

Guide Activities

Collaborative Art Activity

This exercise is intended to be fun and quick. It can be used in meetings, co-design sessions or any other group context to help make participants comfortable in the space and in working collaboratively with each other. It introduces the practice of multi-modal communication and experience.

How

Preparation

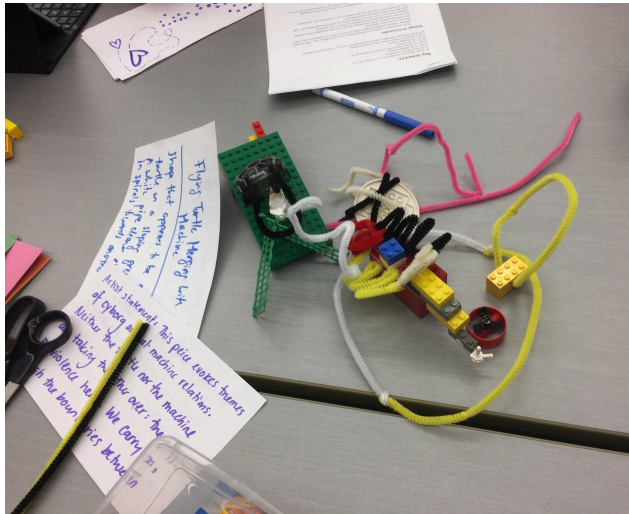
Working areas or stations should be set up for each group, using separate tables or other arrangements. Materials (lego, toys, colored paper, pipe cleaners, tape, sticky notes, etc.) can be made available at each station, or at an easily accessible location in the room.

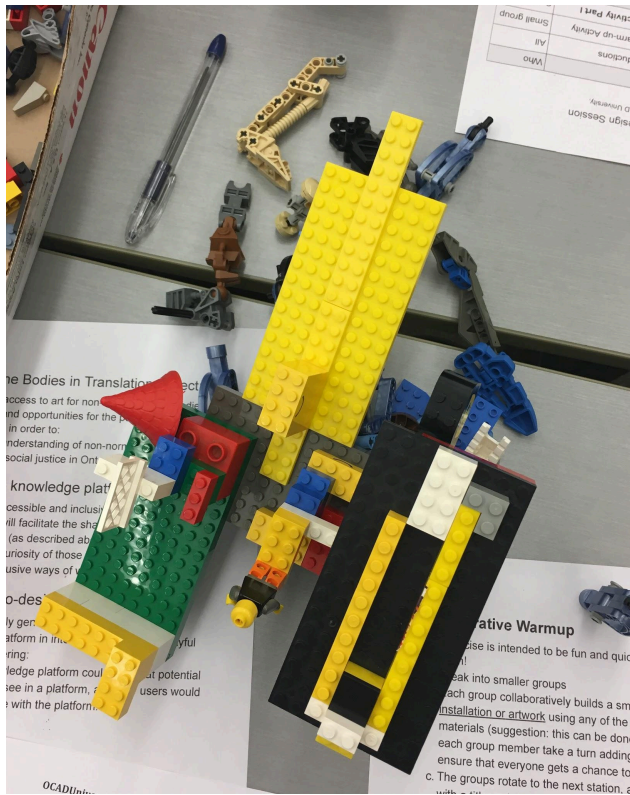
Steps

- Break into small groups (3 or 4 people per group is best) and find a workstation.
- Each group collaboratively builds a small art installation or artwork using any of the available materials. This step can take between 4-7 minutes.
 - **Tip:** Don't worry too much about the outcome, take risks and play
 - **Tip:** If there are members in your group that require audio description, make sure to describe the available materials at the start and to describe the artwork as it takes form. Allow for tactile exploration of the materials and the artwork as well.
 - **Tip:** To ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate, you can have each group member take a turn adding something to the artwork.
- The groups rotate to the next station, and come up with a title and description for the work of art at that station. How would you describe the work to someone who can't see it or isn't here today? This step can take between 3-5 minutes.
- The groups rotate one more time. They now develop and document a brief artist statement (1-2 sentences) about the artwork at that station. This step can take between 3-5 minutes.
- Each group returns to their original station and shares the title, description and artist statement to the larger group.

Why

This activity helps participants to gain a deeper understanding of the different ways artwork or other content may be accessed, perceived and interpreted. It also helps participants to think beyond typical communication methods in order to expand the range of people who can access and use the content.





Web of Strings

This exercise is intended to be fun and highly collaborative. To complete the required task, participants should work together and be mindful of each others' needs.

How

Preparation

This activity can be done in an open space or on a table top depending on how large your group is and how they prefer to work. You will need several strings, two empty containers heavy enough to resist small knocks or bumps (heavy mugs, bowls, boxes, etc.), and one object that can fit inside your containers and that will not roll easily (hacky sack, toy, notebook, pen, etc.).

- **Tip:** try to include participants with a broad range of needs and preferences. The more diverse your group is, the more challenging and more meaningful the activity becomes.
- **Tip:** to calculate how many strings you need, divide the number of participants in your group by two. If you have an uneven number, you can tie one half a string to the middle of another string and lay it out so it is perpendicular to that string.
- **Tip:** you need to match the size and weight of the object you are moving with the density of the web. The more strings you have, the denser your web will be, and the heavier the object it can hold.

Steps

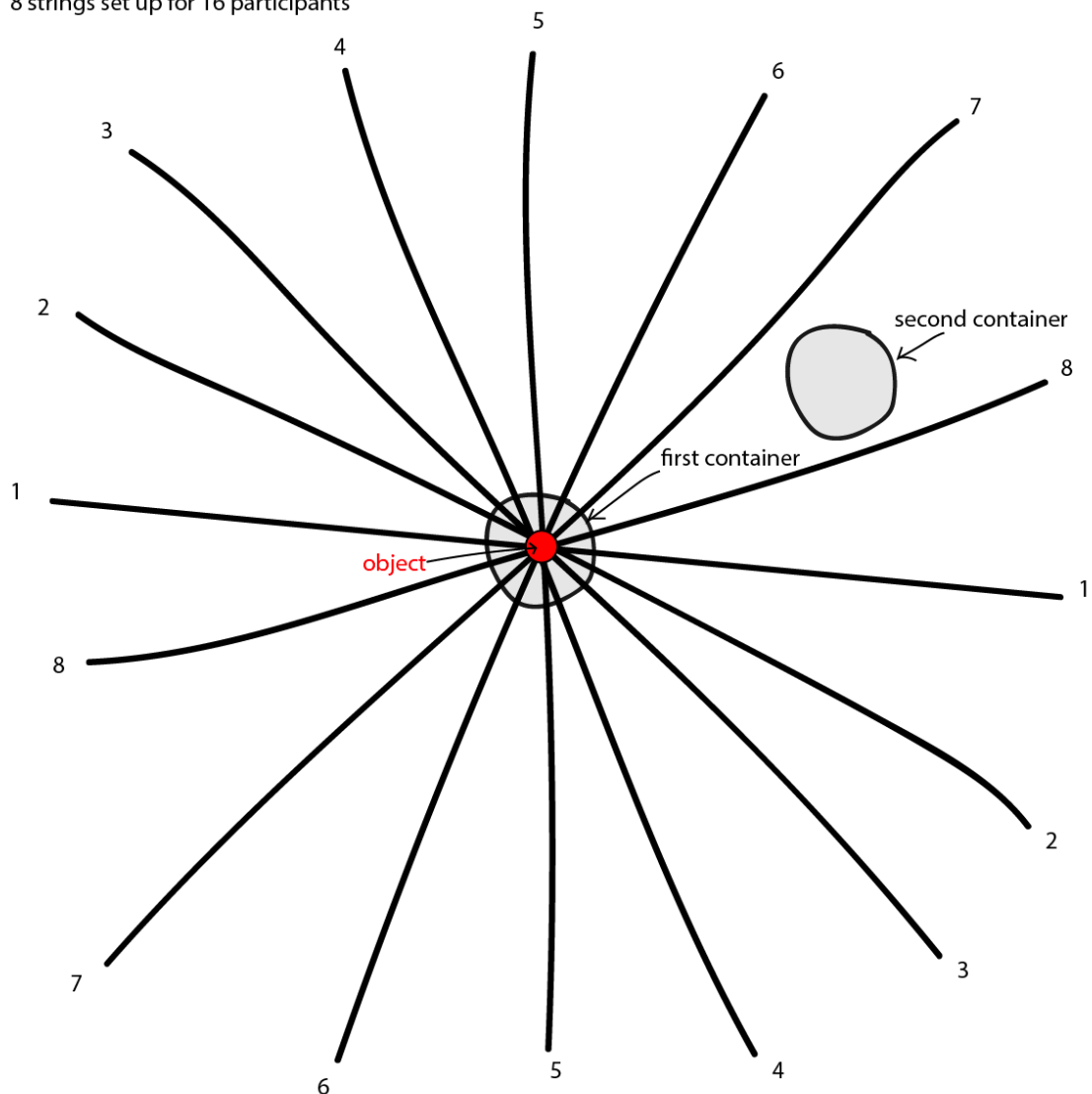
- Place the empty containers at least 1 ft from each other. The further away the containers are, the more challenging this activity becomes.
- Lay out all of the strings so that they intersect at the middle, with the intersection point lying over top of one of your containers.
- Place the object on the intersection point of the strings.
- Each participant should hold one end of a string (i.e. there will be one person at each end of a string).
 - **Tip:** the strings do not necessarily need to be held by hand. For example, a participant may use their mouth to hold the string, or the end of a string can be attached to a wheelchair.
- The challenge is to work together as a team to transfer the object from one container to the other one without dropping it, by collaboratively lifting and moving the web of strings.

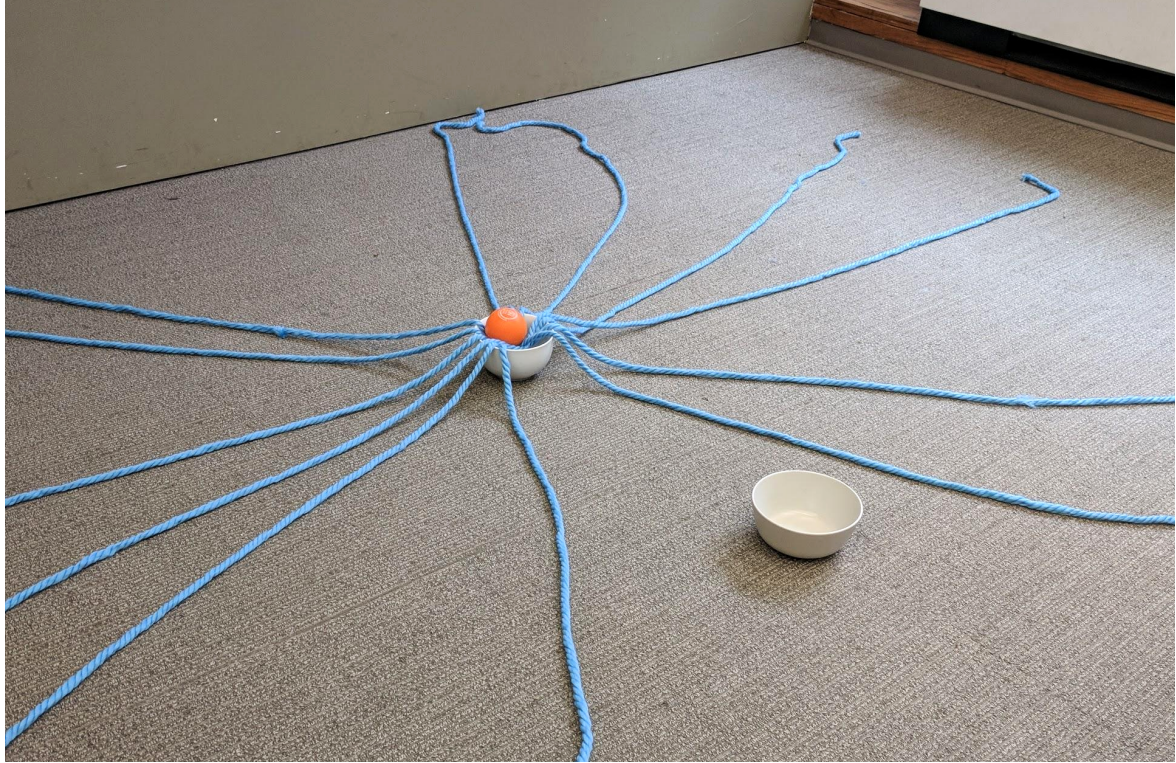
- **Tip:** If there are members in the group that require audio description, make sure to describe the direction of movement, the state of the object, the distance to the other container, and anything else that might help them to participate fully.

Why

This activity helps to make the experience of working collaboratively toward a common goal more tangible. The task requires that no one person overpower the others. Participants learn how to move in unison to keep the object from falling or rolling off the web, focusing on moving to the destination while working closely with each other.

8 strings set up for 16 participants





Functional Mash-Up

This activity can be used in a co-design session to encourage participants to work together toward more creative and resourceful solutions, by thinking beyond the current or obvious.

How

Preparation

You will need a deck of object cards. You can create your deck using any available materials. You might print images of different objects on paper or cardstock, use language learning flashcards, cut out magazine images and paste them onto cards, or find other ways to create a collection of random objects.



How

- Break into smaller groups (3 to 5 people per group is usually best)
- Keeping the objects on the cards hidden, each group selects the same number of cards from the main deck (this number can be decided by the larger group).
- Each group then chooses or is assigned one function from a collection of functions - these can be determined by the facilitator ahead of time or collectively by the group. The functions can be realistic or can be more experimental and exploratory. For example: communicating with a neighbour during a power failure, sending money to relatives overseas, taking your newborn baby to work, walking your dog in an airplane, looking after your parents remotely, etc.
- The challenge for each group is to combine and use all of the objects on their cards to create something that fulfills the selected function. One way to approach this might be to tell a story about how your objects come together to fulfill the function.

Tip: Brainstorm different approaches and don't limit your ideas to what is technically possible.

Tip: If there are members in your group that require audio description, be sure to describe the object cards and the process as you move forward. Allow for tactile exploration where appropriate.

Tip: You can prototype or communicate your solution/idea/story in whatever way that works best for your group (e.g. sketching, building, describing, storytelling, enactment, etc).

Tip: In addition to the object cards, you can use any available materials to prototype your idea.

Why

The goal of this activity is to promote creative thinking over immediate feasibility. It encourages participants to dig deeper to find unexpected and creative ways of addressing a problem.

- Practice Co-Design
- Collaborate

get a group of co-designers to think beyond the current or the obvious and to be creative and resourceful.

I've done it in many ways. I've taken a random collection of Thingaverse objects and printed those out on cards, I've used some of the flashcards for language learning you can buy in toy stores, or I've cut up magazines and found random objects and pasted those on cards.

The idea is that each group picks some cards and then picks a function. They need to use the object cards to create something that fulfills the function.

The types of functions might include things like; eating utensils, communication device, lock, fashion, vehicle, etc.

It depends on the group, but most often, especially if I want the group to practice consensus or if I want to see how the group makes decisions (who leads, who follows, who objects, etc.) I will ask the group to decide the more specific rules. I also usually let them communicate or prototype the design in whatever way they wish. I've tried it with the physical objects available, some have gone on scavenger hunts to find the objects they drew from the deck and then designed with them, others have drawn pictures, or created a variety of wireframes. There was one group that took the cards and connected them with pipe cleaners and taped on other pieces.

You might want to try the activity to gain insights.

This raises a more general consideration, all of these are contextually relative. How I facilitate them depends on the group and what I think needs to be covered. They are in no way formulaic. The rules are meant to be bent or dropped.