



## Liberating Structures Cards

A print-at-home card deck

created by  
Vasileios Papadopoulos

[github.com/vpapadopou](https://github.com/vpapadopou)

### Description

Inspired by Holisticon's original idea, this card deck can help you create strings easily or act as a quick reminder of each format

### Attribution

Liberating Structures are developed by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless  
Link: <http://liberatingstructures.com>

The original LS Cards were created by Holisticon AG  
Link: <https://holisticon.de>

Liberating Structures SVG icons were created by Julian Fastnacht  
Link: <https://github.com/jfastnacht>



## Liberating Structures Cards

[github.com/vpapadopou](https://github.com/vpapadopou)

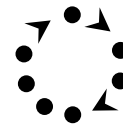
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### Closing thoughts

Please keep this card with the deck, I'd really appreciate it. Have fun :)



## 1-2-4-All

Engage everyone simultaneously in generating questions, ideas and suggestions

### Reveal

12 min

### Invitation

Ask a question in response to the presentation of an issue, or about a problem to resolve or a proposal put forward

### People

Start alone, then in pairs, then groups of four, then the whole group

### Space & Materials

- Space for people to work face-to-face in pairs and foursomes
- Paper for participants to record observations and insights
- Chairs and tables (optional)



## 1-2-4-All

### Reveal

12 min

### Steps

Silent self-reflection by individuals on a shared challenge, framed as a question 1 min

Generate ideas in pairs, building on ideas from self-reflection 2 min

Share and develop ideas from your pair in foursomes (notice similarities and differences) 4 min

Each group shares one important idea with all (repeat cycle as needed) 5 min

### String With

Design Storyboards, Improv Prototyping, Ecocycle Planning



## Impromptu Networking

Rapidly share challenges and expectations, while building new connections

### Share

20 min

### Invitation

Ask:

- "What big challenge do you bring to this gathering?"
- "What do you hope to get from and give this group or community?"

### People

- Ask participants to pair up
- Invite them to find strangers or colleagues in groups/functions different from their own

### Space & Materials

Open space without obstructions so participants can stand in pairs and mill about to find partners



## Impromptu Networking

### Share

20 min

### Steps

2 minutes per person to answer the questions and connect with its pair 5 min

Change partners and do the same again 2 more times 10 min

### String With

Social Network Webbing, 15% Solutions



## Nine Whys

Make the purpose of your work together clear

### Analyze

20 min

### Invitation

Ask:

- "What do you do when working on ... (the subject matter or challenge at hand)? Please make a short list of activities."
- "Why is that important to you?"
- Keep asking, "Why? Why? Why?" up to nine times or until participants have reached the fundamental purpose for this work

### People

Start with pairs, then groups of four, then the whole group

### Space & Materials

- Chairs for people to sit face-to-face
- No tables or equipment needed



## Nine Whys

### Analyze

20 min

### Steps

Each person is interviewed by their partner. 5 min

Starting with "What do you do when working on...?" the interviewer gently seeks a deeper answer by repeating the query: "Why is that important to you?"

Switch roles 5 min

Each pair shares experience and insights with another pair 5 min

Invite the whole group to reflect by asking: "How do our purposes influence the next steps we take?" 5 min

### String With

Purpose-To-Practice, Generative Relationships, Wise Crowds, What, So What, Now What?



## Wicked Questions

Articulate the paradoxical challenges that a group must confront to succeed

**Reveal** 25 min

### Invitation

#### Ask:

"What opposing-yet-complementary strategies do we need to pursue simultaneously in order to be successful?"

### People

Ask participants to form groups of 4 to 6 people

### Space & Materials

- Chairs
- Paper for participants to record observations and insights
- Small round tables (optional)



## Wicked Questions

**Reveal** 25 min

### Steps

Introduce the concept of Wicked Questions and paradox. Give the following template: "How is it that we are ... and we are ... simultaneously?"

First alone then in small groups, generate pairs of opposites or paradoxes using the above format

Each group selects its most impactful Wicked Question and shares it with the whole group

Whole group picks out the most powerful Wicked Questions and further refines them

### String With

Improv Prototyping, Ecocycle Planning, 25/10 Crowd Sourcing, 15% Solutions, 1-2-4-All



## Appreciative Interviews

Discover & build on the root causes of success

**Share** **Reveal** 60 min

### Invitation

#### Ask:

"Please tell a story about a time when you worked on a challenge with others and you are proud of what you accomplished. What is the story and what made the success possible? Pair up preferably with someone you don't know well."

### People

- Start with pairs, then groups of 4
- Encourage groups to be diverse

### Space & Materials

- Chairs for people to sit in pairs face-to-face
- Paper for participants to take notes



## Appreciative Interviews

**Share** **Reveal** 60 min

### Steps

In pairs, participants take turns conducting an interview and telling a success story. Pay attention to what made success possible

In groups of 4, each person retells the story of their partner. Listen for patterns in conditions/assets supporting success and take notes

Collect insights and patterns for the whole group on a flip chart

Ask: "How are we investing in the assets and conditions that foster success?" and "What opportunities do you see to do more?" Use 1-2-4-All to discuss

**String With**  
Min Specs



## TRIZ

Stop counterproductive activities & behaviors to make space for innovation

**Reveal** 35 min

### People

Ask participants to form groups of 4 to 7 people

### Space & Materials

- Chairs
- Paper for participants to record observations and insights
- Small tables (optional)

### String With

Ecocycle Planning, Troika Consulting, Wise Crowds, Open Space Technology



## TRIZ

**Reveal** 35 min

### Invitation & Steps

Introduce the idea of TRIZ and identify an unwanted result

"Make a list of all you can do to make sure you achieve the worst possible results." Use 1-2-4-All

"Ask yourselves: 'Is there anything that we are currently doing that in any way, shape, or form resembles this item?' Create a second list of all your counterproductive activities/programs/procedures." Use 1-2-4-All

"What first steps will help you stop what you know creates undesirable results?" Use 1-2-4-All



## 15% Solutions

Discover & focus on what each person has the freedom and resources to do now

**Reveal** 20 min

### Invitation

In connection with their personal challenge or their group's challenge, ask:

- "What is your 15 percent?"
- "Where do you have discretion and freedom to act?"
- "What can you do without more resources or authority?"

### People

Start alone, then groups of 2 to 4 people

### Space & Materials

Chairs for people to sit in groups



## 15% Solutions

**Reveal** 20 min

### Steps

First alone, each person generates their own list of 15% Solutions

Individuals share their ideas with a small group, one person at a time (3 min per person)

Group members provide consultation to one another (asking clarifying questions and offering advice), one person at a time (5-7 min per person)

### String With

Troika Consulting, Wise Crowds, Open Space Technology, Integrated-Autonomy, Helping Heuristics



## Troika Consulting

Get practical and imaginative help from colleagues immediately

**Help** **Reveal** 30 min

### Invitation

Invite the group to explore the questions:  
- "What is your challenge?"  
- "What kind of help do you need?"

### People

- Ask participants to form groups of 3 people  
- People with diverse backgrounds and perspectives are most helpful

### Space & Materials

- Groups of 3 chairs, knee-to-knee seating preferred  
- No tables



## Troika Consulting

**Help** **Reveal** 30 min

### Steps

Invite participants to reflect on the consulting question they plan to ask when they are the clients 1 min

The first client shares their question 2 min

Consultants ask clarifying questions 2 min

Client turns their back to consultants. The two consultants generate ideas, suggestions, coaching advice 5 min

Client turns around and shares what were the most valuable things 2 min

Switch to next person and repeat steps 22 min

### String With

Helping Heuristics, Nine Whys, Heard-Seen-Respected



## What? So What? Now What? W<sup>3</sup>

Together, look back on progress to date and decide what adjustments are needed

**Analyze** 45 min

### Invitation

After a shared experience, ask three questions to reflect in a way that builds understanding and spurs coordinated action while avoiding unproductive conflict

### People

Start alone, then groups of 5 to 7 people, then the whole group

### Space & Materials

- Chairs for people to sit in small groups  
- Paper to make lists  
- Flip chart may be needed with a large group to collect answers  
- Small tables & Talking object (optional)



## What? So What? Now What? W<sup>3</sup>

**Analyze** 45 min

### Steps

Individuals work 1 min alone on "What happened? What did you notice, what facts or observations stood out?" 8 min  
Then, 2-7 mins in small groups

Salient facts are shared with the whole group and collected 3 min

Repeat the same process with: "Why is that important? What patterns or conclusions are emerging? What hypotheses can I/we make?" 13 min

Then with: "Now what? What actions make sense?" 18 min



## Discovery & Action Dialog

Discover, invent and unleash local solutions to chronic problems

**Reveal** 50 min

### People

- Facilitator works with a partner to serve as a recorder  
- Total group size should be between 5-15 people  
- Diversity in roles and experience is an important asset

### Space & Materials

- DADs take place in a local setting or unit  
- Groups may be standing or sitting around a table  
- Paper, flip chart or projection equipment is needed to record insights and actions

### String With

Improv Prototyping



## Discovery & Action Dialog

**Reveal** 50 min

### Invitation & Steps

State the purpose of the initiative being discussed and the DAD and invite brief round-robin introductions 5 min

Ask the 7 questions one by one: 60 min

1. How do you know the problem exists?
2. How do you contribute the solution?
3. What prevents you from doing this or taking these actions all the time?
4. Do you know anybody who is able to frequently solve the problem and overcome barriers? What made their success possible?
5. Do you have any ideas?
6. What needs to be done to make it happen? Any volunteers?
7. Who else needs to be involved?

Ask the recorder to recap insights 5 min



## Shift & Share

Spread good ideas and make informal connections with innovators

**Share** 90 min

### Invitation

Visit several innovators who will share something new or innovative

### People

- Presenters set up their individual stations  
- Whole group is split into the same number of small groups as there are presenters  
- Groups stay together while they rotate through all the innovation stations

### Space & Materials

- Large space where 5 to 8 stations (with chairs) can be set up far enough from each other to minimize interference  
- Space for a display as needed by presenters



## Shift & Share

**Share** 90 min

### Steps

Describe the process: 5 min  
Groups will move from station to station for a 10-minute presentation and brief questions & feedback period

Each group goes to a different station, where presenters conduct their sessions 10 min

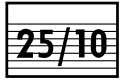
Participants ask questions or provide feedback 2 min

Groups move to the next station 1 min

Repeat until groups have visited all stations

### String With

Improv Prototyping, What? So What? Now What?



## 25/10 Crowd Sourcing

Rapidly generate & sift a group's most powerful actionable ideas

**Reveal** 30 min

### Invitation

#### Ask:

"If you were ten times bolder, what big idea would you recommend? What first step would you take to get started?"

#### People

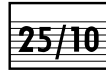
Start alone, mill around, then in pairs

#### Space & Materials

- Open space without chairs or tables
- Index cards (one for each participant)

#### String With

Open Space, Agreement-Certainty Matrix, Ecocycle Planning



## 25/10 Crowd Sourcing

**Reveal** 30 min

### Steps

Explain the process and demonstrate 5 min

Every participant writes their bold idea on an index card 5 min

People mill around and cards are passed from person to person (mill and pass only - no reading). When the bell rings, people stop passing cards and pair up to exchange thoughts on the cards in their hands. Participants individually rate the idea on their card with a score of 1 to 5 and write it on the back of the card 3 min

Conduct four more rounds 12 min

Find the top ten best-scoring ideas 5 min

Ask: "What caught your attention?" 2 min



## Wise Crowds

Tap the wisdom of the whole group in rapid cycles

**Reveal** **Help** 15 min

### Invitation

Ask each participant to be the "client" when their turn comes and briefly describe their challenge and ask for help

Ask the other participants to act as a group of "consultants" whose task is to help the "client" and offer advice or recommendations

#### People

- Groups of 4 to 5 people
- Mixed groups across functions, levels and disciplines are ideal

#### Space & Materials

- Groups of 4 or 5 chairs arranged around small tables or in circles without tables
- Paper for participants to take notes



## Wise Crowds

**Reveal** **Help** 15 min

### Steps

The client presents their challenge and asks for help 2 min

Consultants ask clarifying questions 3 min

The client turns their back to the consultants and gets ready to take notes. Consultants ask questions and offer advice and recommendations, working as a team 8 min

The client provides feedback to the consultants: what was useful and what they take away 2 min

#### String With

Helping Heuristics + Heard-Seen-Respected, Nine Whys, Troika Consulting, What I Need From You, Appreciative Interviews



## Min Specs

Specify only the absolute "Must do's" & "Must not do's" for achieving a purpose

**Strategize** 45 min

### Invitation

In the context of a challenging activity, a new initiative, or a strategic bottleneck, invite participants to generate a list of all the do's and don'ts they should pay attention to in order to achieve a successful outcome (Max Specs) Ask participants to reduce the previous list to the absolute minimum needed to achieve their purpose (Min Specs)

#### People

Start alone, then small groups of 4 to 7, then the whole group

#### Space & Materials

- Groups of 4 to 7 chairs around small tables
- Paper to record Max and Min Specs



## Min Specs

**Strategize** 45 min

### Steps

Starting alone, each participant generates their Max Specs list 1 min

Repeat the process, this time in small groups. Make list as complete as possible 5 min

Each group sifts through the list one item at a time and eliminates every rule that gets a positive answer to: "If we broke or ignored this rule, could we still achieve our purpose?" 15 min

Do a second round if needed 15 min

Consolidate across groups to the shortest possible list 15 min

String With Simple Ethnography, Nine Whys

#### String With

Simple Ethnography, Nine Whys



## Improv Prototyping

Develop effective solutions to chronic challenges while having serious fun

**Reveal** 20 min

### Invitation

Identify a chronic challenge in your work, then playfully experiment, invent, and discover better ways to address the challenge by acting out the situation and possible solutions

#### People

- One small group of players on "the stage"
- All others, the observers, in small groups in front or around the stage

#### Space & Materials

Open space or stage with chairs for everyone

#### String With

Design StoryBoards, Shift & Share, User Experience Fishbowl



## Improv Prototyping

**Reveal** 20 min

### Steps

Explaining the process 2 min

Describe the scenario 3 min

Players on stage enact the scene 3-5 min

Each group debriefs with 1-2-4-All to identify successful and unsuccessful "chunks" from the observed scene 5 min

Each group pieces together the successful chunks into a new prototype. Volunteers act out the new prototype for their own group 5 min

Participants from one of the groups who believe they have an improved prototype come on stage and enact their version for the whole group (Repeat as necessary) 3-5 min



## Helping Heuristics

Practice progressive methods for helping others, receiving and asking for help

### Help 15 min

#### Invitation

Participants view all human interactions as offers that are either accepted or blocked

#### People

Groups of 3: two participants interacting face-to-face in the roles of client (with a challenge to share) and coach plus one observer (roles can change between rounds)

#### Space & Materials

Standing participants, no chairs or tables

#### String With

Troika Consulting, Wise Crowds, What I Need From You, Improv Prototyping, Simple Ethnography



## Helping Heuristics

### Help 15 min

#### Steps

Explain the process 2 min

"Quiet Presence": Coach accepts all offers with compassionate listening 2 min

"Guided Discovery": Coach accepts all offers, guiding inquiry for mutual discoveries 2 min

"Loving Provocation": Coach interjects advice, accepting and blocking as needed when they see something that the client does not 2 min

"Process Mindfulness": Coach and client accept all offers from each other, while noticing how novel possibilities are amplified 2 min

Debrief in the group 5 min



## Conversation Cafe

Engage everyone in making sense of profound challenges

### Share 50 min

#### Invitation

Invite all participants to gather in small groups to listen to one another's thoughts and reflect together on a shared challenge

#### People

- Mixed, diverse groups of 5-7 participants
- One person to act as the host - a participant whose role is to gently intervene when another participant visibly fails to observe one of the six Conversation Cafe agreements

#### Space & Materials

- Groups of 5 to 7 chairs around small tables
- Talking object
- Markers and one or two pieces of flip-chart paper per table (optional)



## Conversation Cafe

### Share 50 min

#### Steps

State the theme of the conversation, usually in the form of a question and explaining the process

Each person shares what they are thinking, feeling, or doing about the theme or topic 1 min p.p.

Each person shares thoughts and feelings after having listened to everybody at the table 1 min p.p.

Open conversation 20-40 min

Each member shares "takeaways" 5-10 min

#### String With

What? So What? Now What?, 15% Solutions, Design StoryBoards, Open Space Technology, User Experience Fishbowl



## User Experience Fishbowl

Share know-how gained from experience with a larger community

### Share 50 min

#### Invitation

Ask those in the fishbowl to describe their experience - the good, the bad and the ugly - informally, concretely, and openly. Invite them to do it in conversation with each other as if the audience wasn't there. Firmly, ask them to avoid presenting to the audience

#### People

- One inner circle group of 3-7 people
- One outer circle with multiple small satellite groups of 3-4 people

#### Space & Materials

- 3-7 chairs in circle in the middle of the room
- Chairs as needed in an outer circle
- Microphones (optional)



## User Experience Fishbowl

### Share 50 min

#### Steps

Explain configuration and steps 2 min

Inner circle conversation goes on until it ends on its own 10-25 min

Groups in outer circle formulate observations and questions 4 min

Questions submitted to the inner circle are answered. Back-and-forth interaction between inner and outer circles goes on as needed 10-25 min

Debrief using What? So What? Now What? and ask: "What seems possible now?" 10-15 min

#### String With

Improv Prototyping, 25/10 Crowd Sourcing, Ecocycle Planning, Simple Ethnography, Shift & Share



## Heard, Seen, Respected (HSR)

Practice deeper listening and empathy with colleagues

### Help 35 min

#### Invitation

- Tell a story to a partner about a time when you felt you were not heard, seen or respected
- Ask listeners to avoid any interruptions except for asking clarifying questions

#### People

In pairs for the storytelling, then foursomes

#### Space & Materials

Chairs facing each other, a few inches between knees

#### String With

Troika Consulting, Generative Relationships STAR, Appreciative Interviews, Helping Heuristics Conversation Cafe



## Heard, Seen, Respected (HSR)

### Help 50 min

#### Steps

Introduce the purpose of HSR: To practice listening without trying to fix anything or make any judgments 3 min

One at a time, each person has 7 minutes to share their story 15 min

Partners share with one another the experiences of listening and storytelling 5 min

In a foursome, participants share reflections using 1-2-4, asking, "What patterns are revealed in the stories? What importance do you assign to the pattern?" 5 min

Whole group reflects on how HSR could be used to address challenges revealed by the patterns 5 min





## Drawing Together

Reveal insights and paths forward through non-verbal expression

**Reveal** 40 min

### Invitation

Invite participants to tell a story about a challenge they face or a common challenge, using only five symbols and no words

### People

Start alone, then in groups of 1-4 people, then the whole group

### Space & Materials

- Open wall with tapestry paper or flip charts
- Water-based markers

### Symbols

Circle: wholeness, Rectangle: support, Triangle: goal, Spiral: change, Star Person: relationship



## Drawing Together

**Reveal** 40 min

### Steps

Introduce the concept and symbols 5 min

Practice drawing the symbols 5 min

Working individually, combine the symbols to create the first draft of a story about "the journey" of working on a challenge or an innovation 10 min

Create a second draft. Refine the story by dramatizing the size, placement and color of the symbols 10 min

Invite another individual or the small group to interpret your drawings. The person who has done the drawing does not speak 5 min

Ask the whole group: "Together, what do the drawings reveal?" 5 min



## Design Storyboards

Define step-by-step elements for bringing initiatives or meetings to productive endpoints

**Plan** 50 min

### Invitation

Invite a design team (a representative subset of the group) to create a detailed plan, including visual cues, for how participants will interact to achieve their purpose

### People

1-2-All or 1-All in rapid cycles for each step

### Space & Materials

- Open wall with tapestry paper or flip charts
- Large Post-its and/or LS Cards
- Blank storyboard



## Design Storyboards

**Plan** 50 min

### Steps

Clarify the purpose of working together (use Nine Whys if needed) 2-5 min

Evaluate the standard approach you would normally use for this session 5-10 min

Reexamine and strengthen the purpose statement if needed 2-5 min

Reexamine and decide who needs to participate or be involved 2-5 min

Brainstorm microstructures that could achieve the purpose 5-10 min

Select the best microstructures (choose one plus a backup) 2-10 min

Determine the questions and process you will use to evaluate your design 2-5 min



## Celebrity Interview

Reconnect the experience of leaders and experts with people closest to the challenge at hand

**Share** 45 min

### Invitation

- Invite the celebrity to let go of their formal presentation or speech and answer the harder questions in a casual "talk show" format
- Invite group members to listen, see the person behind the celebrity and write down questions with colleagues

### People

Whole group for the interview, 1-2-4 to generate questions

### Space & Materials

- Interviewer and celebrity in the front of the room where everyone can see and hear the interaction
- Large cards to collect questions



## Celebrity Interview

**Share** 45 min

### Steps

Interviewer welcomes and introduces the celebrity & topic to be discussed 3 min

Interviewer asks questions that the audience would be expected to ask 15-30 min

Participants generate additional questions in a 1-2-4 conversation and write them on cards 5-10 min

Interviewer sifts the cards, looking for patterns and asking additional questions to the celebrity 5-10 min

Interviewer makes closing comments, thanks the celebrity 1 min

### String With

User Experience Fishbowl, Open Space Technology, Discovery & Action Dialogue, What I Need From You



## Social Network Webbing

Map informal connections and decide how to strengthen the network to achieve a purpose

**Share** **Help** 60 min

### Invitation

Invite members of a core working group with a shared purpose to create a map of their network and decide how to expand and strengthen it

### People

- 1-2-4-All to generate names of key groups
- Whole group to generate names of people in the network and construct the map

### Space & Materials

- Open wall with tapestry paper or multiple flip-chart pages
- Post-it notes in at least 8 colors
- Bold-tip black pens



## Social Network Webbing

**Share** **Help** 60 min

### Steps

Create a legend of all the key groups in the network and assign a Post-it color or symbol for each (1-2-4-All) 5 min

Each member writes their name on a Post-it and puts it in the wall 5 min

"What people do you know that are active in this work?" 20 min

"Who else would you like to include in this work?"

Create a spider-web-like map

Draw connecting lines to illustrate influencing patterns 15 min

Devise strategies to strengthen the network 10 min

### String With

15% Solutions, Design StoryBoards, 1-2-4-All



## What I Need From You (WINFY)

Surface most essential needs across functions and accept or reject requests for support

**Help** 65 min

### Invitation

Invite participants to ask for what they need from others to be successful in reaching a specific goal

### People

- 3-7 functional clusters (unlimited members)
- One spokesperson from each cluster

### Space & Materials

- Chairs for a group of 3 to 7 people to sit in a circle in the middle of the room
- Paper for participants to take notes

### String With

Helping Heuristics, Integrated~Autonomy, Appreciative Interviews, Ecocycle Planning



## What I Need From You (WINFY)

**Help** 65 min

### Steps

Explain the process 3 min

Clusters use 1-2-4-All (or 1-2-All) to make a list of their top needs from each of the other clusters in the room using the format: "What I need from you is ..."

Spokespersons gather and state their top two needs 1-by-1 to each other 15 min

Spokespersons (with group) write down one of four responses to each request: Yes, No, I will try, Whatever 5-10 min

Spokespersons repeat their requests and share their responses (No discussion! No elaboration!) 10 min

Debrief with W<sup>3</sup> 15 min



## Open Space Technology

Liberate inherent action and leadership in large groups

**Reveal** 90 min

### Invitation

Invite participants to co-construct the agenda by posting sessions that they will convene on topics they are passionate about

### People

- Start together in one large circle (or as many concentric circles as needed)
- Continue with groups of various sizes self-organized around agenda topics

### Space & Materials

- Chairs in concentric circles in a large room
- Large blank agenda posted on wall. It should include slots for enough concurrent sessions to accommodate what is likely to emerge given the challenge and the number of participants



## Open Space Technology

**Reveal** 90 min

### Steps

Facilitator introduces the concept and mechanics of Open Space including the *Law of Two Feet* and its *Four Principles* 5 min

"Marketplace" opens: participants propose topics plus a time and space for groups to meet 15 min

Conveners facilitate sessions. Groups develop recommendations and action plans. Notes are taken and published or posted 2x30 min

Debrief, proceedings distributed and closing 10 min

### String With

Before: Celebrity Interview, Appreciative Interviews, TRIZ  
After: 25/10 Crowd Sourcing



## Generative Relationships

Reveal and understand relationship patterns that create value or dysfunctions

**Analyze** 25 min

### Invitation

Invite participants to assess their working group or team in terms of four attributes:

- S** - Separateness (diversity)
- T** - Tuning (listening, reflecting on challenges)
- A** - Action (opportunities to act on ideas)
- R** - Reason to work together

### People

Start alone, then small groups, then the whole group

### Space & Materials

- Tables for small groups of 4, with a STAR compass graphic and pens for each individual
- A STAR compass graphic on a flip-chart page for each small group & one for the whole group



## Generative Relationships

**Analyze** 25 min

### Steps

Participants individually assess where the team is in regard to each of the four elements 5 min

In small groups, participants place a dot along each compass point, then talk with their neighbors (1-2-4) about their placements, looking for consensus and differences 5 min

Small groups decide what type of results are generated by the pattern of interaction they have identified 5 min

Small groups brainstorm action steps to boost elements needing attention 5 min

Whole group assembles list of action steps and decides: "What first steps can we take right now?" 5 min



## Agreement-Certainty Matrix

Sort challenges into simple, complicated, complex and chaotic domains

**Analyze** 45 min

### Invitation

Categorize challenges as simple, complicated, complex or chaotic & place them in the matrix

### People

Start alone, groups of 4-6, whole group

### Space & Materials

- Chairs for groups with or without small tables
- Long open wall with a large tapestry paper illustration of the matrix
- One blank matrix for every participant
- Post-it notes and markers for everybody

### String With

Critical Uncertainties, Purpose-To-Practice, Ecocycle, Panarchy, Integrated~Autonomy



## Agreement-Certainty Matrix

**Analyze** 45 min

### Steps

Participants individually generate list of challenges 5 min

Participants place challenges in their individual matrices 5 min

Discuss in pairs 5 min

In a group of 4-6: find points of agreement, difference & mismatches 10 min

Everyone post their challenges on the large wall matrix 5 min

In small groups: "What pattern do we see? Do any mismatches stand out that we should address?" 5 min

Whole group: Share reflections and decide next steps 10 min



## Simple Ethnography

Observe and record actual behaviors of users in the field

**Analyze** 75 min

### Invitation

Invite participants to silently observe people with experience relevant to the challenge at hand and then follow up with interviews for more insight

### People

In 1s or 2s distributed among sites being observed, whole group for debrief

### Space & Materials

- Local setting (workplace, client organization, neighborhood) with a convenient space for sharing findings, photos, and videos
- Notebook, camera, video (optional)



## Simple Ethnography

**Analyze** 75 min

### Steps

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| Explain the problem and situation   | 5 min      |
| Identify sites to observe and people to shadow  | 5 min      |
| Visit sites and observe interactions and activities without speaking. Record details & internal reflections | 10-180 min |
| Select behaviors that address the challenge and interview individuals                                       | 20-180 min |
| Regroup and use 1-2-4-All to compare notes and find patterns  | 15 min     |
| Write up observations   | 10-20 min  |
| Feed insights into brainstorming and prototyping efforts (Repeat process as needed)                         | 10 min     |



## Integrated Autonomy

Move from either-or to robust both-and solutions

**Strategize** 80 min

### Invitation

"Will our purpose be best served by increased local autonomy, customization, competition, and freedom among units/sites? Or by increased integration, standardization, and control among units/sites? Or both?"

### People

Start alone, then small groups of 4, then the whole group

### Space & Materials

- Chairs for people to sit in groups of 4, with or without small tables
- "Integrated Autonomy Worksheet" for each participant and a large one on the wall
- Paper for recording activities and action steps



## Integrated Autonomy

**Strategize** 80 min

### Steps

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| Introduce the idea  | 5 min    |
| 1-2-4-All to generate a list of activities requiring attention  | 10 min   |
| Groups of four pick and work on one activity from the list  | 10 min   |
| 1-2-4 to develop action steps for standardization/customization   | 10 min   |
| "Which actions boost both? What modifications or ideas can be adopted to move some actions from the standardization/customization group to the common group?" | 5+15 min |
| 1-2-4-All to prioritize the most promising actions that promote both integration and autonomy   | 10 min   |



## Critical Uncertainties

Develop strategies for successfully operating in a range of plausible yet unpredictable futures

**Strategize** 100 min

### Invitation

Identify the most critical and uncertain "realities" in your operating environment or market. Which strategies can help?

### People

Have a group large and diverse enough to break it up into four separate small groups

### Space & Materials

- Four groups of chairs around tables
- Paper, Post-it notes, flip charts, or tapestry paper for each group

### String With

Conversation Cafe, P2P, WINFY, Open Space Technology, Wicked Questions, Min Specs



## Critical Uncertainties

**Strategize** 100 min

### Steps

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| Describe the sequence of steps  | 2 min  |
| Make a list of uncertainties  | 5 min  |
| Prioritize the most critical factors  | 10 min |
| Select the two most critical and most uncertain, place on grid as X and Y. Four quadrants are created | 5 min  |
| Each group writes a scenario for one quadrant, shares it, brainstorms strategies and shares them      | 40 min |
| Select robust and hedging strategies  | 10 min |
| Groups debrief with W <sup>3</sup>  | 10 min |
| Groups share their debriefs and select a Now What to follow   | 10 min |



## Ecocycle Planning

Analyze the full portfolio of activities & relationships to identify obstacles & opportunities for progress

**Analyze** **Strategize** 95 min

### Invitation

View, organize, and prioritize current activities using four developmental phases: birth, maturity, creative destruction and renewal. Formulate action steps linked to each phase

### People

1-2-4-All, small groups for action steps

### Space & Materials

- Chairs in groups of 4, with or without tables
- Blank Ecocycle map worksheet for each participant & large version posted on the wall
- Post-it notes for each activity

### String With

Panarchy, 1-2-4-All, WINFY, Open Space



## Ecocycle Planning

**Analyze** **Strategize** 95 min

### Steps

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| Introduce the idea of the Ecocycle   | 5 min  |
| Generate individual activity list  | 5 min  |
| Place activities on the Ecocycle, 2-4-All with Post-its on the big wall map  | 40 min |
| Decide for activities with consensus which to stop and which to start  | 15 min |
| Create first-action steps for items in the Rigidity and the Poverty trap   | 20 min |
| Ask all the groups to focus on all the activities for which there is no consensus. When possible, create first-action steps to handle each one | 10 min |





## Panarchy

Understand how embedded systems interact, evolve, influence the spread of innovation and transform

**Analyze** **Strategize** 120 min

### Invitation

What is contributing to the existence of a challenge at levels above and below you?

### People

1-2-4-All

### Space & Materials

- Room with unobstructed flat wall
- Blank Panarchy chart handout
- Large wall-poster version of Panarchy chart
- Post-it notes for each participant
- Flip-chart pages for the Panarchy graphic

### String With

Ecocycle Planning, 1-2-4-All, WINFY, Social Network Webbing, Celebrity Interview



## Panarchy

**Analyze** **Strategize** 120 min

### Steps

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| Introduce the idea of the Panarchy (and the Ecocycle if needed)               | 5 min  |
| Identify the levels of the Panarchy   | 30min  |
| Identify obstacles and opportunities  | 50 min |
| Create and share action steps   | 25 min |
| Debrief using What? So What? Now What? and prioritize the next possible steps | 15 min |

*(Please refer to the book or website for detailed instructions)*



## Purpose-To-Practice (P2P)

Define the five essential elements for a resilient & enduring initiative

**Plan** 120 min

### Invitation

Invite all or most stakeholders to participate in the design of their new initiative in order to specify its five essential elements: purpose, principles, participants, structure and practices

### People

- Start with 1-2-4-All
- Whole group for finalizing each element

### Space & Materials

- Chairs and small tables for people to work in groups of 4
- Large wall with poster paper for recording the P2P result for each element
- Five worksheets for each participant, one for each of the five elements



## Purpose-To-Practice (P2P)

**Plan** 120 min

### Steps

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| Introduce the idea of P2P  | 5 min  |
| Use 1-2-4-All to clarify purpose   | 10 min |
| In groups of four, compare, sift and amplify the top ideas   | 10 min |
| As a whole group, integrate themes and finalize ideas for Purpose                                      | 10 min |
| Repeat process to clarify principles, participants, structure and practices                            | 55 min |
| After each element:<br>"Has this element shed new light that suggests revisions to previous elements?" | 5 min  |
| Debrief using W <sup>3</sup> in small groups and prioritize next steps as a whole group                | 15 min |