

ASSIGNMENT 2: METHOD EXPLORATION

WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK

Julia Spohr Reinhardt

METHODS:

Collage

Cognitive Map

Directed Storytelling

PARTICIPANTS:

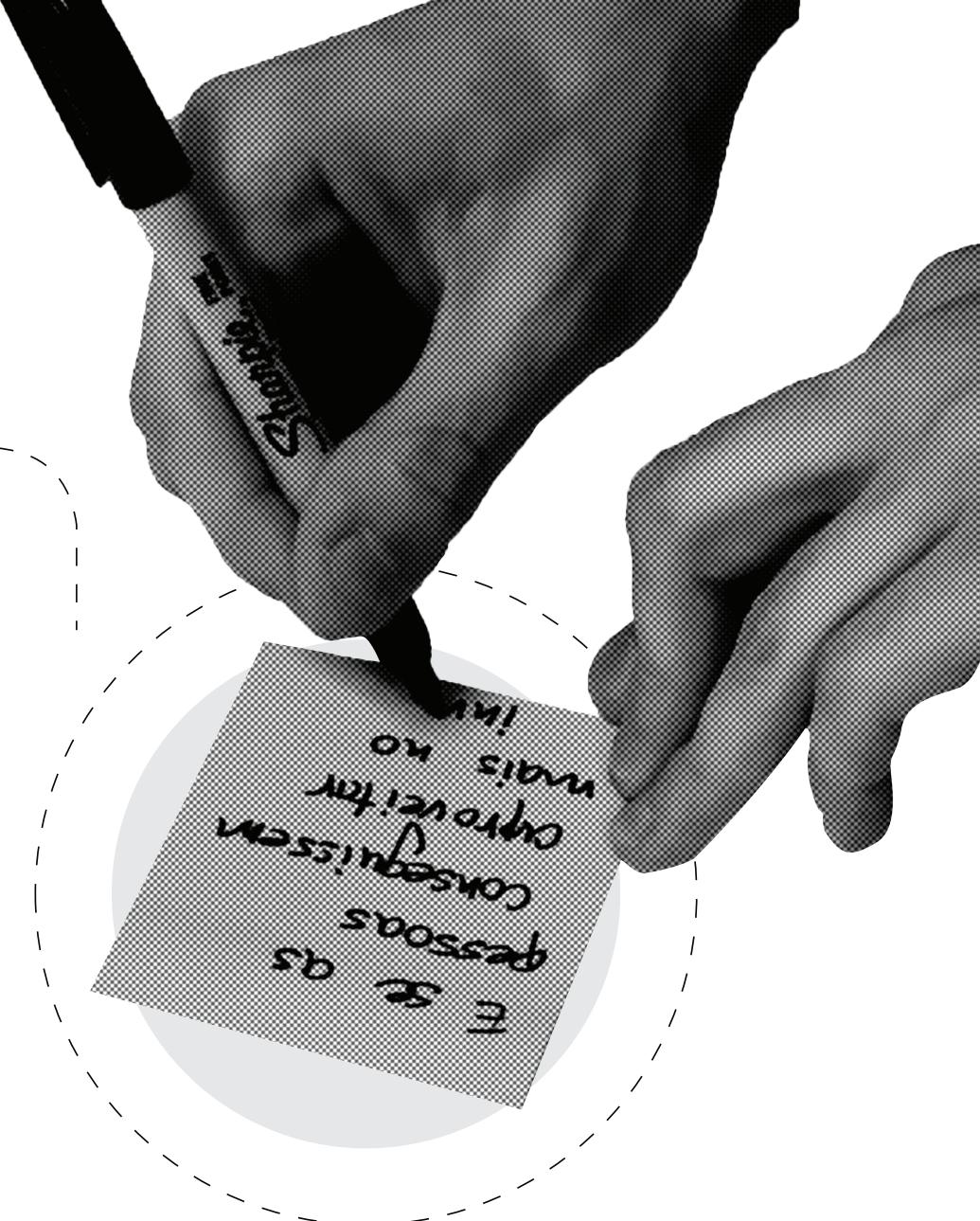
Lucas, 24, Architecture student, Brazilian

Betina, 24, Photography student, Brazilian

Gustavo, 21 anos, Design student, Brazilian

Cadu, 20, Design Student, Brazilian

Filipe, 22, Architeture student, Brazilian



¹ Martin, B.; Hanington, B., *Universal Methods of Design* (Rockport Publishers, 2012).



Axis and pictures.

The team was composed of Brazilians that are students at Parsons and which have been living now for seven months in New York.

Collage method was chosen as the first activity to create a creative sense and help participants to chose their own means of expression.

The collage kit was composed of diverse images of Washington Square Park during summer and winter, sharpies, post-its, and some words that could be useful to express emotions.

The paper in which participant produced the collage had a axis: the horizontal line worked as a time line between winter and summer, while the vertical axis ranked activities considering how often they did something. Many participants expressed the desire to write some feelings in Portuguese, since it made them feel more confortable.

After explaining the axis and presenting the collage kit, participants were divided in team and invited to produce a personal story or a fictional one. Each pair could work together, or alone, sharing the axis. After 30 minutes, they were invited to explain their process.

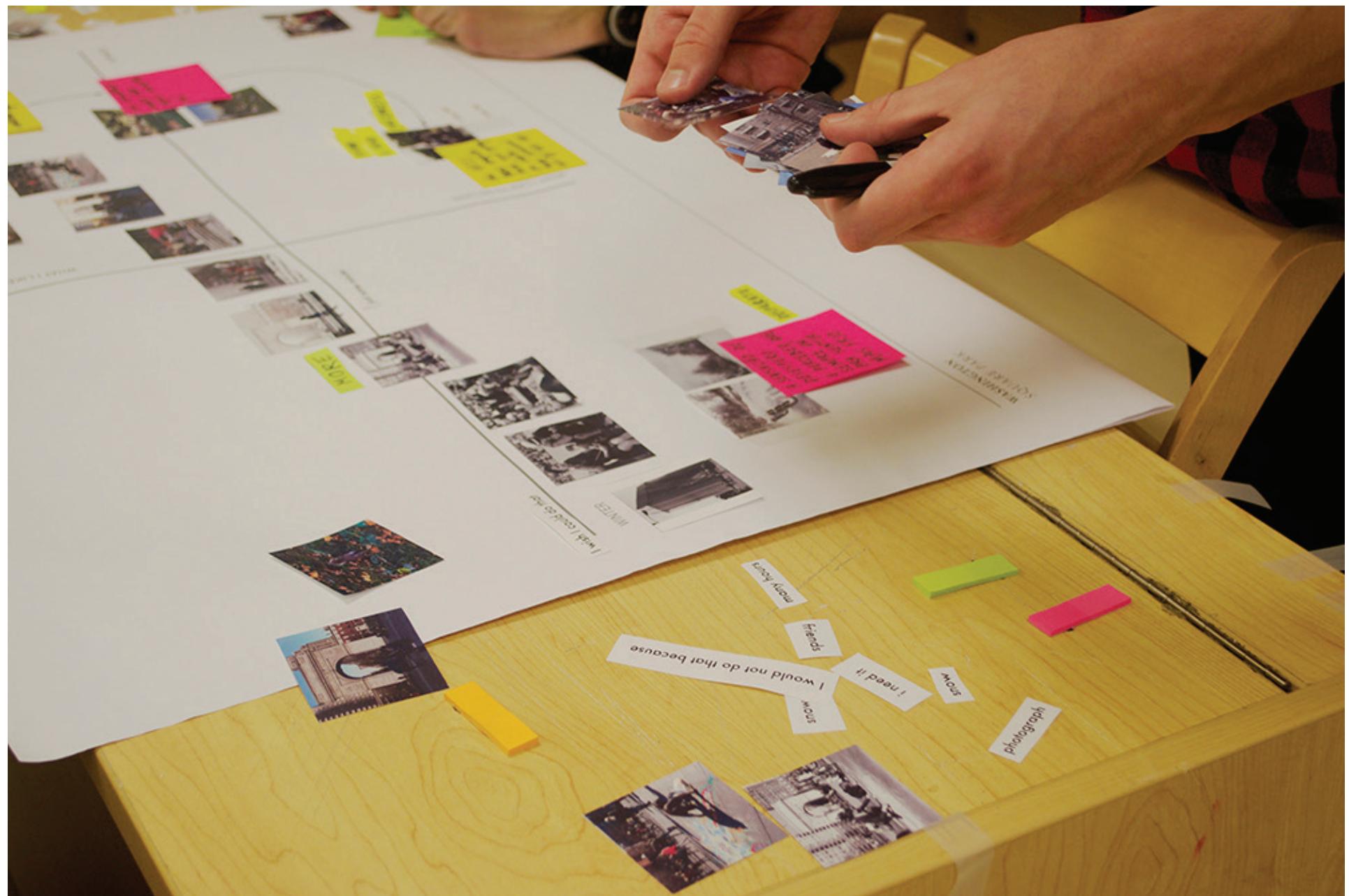
Collage

The first participant to speak did a fictional story. It was about a girl that used to go to the park on summer to read and sometimes just to watch other people hanging out. She hated seeing dating couples at the park. He also had a observation about winter: "That desperate feeling of it is always possible to feel colder".

The second participant liked to go to the park during winter time. She said she had special boots to do so. As she and her pair did the activity together, he added disagreeing with her. He complained about be surprised with huge amounts of slush, which made his shoes wet and dirty. They both show interest for the heater picture and said enjoying being out in the snow, but that is was hard because of the cold.

The last participant chose pictures representing the past of the park and organized the pictures in a growing scale, showing he liked the current state of the park more, because of it's diversity of people and plurality of activities. He stressed his interest about the park history, though.





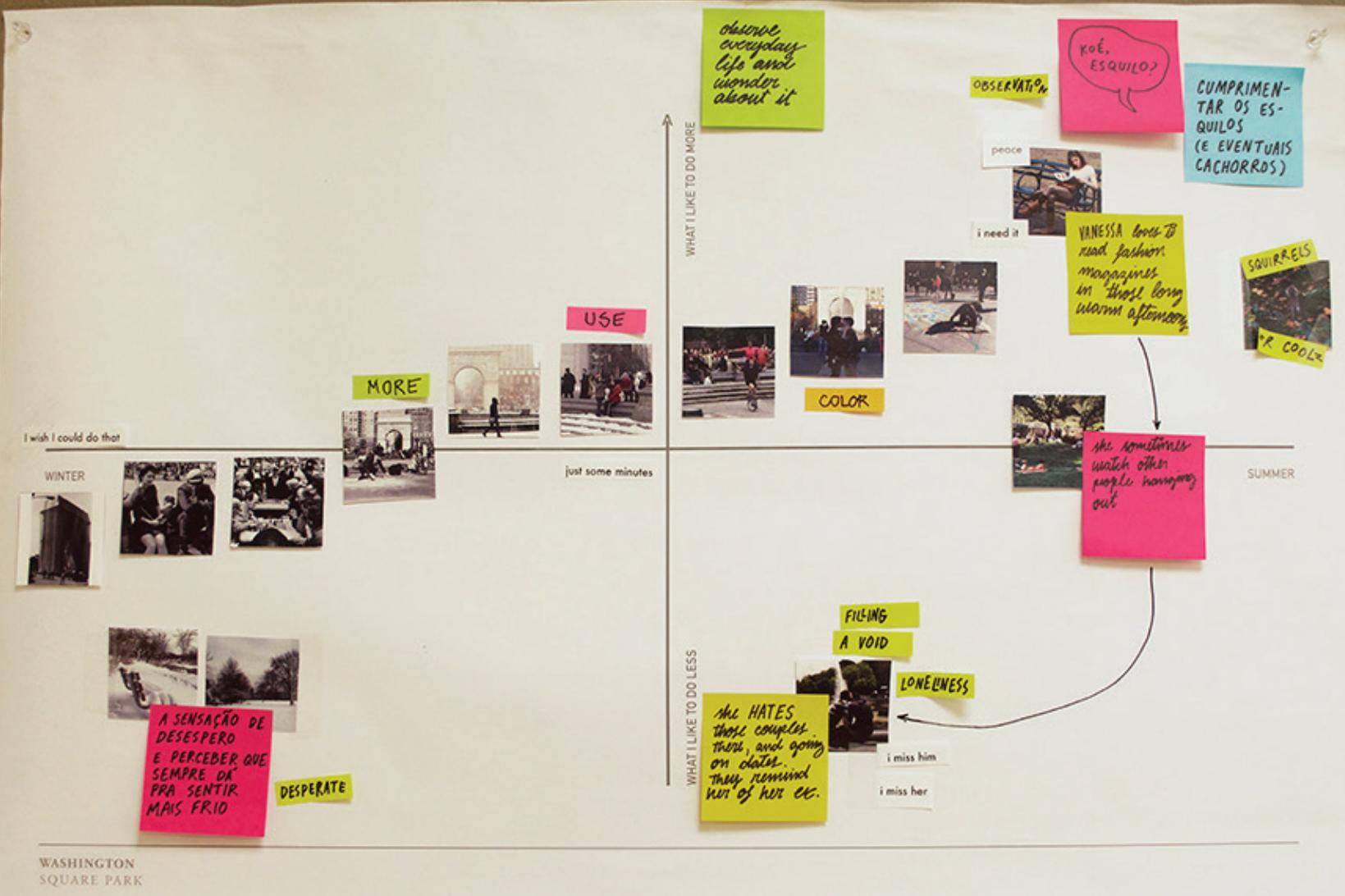
Collage kit.



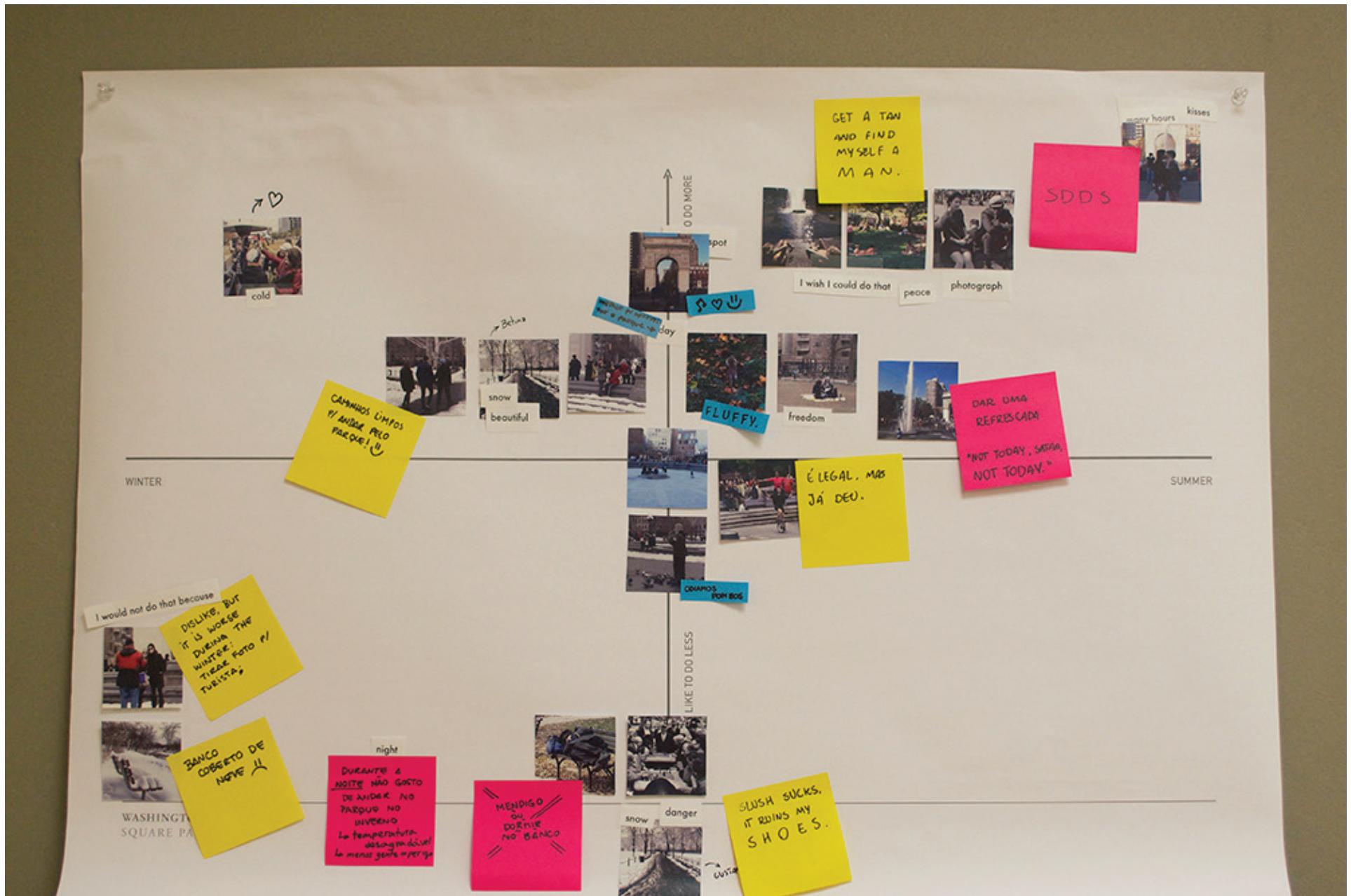
These two participants worked as a team, presenting similar interests.



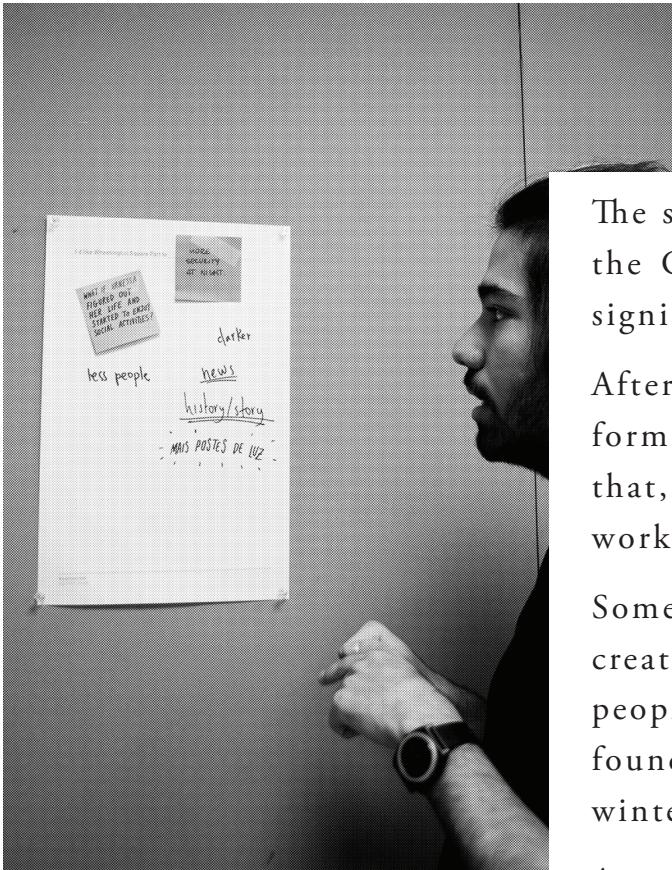
Participant stands up, trying to visualize the whole collage.



First group worked individually. Right, a fictional story. Left, a crescent scale of color and use.



Second group worked together. It is possible to see the interest over the heater picture, symbolized with a heart.



Participant presenting.

The second activity was the creation of a Cognitive Map. Looking over the Collage exercise, the participants were invited to select the most significant problem/discouraging fact within their stories.

After writing it down in a post-it, they had to use that to fill another form with the sentence: "I'd like Washington Square Park to". After that, they had to connect possible situations why that would or not work and ideas they had to fill the possible gaps and make it possible.

Some post-its had alike situations and so they were place together, creating a complex hypothesis. The fist analyzed form stated "What if people could enjoy the park more, even when it's winter?". Solutions found for this problem were "to have clean paths", "to be warmer during winter" and "to have a cleaning path service more often".

Another interesting Map came from the problem of security at night, specially during winter when it is darker and there are not many people out. Mixing the fictional story created in the Collage with some scary history facts about the park, the team agreed that "to have more light pols" was a option to increase the feeling of bein safe.

Cognitive Mapping

I'd like Washington Square Park to

HAVE
CLEAN
PATHS

E se as
pessoas
conseguissem
aproveitar
mais no
inverno?

BE WARMER
DURING THE WINTER

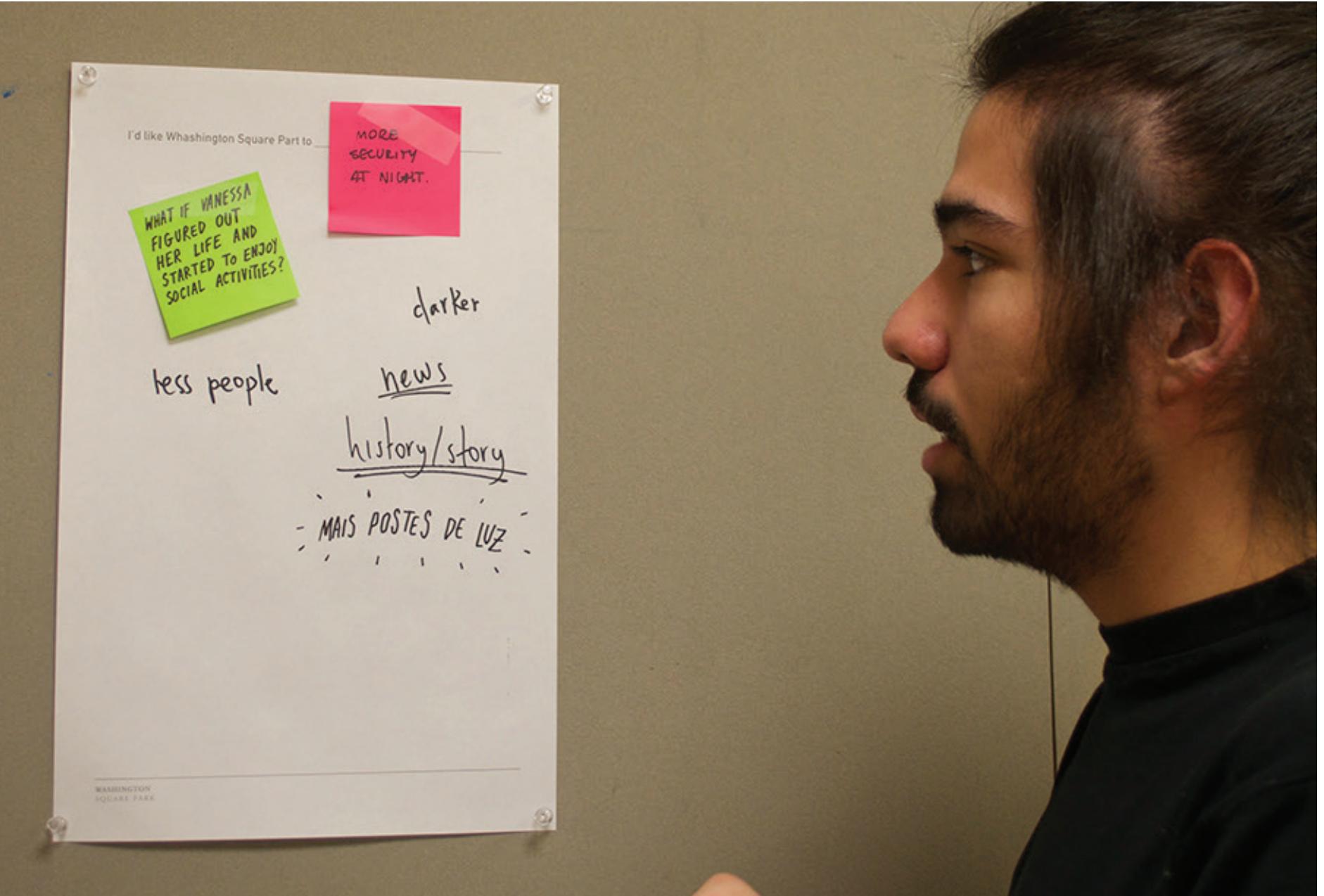
hard to walk

SERVICO

↳

FREQUENTE

Participant taking notes on solutions to "What if people could enjoy the park more, even when it's winter?".



Participant explaining solutions for “I’d like Washington Square to be more secure at night”.

I'd like Washington Square Park to

HAVE MORE
TANNING
SPOTS!

warmer

winter

more life

- Clean the spaces where people hang out, so people feel comfortable to sit or lay down.

WASHINGTON
SQUARE PARK

I'd like Washington Square Park to

WHAT IF VANESSA
FIGURED OUT
HER LIFE AND
STARTED TO ENJOY
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES?

MORE
SECURITY
AT NIGHT.

darker

less people

new

more community events.

history/story

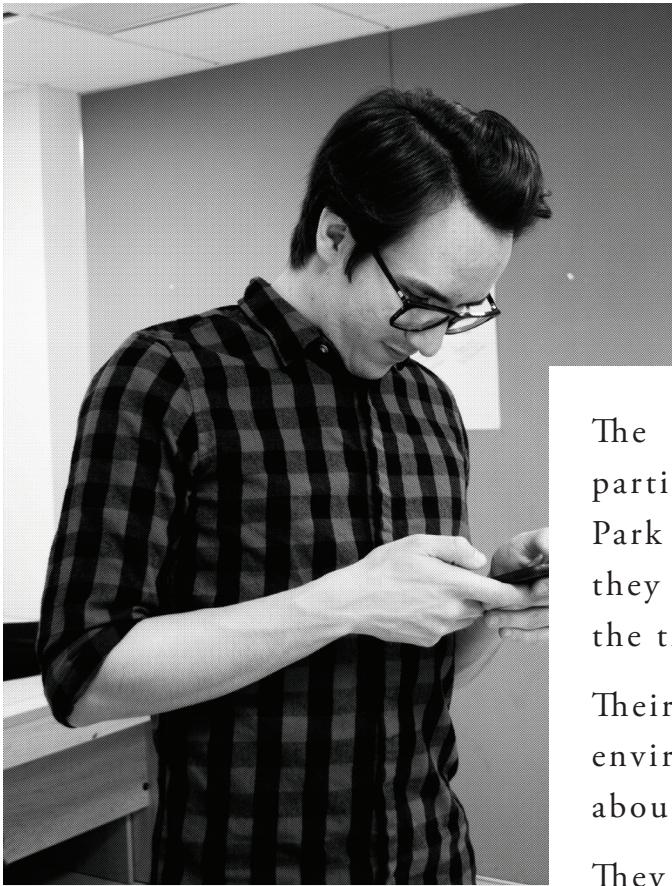
PARTY

- MAIS POSTES DE LUZ -

more restaurants, bars
and activity around it

WASHINGTON
SQUARE PARK

Cognitive map.



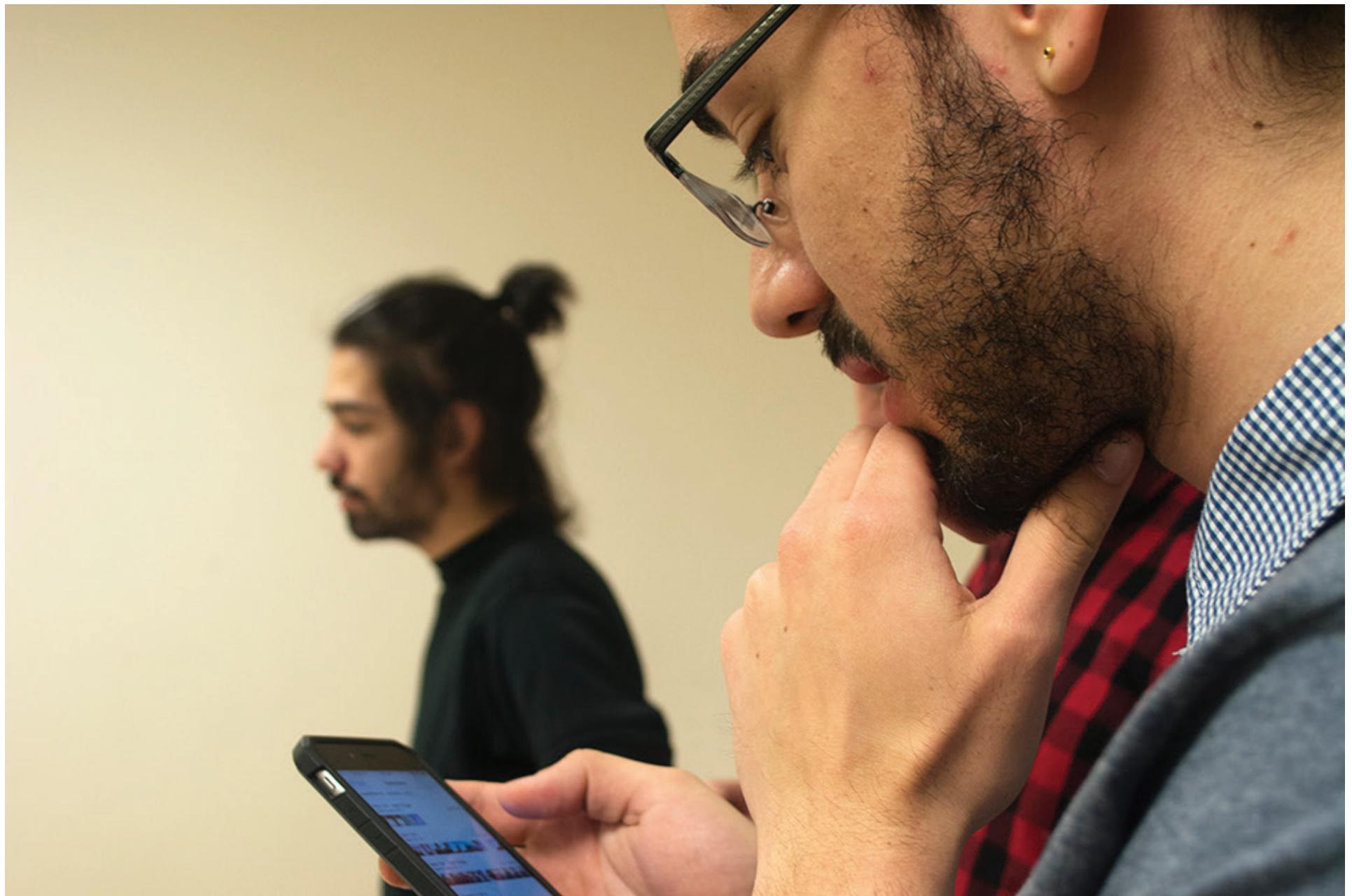
Participant looking for pictures.

The last method was the Directed Storytelling. To get started, participants were requested to look for snapshots of Washington Square Park on their phones. Then, each one described the experience and why they had taken that picture. They were requested to give details such as the time of the day, the weather and how many people were there.

Their proximity to the phones and to their memories created a good environment to participants to give enough emphasis on the details about that past situation.

The essence of the stories were descriptions such as “sunny days”, “company of family/friends” and “day time”. One interesting story was from a participant that stressed his satisfaction to go to the park when it is cold, but that recently he had found benches covered on snow, so there was no place to seat.

Directed Storytelling



Participant looking for pictures on his phone.

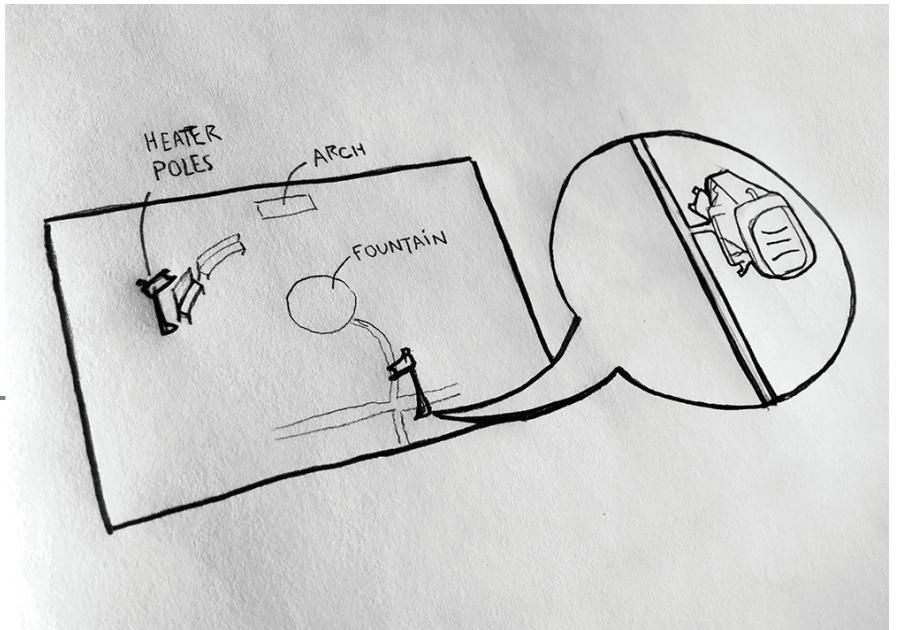


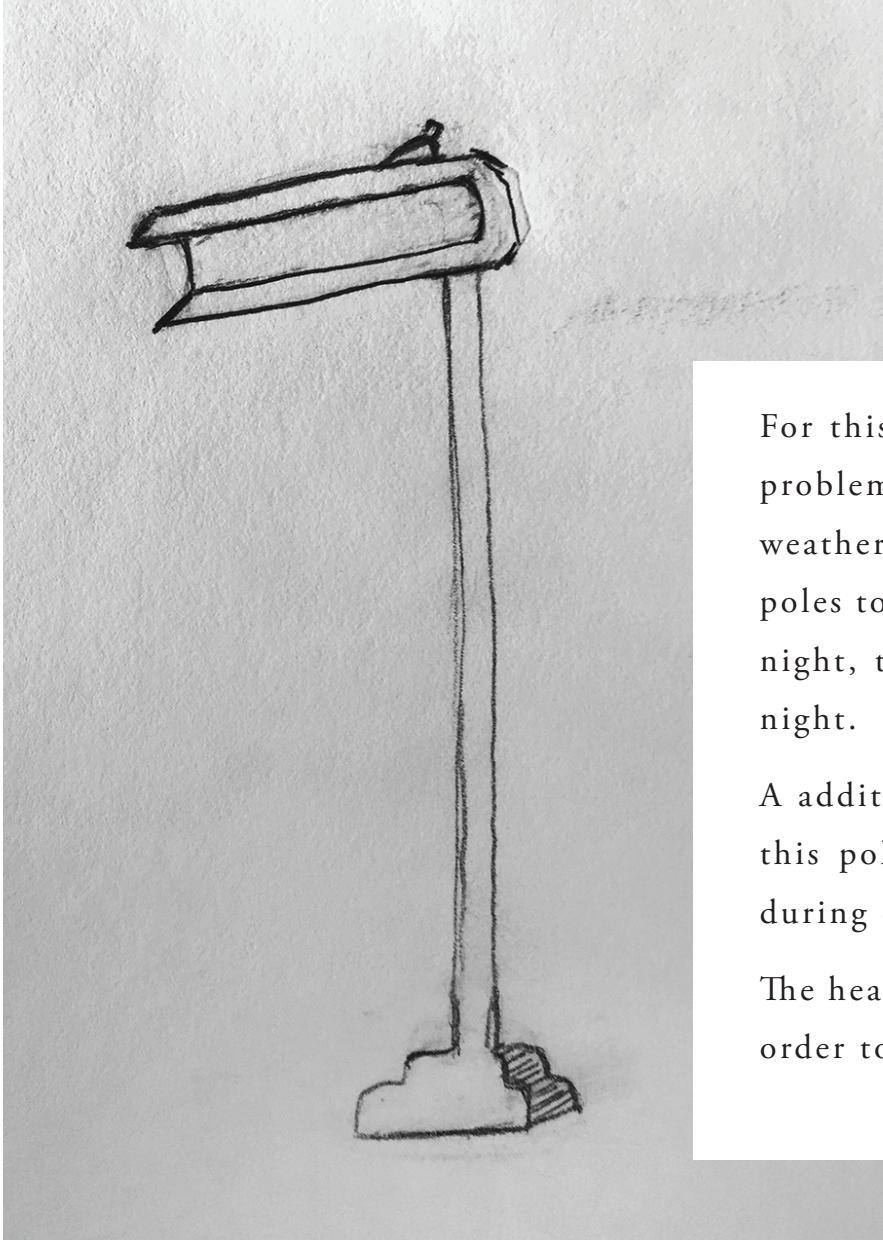
Participants sharing memories using the pictures.

ALTERATION

proposal

Each applied method helped to specify the concepts that were polished until last activity, the moment when key-words summarize what a possible solution should have.





For this project the solution found solves two of the biggest problems the park faces during winter: poor light and cold weather. The solution would involve the installation of heater poles to be working during the day. As the park closes at midnight, they would be turned off but not removed during the night.

A additional function would be also important: light spot to this poles - to increase safety and to call peoples attention during evenings or early night times.

The heater poles could or could not work with coin system: in order to turn the heat on, user must pay with a dollar coin.

REFERENCE

Martin, Bella, and Bruce M. Hanington. *Universal Methods of Design: 100 Ways to Research Complex Problems, Develop Innovative Ideas, and Design Effective Solutions*. Beverly, MA: Rockport, 2012.