

Boat Tree Game Buttons

How ordinary objects can spark extraordinary change
Cultural Animation and Community Organising

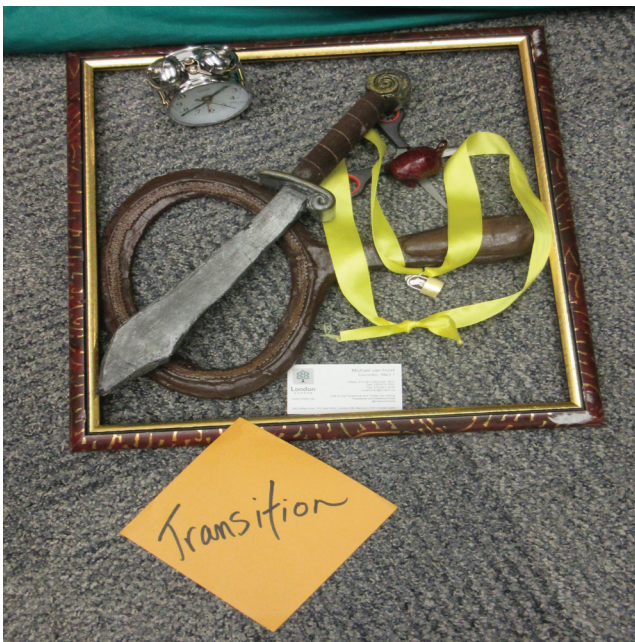


PRACTICE REPORT

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Jericho Road Solutions

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 Evaluating the Legacy of Animative and Iterative
 Connected Communities Projects:
 A Three Dimensional Model of Change

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“On the one hand we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life’s roadside, but that will only be an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed, so that men and women are not constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life’s history.”

Martin Luther King, ‘A time to break silence’, 1967
www.jerichoroad.co.uk



PREFACE

Mihaela Kelemen: A good friend of mine who was a senior NHS manager said over coffee about 5 years ago: “you must meet this fabulous theatre director who ran some extraordinary experiential workshops for the NHS. You two have a lot in common.” I couldn’t really see what I’d have in common with a theatre director. After all, I trained as an economist and work in a management school, teaching American Pragmatism and leadership. But I did meet Sue and it became obvious within seconds that we share the same social values, aspirations and understandings of the world. Our languages were different but we were driven by the same passion: to make the world a more inclusive and fair place. Through our first AHRC grant, we met Martin, a geographer, and Jess, a community organiser and activist at Connected Communities events. The synergies were amazing. We quickly realised that American Pragmatism, theatre, geography and community organising make a powerful cocktail of robust theoretical insights and learning grounded in grassroots experiences. Call it serendipity, but as a result of the Connected Community work I became a more rounded human being and my academic practice has changed beyond recognition, affecting positively the way my university views and supports community-based research.

Sue Moffat: I met Mihaela five years ago. She said ‘you should read...’, I said ‘why?!’. I didn’t know anything about her, just that she was Romanian. Very quickly I recognised that her ethos and values matched mine. I had no idea why she was important or why she was an American Pragmatist! Going on about Dewey – I thought he was all about libraries! But we knew we wanted to do something together. She was having a hard time with her MA students who weren’t engaging, sometimes not even turning up. I said ‘bring them to the theatre!’ She gave me the background papers and I designed a whole day around her theories. On the bus on the way to the theatre they were disengaged but on the way back they were lively and asking ‘so what do you call this then?’; the closest I could come to describing it was ‘cultural animation’.

Jess Steele: I got involved in the AHRC advisory group and ended up in Edinburgh at an event. I had almost no idea what it was about and I arrived 15 minutes late so it never became clear. But that was where I met Mihaela and Sue and it was great from the get-go. Once we started talking we couldn’t stop – exploring all the things we had in common and mapping the differences. We knew then we wanted to work together. I could see how my experience of community engagement and particularly my work at the time in community organising could connect. I’ve always been interested in creative outreach, believing that ‘their apathy is the failure of your outreach’. I have been impressed by the depth and richness of simple techniques, and particularly the iterative opportunities which feed a more deliberative approach to engagement.

Martin Phillips: For me, this started as a research project engaging young people talking about place. We suggested they imagine creating a monopoly board – and it all spun out from there, so now there are different formats of the game (table-sized or room-sized) and it has been played in a range of settings from Glossop to Greece. When you play the game you are unlocking your own views and responding to other people’s, generating material to feed further iterative investigation. Glossopoly turned out to be a highly flexible method for community engagement, research and asset mapping. In Athens we were amazed at what they did with the game, including kickstarting new collaborations. Properly facilitated, these tools are very much the beginning of something...

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Community engagement is a dynamic and ongoing process, but it has to start somewhere. The tried-and-tested 'mosaic of methodologies' described in this report have proved themselves effective in kick-starting genuine engagement, problem-solving and group development. They can be used to facilitate collaborative work within groups of varying sizes, by people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

This Practice Report focuses on a rich set of techniques that have been tested and refined through the series of AHRC-funded Connected Communities projects led by Prof. Mihaela Kelemen at Keele University, working with Sue Moffat of the New Vic Borderlines and Prof. Martin Phillips at Leicester University. Jess Steele of Jericho Road Solutions joined the partnership to help locate and embed the techniques within a wider framework of community engagement and community organising.

This report is part of a Legacy Project with the following objectives:

1. To evaluate the intended and unintended legacies of the projects in terms of their methodologies, cultural outputs and partnerships;
2. To support and upscale the legacy of such projects by enlisting new communities and institutional stakeholders (such as Locality and the Department of Communities and Local Government);
3. To critically reflect on and learn from the positive and negative experiences of working in a cross-disciplinary and collaborative manner with community partners and other institutional stakeholders with the view to shed new light on what counts as quality, originality and impacts of research;
4. To co-produce and disseminate knowledge about what methodology works best in what context;
5. To synergise and exploit more fully the existing expertise and knowledge co-created within the CC programme in an international context.

The report introduces cultural animation and the Boat Tree Game and Buttons techniques, arguing that these 'simple games' create opportunities to span boundaries and elicit significant insights. If cultural animation offers 'the start of something' then placing it in a wider system of community organising could enhance the impact and longevity. We outline the impacts – individually, collectively, organisationally and academically – and highlight the iterative and developmental approach that continually re-shows, re-energises and re-invents the cultural artefacts of earlier cultural animation.

The second part of the report focuses on the process of making a card game that can present the techniques, theories and lessons from the project in a way that is itself animative. The card game remains very much a work in progress: these are our production notes.

1. This is one of many links between cultural animation and community organising. Alinsky would say 'enjoy the action', 'drag is a drag', 'never go outside your people's experience', 'go outside the enemy's experience'.

CULTURAL ANIMATION

Cultural animation puts the day to day experiences of ordinary people at the heart of inquiry (Kelemen and Rumens, 2013). Culturally animating a community involves acknowledging and critically approaching existing power and knowledge hierarchies and taking steps to minimise them, as a means to developing more interpretative and less legislative approaches to understanding and working with communities (Phillips, 1998a; 1998b; 2002). Cultural animation starts by validating the language used by community members to describe their experiences, placing the 'mantle of expert' upon their shoulders in order to explore what changes they would like to see, who should be involved and how to make them happen. By enlisting the creativity and potentiality of the community (Dworakowska et al, 2011), cultural animation creates opportunities for academics, policy makers and others in relative positions of power to access and understand the ambitions of these communities and create an environment where ordinary people can play a role in shaping their world and realising their ambitions. The outcomes of cultural animation are tangible actions with which all parties are able to identify and play an active role.

- Kelemen et al, *Untold stories final report*

While the techniques deployed and refined through these projects may at first consideration appear to be 'simple games', in practice they offer significant depths of insight. Iterative and developmental, they illuminate and challenge the fundamental philosophies that participants bring to the exercises and, apparently effortlessly, generate new 'collective intelligence'. The processes of collaboration and competition at the heart of all games rapidly build bonds between the 'players'. The fact that playing is fun makes these exercises more likely to engage more people for longer and more effectively. While cultural animation is not new it continues to represent a radical departure from standard consultation processes, valorising bottom-up creativity and raising wider questions about the 'politics of fun'.¹

The academics today (half doctoral students, half faculty) found the buttons at first bemusing. One said "ok, we get the point, now what?" after just a fraction of the sorting. I said "we carry on". So we did, and much more came out.

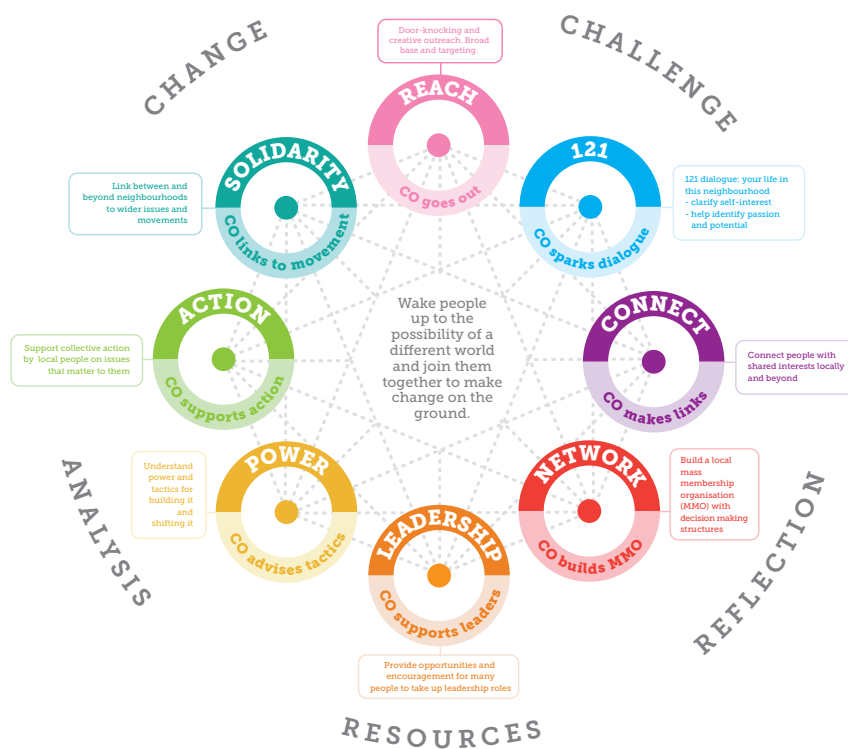
The buttons, game, tree and boat are all boundary spanning objects that spark new thinking, connect people together and translate between them. They are like the dog that brings two people together. The man buys a dog and starts chatting to a woman in the park. We can't know if they'll end up married, but without the dog they would never have met at all! As Tema said: "you guys are in the field creating dogs".

Cultural animation is 'the start of something'. It doesn't primarily focus on generating action in the world. Community organising, on the other hand, is a wider framework to support people to take action on issues that matter to them. The diagram or 'scaffolding' shown on the next page gives an overview. Cultural animation techniques are particularly relevant in REACH, DIALOGUE, CONNECT, NETWORK and SOLIDARITY.

COMMUNITY ORGANISING

Community organising aims to wake people up to the possibility of a different world and join them together to make change on the ground. It is a radical approach in the sense that it aims for the roots in both identifying and solving problems. The diagram below was developed as part of the national Community Organisers programme (2011-15) that trained and supported 500 full time Community Organisers who identified and developed a further 4,500 volunteer organisers and community leaders in neighbourhoods across England. The eight circles represent different aspects of community organising, while the words around the outside describe cross-cutting elements of the system.

Community organising reaches out widely and systematically, builds 121 relationships, connects people together to create a mass-membership network, supports leaders, builds an understanding of power so people can take effective action on issues that matter to them, and makes alliances with others to support each other and tackle wider issues.



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Cultural animation can play a crucial role as part of community organising. A legitimate question might be: how do you get from prop to action? from animation to activation? Placing cultural animation and community organising in the same frame can electrify the outreach element while offering insights to build on the engagement through work to support leaders, build power, take action, show solidarity. Alongside the standalone cultural animation techniques, we used a guided participative workshop based on the diagram above to explore the wider system.

IMPACT & LEGACY

The impact and the legacy of these cultural animation projects is multi-faceted. Each and every session has a discrete impact and legacy, while the multiple and iterative experience of the whole has created a coherent methodology that continues to spread. The techniques are not fixed but constantly evolving. “The game has been transformed in various contexts; it is out there rippling away.” (Martin Philips, 2015)

Individual participants change how they think about their own and each other’s aspirations and agendas. They pick up and practice new skills and emotional intelligence, useful in ordinary life as well as specifically in community work or teaching. They enjoy themselves and remember the experience.

Collectively, cultural animation promotes new thinking through dialogue and iteration. It was interesting that participants in Athens saw the questions from Glossop as very relevant – *how much say do I have? how do we connect? how do we get outsiders to take us seriously?* These tools uncover universal issues in diverse places. While the techniques can be used effectively at any stage of a deliberative project, the exercises are particularly great as ‘the start of something’. They tend to build collaboration, creativity, a sense of excitement and can-do agency.

Workshop participant (London): *My frustration is that I spend two days with a group who know what needs doing and we work it out. But six months later nothing has happened.*

Sue Moffat: *When it was “sort the buttons, go!” did you have committee meetings? What is it that you can just do? In Athens we met doctors running surgeries in empty buildings. They got animated and they got on with it. They said: “we don’t know if we can ever go back because this is addictive!”*

Organisationally these projects have refined the ongoing work of New Vic Borderlines with marginalised people, strengthened Keele and Leicester University’s agenda of community leadership and sustainability, provided evidence for NCVO to exert policy influence, and helped Jericho Road, working with Locality and the Community Organisers programme, to develop and test a new framework around community engagement and community organising.

From an academic perspective, the techniques can access authentic voices and stories in any field. Untold Stories uncovered and heard from the ‘voluntolds’, a marginalised category whose voice is hardly represented or accounted for in the academic literature or the policy-making debates, and challenged taken-for-granted views about motivations and rationales for volunteering. The Boat and the Tree emerged from a focus on ‘bridging the gap between academic rigour and community relevance’.

In what ways has cultural animation left an impact?

Sometimes the approach generates new ways of thinking that continue to impact. One example from Athens was in recognising the unused spaces that were not seen as valuable. The state was withdrawing but retaining public assets as storerooms. People started thinking about using the spaces differently, not seeing them as a problem but rather thinking ‘what if we ran it?’

In Japan where participants had suffered the acute loss of real material things, the workshops reminded people of what they still have and helped them see how stories could be the building blocks of what happens next. By telling stories they began to reaffirm their agency and reassert the regenerative power of the ordinary human. Similarly in Stoke, even when people feel they've lost everything they find they still have assets. The seeds of innovation/enterprise exist but are hidden; cultural animation valorises them and gives people the opportunity to imagine what it would be like to regenerate, to step out old redundant models and invent new worlds.

What is going on when the cultural artefacts are re-shown?

Oscar the Octopus, The Slippery Eel, Volunteering Angel, the poems about community and volunteering, the shadow puppetry show, the Generositree, the 'It's paradoxical' song and accompanying slide show, amongst others, will form part of an installation in Phase 2 which will accompany the tour of the drama performance. An audio archive of the Phase 1 recordings will be edited in Phase 2 and lodged with the East Midlands Oral History Archive.

At first it would seem that the important element is the process of their creation and it is hard to understand the role of any exhibition beyond the participants other than for monitoring purposes or to spread the techniques. However, the partners assert that "to research (with) communities meant to experience their world with all our senses and communicate our experiences in a multitude of ways". (Bridging the Gap final report). This dissemination is partly driven by participants themselves: "All that people [in Japan] wanted from us was to take their story and tell it on further" (Prof Mihaela Kelemen, conversation June 2015). It is also rooted in the theoretical underpinnings of the work with its strong focus on actively creating the future.

"The American pragmatist's interest in what works and how and why it works (or doesn't) translates into a notion of knowledge which is directed towards the future, in the alternatives that may just happen, and in perspectives that are not yet realised. Pragmatist research seeks to intervene in order to actively create particular futures for communities that are affected by the issues at stake, but also beyond these communities. Acting in the present is about anticipation and projection rather than simply evaluating the past (Kelemen and Rumens, 2012). Pragmatism, in its focus on the future, upholds the promise and the possibility of social reform... revisioning and creating new futures in order to improve human experience and condition." (Bridging the Gap final report, p5)

It is in displaying the results of previous/other cultural animation sessions, especially in ways that new participants can directly engage with and alter, that cultural animation goes beyond the intense but sometimes ephemeral value of the one-off engagement, and becomes iterative and developmental.

THE CANADA EXPERIENCE

Four members of the project team travelled to Canada to deliver experimental workshops with a range of audiences in order to gain further insights into the benefits of and interplay between cultural animation, iterative practice and community organising. The team comprised:

Professor Mihaela Kelemen, Keele University (PI)

Susan Moffat, Director, New Vic Borderlines (CI)

Dr. Martin Phillips, Leicester University, (CI)

Jess Steele, Director, Jericho Road Solutions, (CI)

We held three workshops:

15/6/15 Ivey Business School academics (faculty and post-grads). 1.5 hrs

16/6/15 London Library (coordinated by 3rd sector organisation Pillar Nonprofit Network). Full day

19/6/15 Markham Public Library, with library staff.

Two half-days (morning and afternoon) with some overlap of participants

Many of the conclusions in this report, and the idea for the deck of cards, emerged from the experience of being away together delivering high-intensity experiences with engaged passionate participants. It was an excellent space for thinking and reflection, both individually and collaboratively.

The workshops were well received by participants and local organisers. The feedback from participants to a follow-up evaluation is detailed below.

Q1 Throughout the workshop/s you were presented with a number of cultural animation techniques. Have you used any of these techniques before? If so, in what context?

Markham

- 5 x No
- Yes, during strategic planning with facilitators – group brainstorming and group presenting
- I've played some of the games (prison guard and the name game) in a summer camp for kids. I've also done the presentations and listening/reporting as part of an instructional design workshop.
- Yes as a community librarian with MPL London
- Yes, acting things out in different workshops and in some coach training
- No, I have not used these techniques before!

Ivey

- We had a categorization game. If you mean using it in a workshop context, the answer is no. But if you mean in general, everyday life is so abundant of categorization.

Q2 If you had not used any of the techniques presented, have you used anything similar? Please specify the technique and describe the context.

Markham

- Yes
- Yes, as icebreakers for workshops etc
- No
- During various management courses/workshops: 1. Everyone to share a fact others don't know about selves; 2 all to write down/identify on atlas where come from /how many places lived in to show diversity/collective richness of ideas; 3. Everyone to pick an image (from a pack) to describe how feel about current situation; 4. Everyone to make a paper airplane - in a course about process mapping - to understand difference between outputs and outcomes; and in a diversity workshop to understand how internalized certain traditions/biases may be, without our knowing; in a course on crisis management: everyone at a table given clues and having to figure out the solution to a problem together.
- Round robin type exercises or techniques that get to personalizing people or getting at facts or tidbits you never knew about people. While corny, those 'Colours' types workshops can aid in this type of pursuit.

London

- In my coaching practice I use vision cards to have people tell a story based on their expression of key concepts like resilience, trust. Once people share their individual photo we then make a collage and focus on the system voice that is revealed with all the photos depicted together.
- No, I have not been involved in a role where these techniques would be part of my role. I came to the workshop to learn.

Ivey

- No

Q3 Which exercise/games did you find most interesting/animating? Why?

Markham

- I was only there for the afternoon session (community engagement + leadership) . I found the brainstorming and the question of what problem to tackle and how to tackle it most animating - it felt most real and relevant than the ice-breaker games.
- all - brought group together and began to open up
- I enjoyed the prison guard game. It was fun, active and a great ice breaker.
- I like the exercises with the props, it was very instructive for storytelling and I work well with visual cues.
- I thought the association of the object to a memory or story was good. I would have liked to have seen more of this at the end, say, with each person relaying their perception or the story of the other person back to the larger group at the end. Or, some rough or comical dissection of what your story/association might mean and if it was food for thought. Or, how it could be applied to community organizing.
- Prison guard game. Because it was fun.
- All of them. Each was different. Encouraged interaction and participation..
- The ice breaker - really enjoyed exploring ways people connect and think of themselves

London

- Love the button exercise because it helped reveal the system. I wrote the following blog based on my experience, it's impact on me and what I witnessed in others.

Love the Cinquain and look forward to using it with the teams I work with. I see it as a powerful way of giving voice in a simple yet powerful way.

I also really like the Acting It Out and could see doing this exercise as part of Myth Change work that I do with my clients.

I'm trained in Organization and Relationship Systems Coaching. We use a lot of metaphor, storytelling, and deep democracy work where we get a diversity of voices revealed. I see all of these techniques as ones that I would use with intact teams, teams going through change and organizations or teams merging.

By way of interest I've attached a white paper on Relationship Systems Intelligence written by the founders of the ORSC model. It might be of interest to your team. There are practitioners in the UK if you are interested in finding out more.

- I found all of the exercises/games interesting at one level or another, but primarily because of the combination of the exercise/game and the facilitation. It seems to me that the facilitation is critical to the animation gained through the exercises/games.

Ivey

- We just had 1 game in two parts and both parts were equally interesting.

Q4 Would you personally use these techniques in future? If yes, in what context? If not, why not?

Markham

- Yes
- Yes, if facilitating workshop, or community meeting, particularly among a group that does not know each other, also doing outreach to community here.
- Yes. I would use them as icebreakers/team building activities.
- Yes, for training/learning opportunities. To help staff articulate thoughts and feelings in a safe way and to gain further understanding of our work culture.
- Maybe the above example. I am typically not one for exercises or group white-boarding type pursuits. I often feel that gets in the way of getting stuff done or the way I learn. But, I realize we all learn differently and I must grin and bear it.
- Yes. For workshops or to get people to think outside the box.
- Yes, as an icebreaker to encourage participation.
- Yes - in community development work for the library (and in general as an ice breaker for other stuff, in relation to that technique specifically)

London

- YES, when coaching teams, working with organizations visioning their future in a way that is designed to challenge the status quo, in community processes where people are exploring possibilities and challenges associated with collaboration. I think it would be good to apply to any type of system or group exploring innovation. To use the tools I'd really like to have more detailed instructions on how to run the exercises though. I was so in the process of

the day I wasn't tracking steps on how to do things. The only barrier is instructions to doing the exercises.

- Yes, if I was able to practice the delivery and particularly the facilitation skills that enliven the techniques.

Ivey

- No idea if there is any opportunity.

Q5 Thinking about the workshops ... What did you enjoy? What did you learn?

Markham

- I learned about (or had reinforced) the importance of process to the production of something useful; i.e. having a task for people to do as soon as arrive; moving into an immediate social interaction so people don't feel isolated.
- Most important thing I learned: the importance of open-ended questions and finding out what others need/want from the engagement/relationship. Also: a genuine relationship involves repeated contact; not one-offs.
- I enjoyed all the games and also the information given about outreach in the UK
- I enjoyed the activity where we created "a collage" using items provided (that represent volunteering at MPL). I like that it was creative and collaborative.
- I enjoyed the combination of academic and hands-on learning. I learned a lot about cultural animation (what it is and how I could use it in my work) and I also was very interested (from a visual literacy perspective) on how objects were used to represent ideas and concepts of the world around us.
- I learned that people will act or do more when there is that personal connection. I learned that so many examples were of personal/social isolation which is a real issue in suburbs!! I enjoyed hearing about community organizing from the UK perspective and about how those small connections can make big impacts.
- I enjoyed how interactive the workshops were. Learned that fighting the good fight is hard work.
- Enjoyed the entire day. Learned how some of it could be applied to my work/role.
- I enjoyed hearing the stories of what people did in various communities

London

- What did you enjoy? Interactive nature. Teaching through experience. Working with a group through the day which allowed us to deepen connection and see how our dynamic shifted through the day.
- What did you learn? New thinking can only be provoked with we look at things through different lens'. That's the only way that innovative ideas can be sparked and change provoked. Working with a variety of people from different backgrounds, organizations and experiences always good for bringing new personal insight and wisdom to a topic.
- What did you enjoy? I enjoyed the personable spirit in which the material was presented. I appreciated the engagement of the presenters. I enjoyed the creative process.
- What did you learn? I appreciated the reminder that individuals and groups that come to an issue or a question, come to that issue or question at different points in a personal story.

Ivey

- I enjoyed the thoughtfulness of game design to convert the academic domain of categorization into a game. The diversity of ideas and the process of solution formation in the group were interesting. Thanks again!

Q6 Anything else you'd like to add?

Markham

- It was very enjoyable!
- Presenters approached the topic from a very creative perspective.
- Sorry but after a few weeks I have forgotten a fair amount of the exercises. What I took away was more about building that personal connection or story via a conversation than any technique to get at that beyond just talking.
- Thank you for the opportunity!

London

- Huge appreciation to all of the facilitators. Fun to learn from such passionate professionals from different backgrounds. Thanks for coming to Canada's London to introduce your work. Looking forward to following through the web site, newsletters, etc. I'm a fan and keen to learn and practice more.
- I would have appreciated a more defined set of scenario's to practice with.
- I would have appreciated hearing how this has worked in different situations (What was discovered via the exercises/games? What did the exercises/games lead to? etc.)
- I learned stuff about myself today, and I learned stuff that I'd forgotten



INTRODUCING THE CARD GAME – BOAT, TREE, GAME, BUTTONS

We believe the impact of these techniques can keep growing exponentially. By presenting the techniques in a format that is itself a tool for cultural animation, we hope to maximise the impact and spread of the approach. This reflects our belief that “legacy is not something you measure but something you perform”. (Martin)

A cultural animation tool needs to:

- be something people do together
- be something that gets people talking and thinking
- be easy to explain but with layers of hidden depths (eg buttons – first tier meaning is ‘sort the buttons’, second tier is ‘organise the world’)
- be easy to get started
- include plenty of opportunities for pause moments
- feel like fun, sociable
- have some aspect that is familiar yet open to interpretation

While the Boat is a metaphor for journeys, and the Tree is a visualisation of life, the Buttons offer all kinds of insights relating to sorting and animating collectives and Glossopoly has shown the effectiveness of adapting a well-known game for new purposes.

The game approach diffuses conflict and dominance – taking turns, the randomness of the dice-roll or the turn of the card. It is a fun way to generate data, analyse findings and disseminate research. It offers a very flexible format for deliberation and investigation. By playing over and over again and trying out changes to the format, both the content of an individual exercise and the effectiveness of the tool itself are iteratively refined. A wide range of views can be expressed in a safe way. Even where participants’ views may range from, for example, ‘more state involvement’ to ‘can’t wait for the state’ to ‘don’t trust the state’, these divergent opinions can be tolerated and even welcomed as part of the game.

The Card Game builds on the game precedent set by Glossopoly and the patterning opportunities of the Buttons, and adds two further factors – the complex but well understood multiple-axis structure of a deck of cards (with 2 colours, 4 suits, picture and number cards) and the building and unveiling of an individual hand of cards that tells a story.

Our version of it is specifically designed to get people talking about cultural animation, but as with all these tools, the format could be adapted for a range of other purposes. The game helps to deconstruct the techniques to show the various axes of their capacity to generate meaning. It is played like rummy. Players pick up and put down cards to create a hand that can tell a coherent story. When you call ‘rummy’ you also pick one of the bonus cards and choose whether to add that to your story.

MAKING THE GAME: 52 THINGS TO SAY ABOUT CULTURAL ANIMATION and COMMUNITY ORGANISING

[the techniques - ACES]

1. Boat – journey metaphor (A to B, past-present-future, migration), lost and saved, ‘all in it together’, different roles required
2. Tree – life metaphor (in Japan – the tree has lost all its leaves, it needs its stories back in order to be reborn)
3. Game – place-based investigation and deliberation, hidden assets revealed.
4. Buttons – sorting and categorising, grouping, planning (addition of boundary tape). Importance of how people treat the ‘not buttons’/oddities. Their discussion as they begin to plan – inclusion/exclusion, social engineering, different choices (eg explicit choice of whether to mix them up; white buttons in the middle to tell a story about race, boundary tape around the ‘ivory tower’ with a moat and links to the donors pile). Throwaway phrases become important – eg calling the non-buttons ‘garbage’. Disconnections as important as connections. Ask: where in the world does this look like? Are these preferred worlds or depictions of the world as it is?

[the co-collaborators - TWOS]

1. Sue/New Vic (cultural animation) Pioneered in the UK by Susan Moffat, New Vic Borderlines Director in collaboration with Polish colleagues (Dr. Zofia Dworakowska) - BUTTONS
2. Mihaela/Keele (leadership) - BOAT
3. Martin/Leicester (localism) - GAME
4. Jess/JRS (CO) - TREE

[what does it produce? THREES]

1. spoken words and performance – poetry, songs, chants, short plays - BUTTONS
2. metaphors – creating new worlds from lost worlds – the boat as journey from past to future; objects and frames to tell stories - BOAT
3. artefacts – models, puppets, tangible visualisations (boat, tree, frames) - TREE
4. games and props – glossopoly, card game, buttons, speak-out props (tree/wall, moodometer etc) - GAME

[theoretical underpinnings - FOURS]

1. BOAT - American Pragmatism – knowledge through experience, the starting and ending point of knowledge is the experience of the community. Rather than being antithetical to knowledge, experience is part of it. If experience and knowledge are seen as the two sides of the same coin, thinking and acting refer to the same process, namely the process of making our way, as best as we can, in a universe shot through with contingencies and ambiguities (Menand 2001) “to research (with) communities meant to experience their world with all our senses and communicate our experiences in a multitude of ways”
2. BUTTONS - Cultural animation – give life, fill with boldness or courage, give breath to, etc. Pioneered in the UK by New Vic Borderlines and Keele University, cultural animation puts participants day to day experiences at the heart of the process, when people get up and do things they can think in fresh ways about problems and experience them from multiple perspectives
3. TREE - Community organising – Alinsky, Friere, CO scaffolding
4. GAME - Multi-disciplinary community studies focusing on people’s emotional and sensory engagement with ideas of community – Glossop – revisiting the mid-point of British communities. Revisits the town of Glossop since it was the focus of an important study in the late 1950s, to illuminate the huge changes since and the impact on community and belonging
Explores people’s emotional and sensory engagement with ideas of community
Documents the activity paths of people living in the town to assess how far they are embedded within the town

Considers impact of historical development, topography, landscape settings (ie context) on the development of a series of quite autonomous communities within the town.

Aimed to create an archive (glossopoly as a living archive)

[More props/exercises/arrival tasks - FIVES]

1. BOAT - Cinquain – 1-word title, 2 words that describe the title, 3 words for what you feel/hear/see, 4 words that are actions, and last 1 alternative word to describe the title. (alternative: Haiku)
1. GAME - Name game – v important – allows you to see who is in the room – warming the room, gathering intelligence, getting people paying attention. An arrival game helps the group to establish their own rules (Sue could have jumped in and stopped Russ – his talking led to the others behaving differently. Janet – the twirl – embodiment of being in the middle of the room). The floor becomes a place for exploring together.
2. TREE - Speak-out tools – tree/wall, moodometer, maps, spider diagrams etc
3. BUTTONS Shuffle-bottom. A few steps, see how far I've come. Rest. New perspective. Empty chair – represents the change – ask what change, what would that involve, what would it look like. We are the factors that leap up and interfere and prevent the vision from being realised.

[why is it good? - SIXES]

1. BUTTONS - Draws on the everyday experiences of ordinary people and their creative abilities to make sense of the world and achieve positive change (this makes it hugely flexible – eg experiential workshops in Rotherham encouraged participants to think about their own life journeys and imagine a future in which discrimination, exclusion & marginalisation will no longer exist).
2. BOAT - Builds up trusting relationships between participants by inviting them to work together in activities which may be new to them but which draw on their life experiences
3. GAME - Dissolves hierarchies: common sense, expertise, practical skills are equally valued. Creates a company, we're all responsible for what happens in this room. (Can be difficult because characters in the room use their disruptiveness to go with the flow.)
4. TREE - Articulates ideas and experiences in actions and images rather than the written word

[links between CA and CO - SEVENS]

1. BOAT - acknowledge existing **power** and knowledge hierarchies and minimise them through techniques that build trust, respect and collective action, helping to dissolve power differentials based on formal writing and behaviours.
2. GAME - importance of **fun**, familiarity, sociability
3. TREE - CA gets it started, CO takes it forward
4. BUTTONS - importance of **everyday life**, self interest as a motivator, validation of the informal, unofficial, grassroots, bottom up, ("many people are extremely pleased to become involved in a project which addresses how they themselves feel about the community in which they live and involves them reflecting" – similar response to CO door-knocking – people amazed and delighted)

[themes these techniques have looked at in depth - EIGHTS]

1. BOAT - volunteering – it's paradoxical song, detail from Untold Stories eg re identity, mundane/unusual/memorial/voluntolding, stresses
2. GAME - localism – glossopoly, buttons (for visioning neighbourhoods)
3. BUTTONS - genocide – button sorting
4. TREE - community in adversity (Stoke and Minami Sanriku – people feeling 'disused' and forgotten, response to build from within, not wait for hand-outs from above. New businesses in the aftermath of disaster followed coop business model rather than market competition.)

[key components - NINES]

1. GAME - Wordplay: Generositree, voluntold, glossopoly/localopoly
Blake quote – ‘in still waters expect poison’, Cinquains, haiku
2. BUTTONS - Tangible artefacts: the suitcase of ‘boundary objects’
3. TREE - Making things: The Japanese women made dolls – they never had dolls as children – gradual emergence of stories. Mapping the place as an act of affection, claiming and belonging
4. BOAT - Story-telling & performance – making sense, reframing, playing with plotlines and outcomes

[lessons for academics re bridging the gap between academic rigour & community relevance - TENS]

1. TREE - authentic voices/stories including marginalised voices/stories, exploring qualitative experience of volunteering, crisis, etc – slow crisis of Stoke, natural disaster impact on Minami Sanriku
2. BUTTONS - orchestrate multiple voices in an inclusive and democratic way, while assuming an authorial position in writing academic papers
3. BOAT – need spaces that enable a shared language and social hub environments to stimulate creativity and widen communication
4. GAME - wide variety of opinions, skills and expertise a constant source of fresh insights but sometimes difficult to find common ground (across disciplines and between the different rationales and timescales of academic and community partners).

[challenges ahead - JACKS]

1. BOAT - How to get policy makers and the powerful to use these techniques in their own engagement strategies?
2. TREE – How to strengthen the link between animation and action, moving beyond the game (what now, when we step out of this safe, neutral space? Need to decide what you need to happen next. Is community empowerment itself the aim or something beyond that?)
3. GAME – How to maintain the balance between academic rigour and community relevance? (See more on PA methods)
4. BUTTONS – How to spread the word and ensure diversity?

[brilliant QUEENS]

1. BOAT - Not new but new to these participants – the river is different each time, a new voyage for each person
2. TREE - Facilitates organic emergence of understanding
3. BUTTONS – Facilitation is everything – the crucial importance of Sue!
4. GAME - Boundary objects (boundary spaces, boundary spanners – Paul Williams). Can span boundaries because people can use the object to describe and discuss their world view. “Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual-site use. They may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation. The creation and management of boundary objects is key in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds.” (Star 1989, p393) Interpretive flexibility (Susan Leigh Star) and need to be seen in context of the motivations of the people that choose the object (Kimble, Grenier and Gogio-Primard, 2010). Sue Moffat – if we didn’t have the buttons we wouldn’t be able to access the meaningful stories’. It’s what you do together that matters – importance of collective action

[the big principles - KINGS]

1. BUTTONS - Bottom up processes in the construction of new worlds (the four groups in the boat workshop then had to find ways to communicate and work together)
2. BOAT - Reversal of roles between professionals/experts and community members – returning dignity to people

3. TREE – Abundance of creativity at individual and group level – resource stretch (new ways of doing things by bringing people together)
4. GAME - Asset based – revealing hidden assets, skills, talents; importance of stories (which everyone has); Martin's totem pole – people said they didn't want to include tower blocks because they hated them but then realised they are a part of 'us' so need to be included and maybe rethought (Athens govt spaces) – ie recognising the world as it is – see Alinsky on this

Cultural Animation Card listing

	BOAT	TREE	GAME	BUTTONS
Ace	Boat	Tree	Glossopoly	Buttons
2	Mihaela	Jess	Martin	Sue
3	Metaphors	Artefacts	Games & props	Spoken word/ performance
4	American Pragmatism	Community organising	Community studies	Cultural animation
5	Cinquoin	Speak-out tools	Name game	Shuffle-bottom
6	Builds trusting relationships	Articulates through actions and images	Dissolves hierarchies	Draws on everyday experience of ordinary people
7	Power	Animation to action	Fun	Everyday life
8	Volunteering	Adversity	Localism	Diversity & discrimination
9	Story-telling & performance	Making things	Wordplay	Tangible artefacts
10	Spaces for shared language	Authentic voices, qualitative experience	Wide variety of views & skills, hard to find common ground	Inclusive and democratic facilitation vs authorial position
J	How to get the powerful to use these techniques	How to strengthen the link between animation and action	How to maintain the balance between academic rigour and community relevance	How to spread the word and ensure diversity
Q	Not new but the river is different each time	Organic emergence of understanding	Boundary objects	Facilitation is everything
K	Reversal of roles between experts and community members	Abundance of creativity at individual & group level	Revealing hidden assets, skills, talents. Dealing with the world as it is.	Bottom up processes in the construction of new worlds

JOKER 1:

You need TECHNIQUES + SKILLS + [BLANK] to create PARTICIPATION

JOKER 2:

Messages that come back can be difficult for the commissioning body to hear or swallow

THE RULES OF THE GAME (little folded pamphlet)

Welcome to the Cultural Animation Card Game. We have designed this game as a way for a group of people to get to know about cultural animation while having a fun and interesting time. The rules of the game remind us about the rules we play by in the real world.

Playing the Card Game

The game is similar to rummy. Shuffle the pack and deal each player 7 cards. Place the remaining cards face-down in the middle with one card face up beside them. Players take turn to pick up (either the face-up card or one from the top of the deck) and put down in order to build their hand. You are aiming to collect sets (min 3) of the same number or of the same suit. While the number sets are clearly similar, to justify suit sets you need to tell a story that uses something from each card. If you have more than one set you need to make a direct link between them in the report-back. **For example...**

PLAYER 1 – Starts with 4 boats, 2 buttons, 1 game. Ends with 7 boats

STORY/REPORT-BACK

How do we make the powerful use these techniques J
we need to acknowledge existing power and seek to disrupt 7 through the reversal of roles K
using American Pragmatism, ie knowledge through experience 4
(as studied by Mihaela 2)
which experience we get through volunteering 8
This approach dissolves hierarchies 6

PLAYER 2 – starts with 3 x Q, 3 x 9, 1 x 7. Ends with 4 x 9, 3 x Q.

STORY/REPORT-BACK

Creative approaches – story-telling and performance 9Bo, making things 9T,
wordplay 9G, artefacts to play with 9Bu
Direct link to Boundary Objects QB
facilitate the emergence of understanding QT
which is new to these participants QBo.

PLAYER 3 – Starts with 2 boats, 2 games, 3 buttons and 2 x J. Ends with 4 buttons and 3 boats

STORY/REPORT-BACK

Buttons:
How do we ensure diversity? J
is a theme that this work addresses, especially the buttons 8
focus on spoken word 3
and bottom-up processes K
Direct link – between spoken word and shared language?
Boats: The boat offers metaphors (3) especially for journeys (A) that helps create space for a shared language (10)

PLAYER 4 – Starts with 3 x 5, 2 x K, 2 misc. Ends with 4 games and 3 x 5

STORY/REPORT-BACK

A series of facilitated activities (cinquoin 5Bo, speak-out props 5T, shuffle-bottom 5Bu and Name Game 5G).
Facilitated well QG
these activities reveal the assets in the room KG
But the challenge is to maintain the academic rigour JG



Once one player can tell their story to the satisfaction of the others they have won. The game continues until all players have reported back.

Ground Rules

Always a good idea to set some ground rules. You could pick and mix from: actively listen; act appropriately; non-judgemental; seek to make links; not to be offended; understanding; sensitive to needs; forgiveness; confidentiality; communication; good preparation; patience, or others chosen by participants.

Who can play?

Children and adults will play differently – eg with Glossopoly adults will critique where places are (ie why is that road in the Old Kent Road position?), with the Name Game kids will enjoy centre stage, walk around looking at their mates. Most British adults don't do this.

Who is not here?

Always ask that question. But remember, when it comes to animation, the people in the room are the people who matter right now.

What is this not?

Cultural animation is not role play. For role-play you have to know the situation whereas this is the start of something. We have to find the situation and to do that you need to be yourself. Cultural animation needs no tech, no hand-outs. It should cost practically nothing, using ordinary objects to spark extraordinary change.

Facilitation

Don't take anything personally in the room and don't take responsibility to make it ok for the participants.

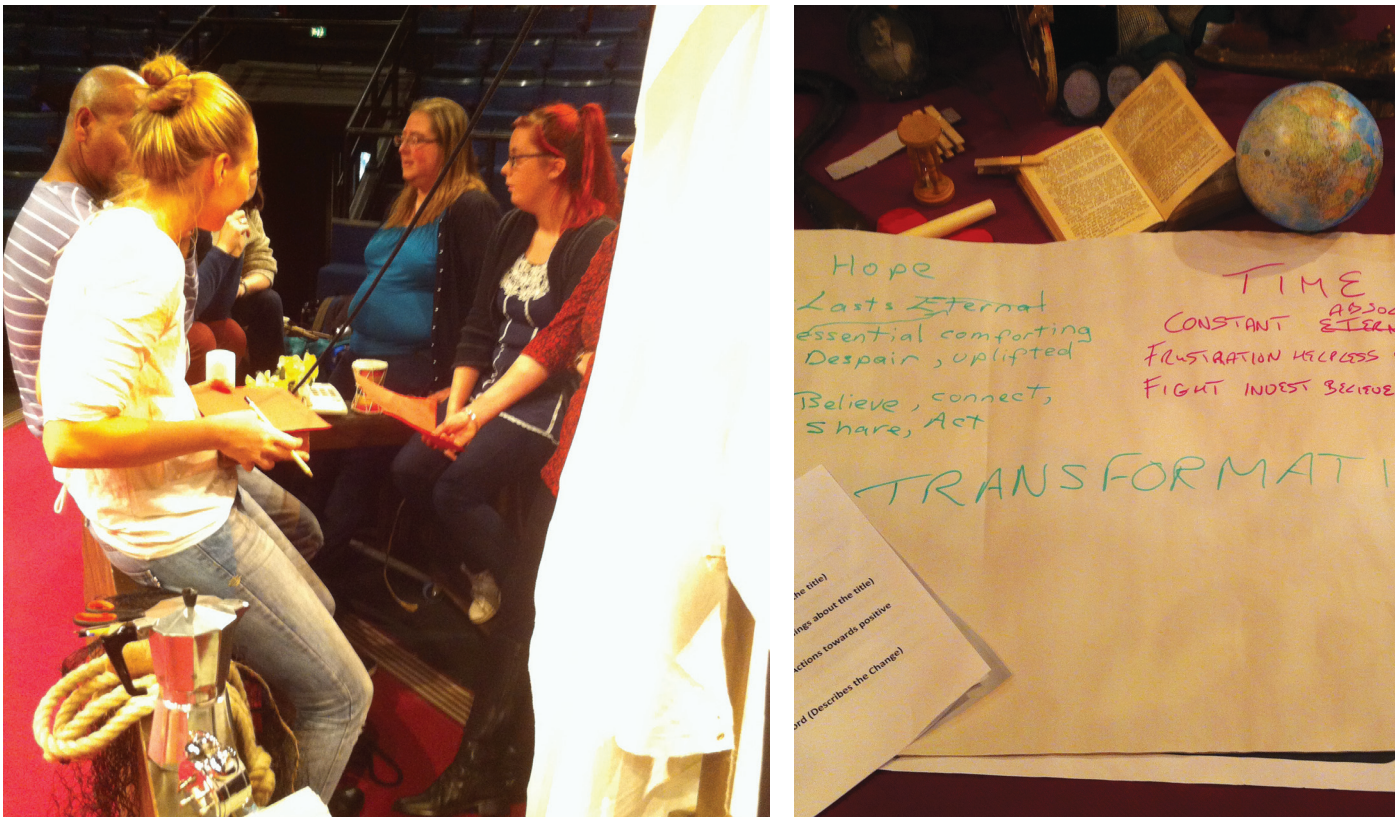
The cultural animation kit

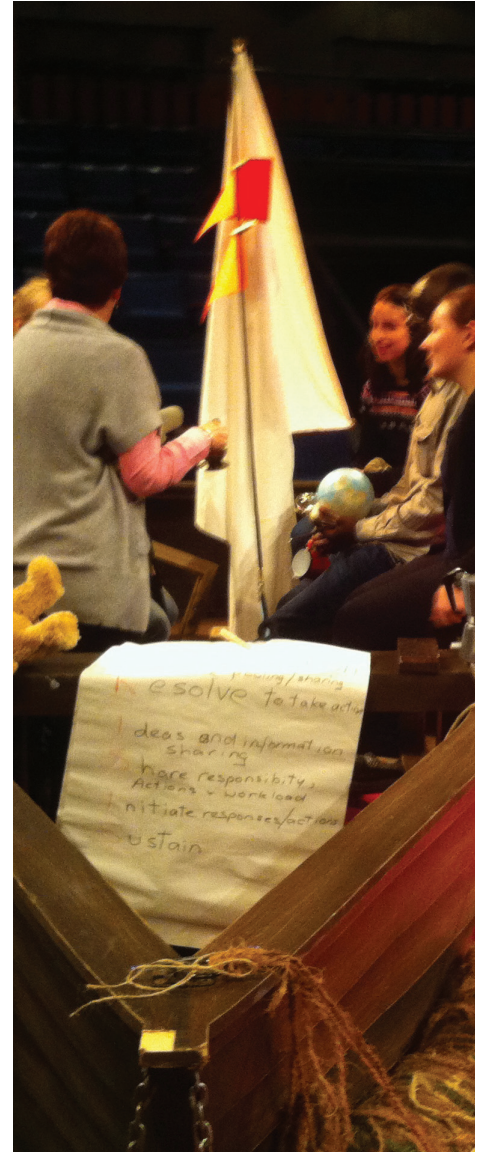
The props and kit for cultural animation can be completely tailored to logistics. There is a standard outreach kit that would fit in a small toolbox (pens, scissors, blu-tack, sellotape, posts-its, pegs, coloured card, sticky labels, coloured dots, etc). Beyond that are the core collections of objects and images that you will use to span boundaries and stimulate creativity. And beyond that are the major props like the tree, the boat and the game which can either be transported whole or remade by new participants.

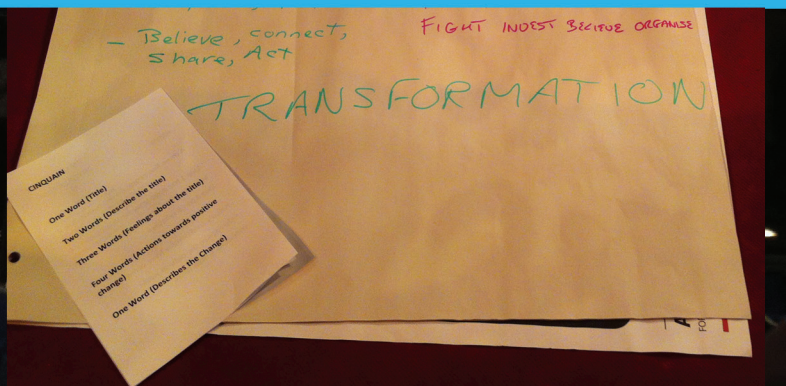
You can transport the props, or make new ones. A tree made of interlocking parts travelled to Japan. The artefacts that people made became the leaves of the tree giving it new life when it arrived.

Who owns engagement?

We believe engagement techniques should be 'creative commons' to facilitate the widest possible spread. Inventive and adaptive practitioners should be credited.







www.keele.ac.uk/legacyofconnectedcommunities

A direct legacy of the Connected Communities Programme is the setting up of a new inter disciplinary research centre at Keele University: CASIC (Community Animation and Social Innovation Centre) aims to give communities an equal voice in the process of research. For more information see <https://www.keele.ac.uk/casic/>