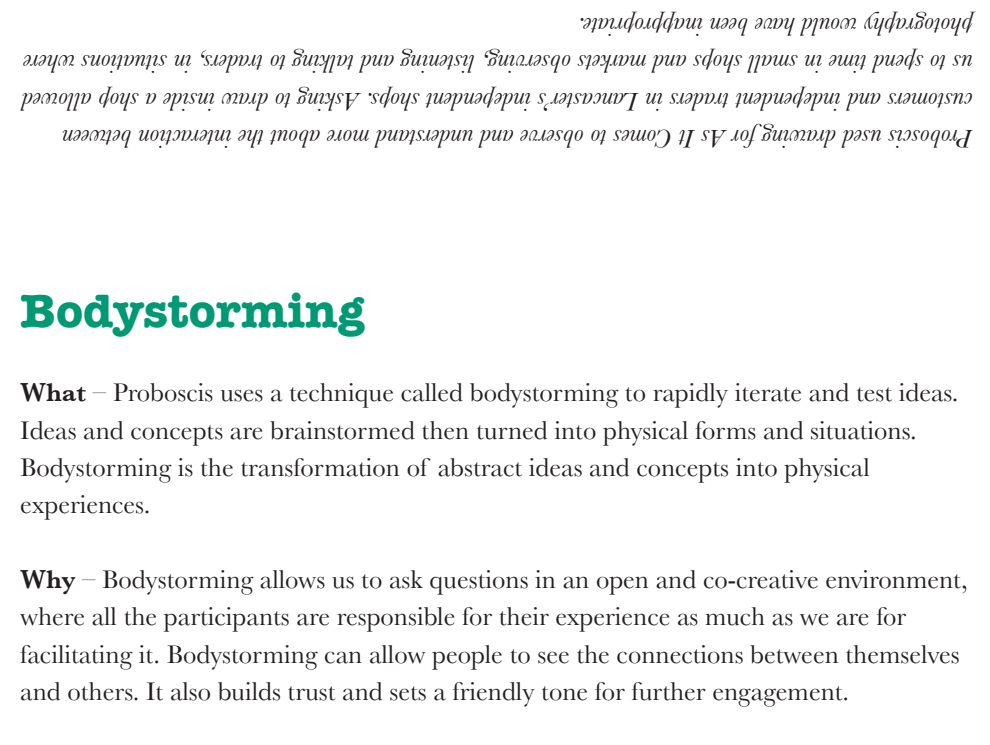
Who – StoryCubes are a universal tool which anyone can pick up and use.

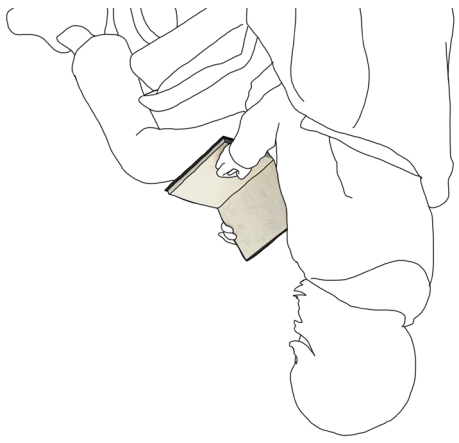
How – Use booklet.com to design, print and make StoryCubes on a personal printer, or use the short run printing service to print on demand. You can also order blank StoryCubes for participants to write, draw, and place stickers on. They can be used in exploration packs, for gathering stories, to promote events or services, or employed during Bodystorming exercises.

Why – Blank cubes can be used for people to write or draw on immediately, to capture and explore ideas. By placing cubes together it is possible to build up multiple narratives in three dimensions and explore the relationships between them. The cubes can be folded in two different ways, giving each cube twelve possible faces – two different ways of telling a story to reveal different perspectives and make new connections and associations.

What – Paper or card cubes, they can be pre-printed or left blank to write on or add stickers, to use as a thinking and storytelling tool. StoryCubes are a tactile three dimensional tool that can be used for exploring relationships and narratives. Each face of the cube is illustrated or annotated to convey an idea, a thing or an action. StoryCubes are a dynamic yet simple way of gathering and sharing ideas by engaging a group of people in creating text and images about a shared issue.

How – It involves creating a playful, live and physical experience to engage people in specific issues. A scenario or mock up of a situation is created and people are asked to use or react to it. Props can be made such as mock ups of technologies, objects, interactions, scenes, large floor or table maps, or Post-It notes for an authoring tool. The experience should be gentle and non-technological to provoke and cajole





Proboscis used drawing for As It Comes to observe and understand more about the interaction between customers and independent traders in Lancaster's independent shops. Asking to draw inside a shop allowed us to spend time in small shops and markets observing, listening and talking to traders, in situations where photography would have been inappropriate.

Bodystorming

What – Proboscis uses a technique called bodystorming to rapidly iterate and test ideas. Ideas and concepts are brainstormed then turned into physical forms and situations. Bodystorming is the transformation of abstract ideas and concepts into physical experiences.

Why – Bodystorming allows us to ask questions in an open and co-creative environment, where all the participants are responsible for their experience as much as we are for facilitating it. Bodystorming can allow people to see the connections between themselves and others. It also builds trust and sets a friendly tone for further engagement.

Who – Requires experienced designers and facilitators to devise and deliver effectively.

Set up a large map of an area and ask people to write on Post-It notes or stickers to show where they live. Ask them questions about the community – where they live, work and play, what it's like and what they like to do – gradually teasing out the details and motives behind activities they participate in, as well as the difficulties and challenges that people face. Use photographs and postcards to trigger stories.

For Social Tapestries we ran story mapping workshops with two housing groups, schools and users of a London park. The process of mapping stories in a group encouraged more people to pitch in as they reminded each other of key issues or memories. Capturing contributions in this informal and open ended way enabled us to get a deeper understanding of the issues which face the various groups. It also allowed us to explore the potential for emerging mobile media to enable change through the mapping and sharing of knowledge and experience in everyday settings.

Mapping Stories

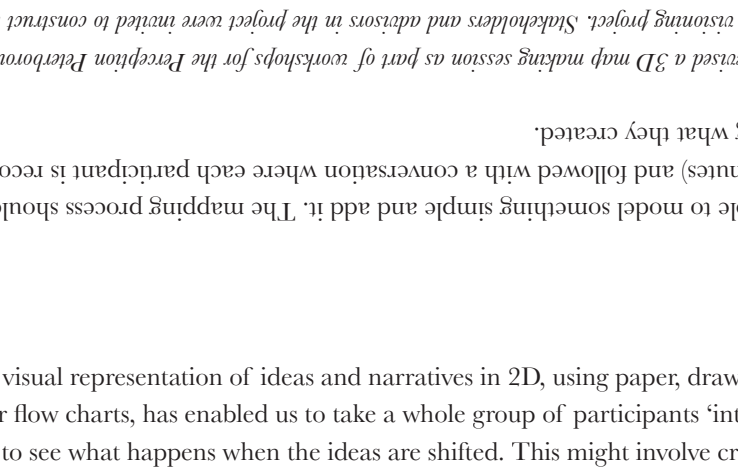
comfortable to model something simple and add it. The mapping process should be short (30-40 minutes) and followed with a conversation where each participant is recorded presenting what they created.

Proboscis devised a 3D map making session as part of workshops for the Perception Peterborough regeneration visioning project. Stakeholders and advisors in the project were invited to construct their ideas for an environmental city upon a large scale map, allowing them to visualise the impacts and relationships which these had with the existing infrastructure and sparking many conversations amongst the group.

Making a visual representation of ideas and narratives in 2D, using paper, drawing tools, stickers, or flow charts, has enabled us to take a whole group of participants 'into' the ideas and to see what happens when the ideas are shifted. This might involve creating large visual diagrams (such as a Venn diagram) for participants to complete. Participants can also devise their own maps, using large sheets of blank paper to express concepts and issues, drawing links between them to demonstrate the flow of ideas or a narrative.

For our co-discovery research workshops with CARET we designed large sheets printed with Venn diagrams that encouraged the participants to individually map out where factors affecting collaboration resided and to mark them on the diagrams. This stimulated an open group discussion about values and conceptions of collaboration that highlighted key differences as well as revealing less obvious commonalities. A second collaborative round of the exercise focused on the nature of collaboration tools and services they use, revealing useful patterns across motivation, action and adoption.

Three Dimensional Mapping



We have found that asking people to make their ideas and concepts 'manifest' in 3D is a powerful way to focus tangible ideas from vague concepts. The map itself is a good way to capture ideas and spark conversation. A group is asked to quickly make a 3D representation of their ideas and concepts incorporating symbols of issues, projects and aspirations. This is built up over an existing map of an area or location. We find it works best to use familiar things that are to hand and are easy to play with, such as modelling clay, felt, wooden blocks, cardboard, drawing materials and string. People should not feel they have to make something special or beautiful – it is important that they feel