Enabling Co-Creation

Learning to facilitate a co-creation session with diverse stakeholders for real-life cases

COLLABORATING | Co-creation Skills

What you will need:

- Groups of 3-4
- Group work
- 1 hr preparation
- 4.5 hrs execution
- Handouts

Related Tools:

- Exchanging Perspectives
- Shared Problem Definition
- Onboarding in Transdisciplinary Collaboration

Menu:

I. Overview
II. Learning Activity
III. Assessment
IV. Key Advice
V. References



"Enable students in creating safe and inclusive spaces where meaningful connections, active listening and open interactions thrive. By leveraging the power of co-creation, students develop the skills to engage diverse stakeholders, build trust and foster a collaborative environment. "

—Anke Swanenberg & Hanna Eppink

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

I. Overview

Co-creation skills are crucial for promoting problem-solving, innovation and collaborative decision-making. By mastering these skills, students can cultivate an inclusive and cooperative environment.

This tool enables students to lead co-creation sessions confidently. In addition, it promotes active participation and motivation in a safe and inclusive setting, essential for building collaborative relationships among diverse stakeholders.

Intended for courses where students will work on a real-world case, this tool is designed to be used after students have identified the relevant stakeholders within the broader context of their course. Therefore, stakeholder mapping, conducting a stakeholder analysis and defining the purpose of the stakeholder meeting should be completed beforehand.

Learning outcome

- The student is able to collaboratively facilitate a co-creation session of participants with diverse perspectives, securing a safe environment

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

II. Learning Activity

Students develop co-creation skills with their peers as they design, facilitate and moderate a stakeholder meeting with stakeholders outside the university.



1. Defining the Co-creation Session

30 mins

Make teams of 3-4 students and provide each team with the preparation form.

In the next 20 minutes, the teams complete the preparation form to set up a co-creation session. They choose the corresponding combination of activities that fit the goal of the meeting.

Then, invite the teams to peer review each other's forms: are the stakeholder's interests clear? Do they miss an important perspective in the discussion?

After completing the peer review, all students discuss guidelines for creating a safe, inclusive and open collaborative space for the participants.

Tip: you can use the seven golden guidelines to create a safe learning environment as inspiration.



2. Preparing the Session

30 mins

The student teams divide the tasks needed to organise the co-creation session, such as finding a date and time, collecting necessary materials, distributing guidelines for the participants, inviting stakeholders and organising a location.

Next to these practicalities, the teams make an evaluation form for the participants of the session, to receive feedback on the intended learning outcome: "The student is able to

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

collaboratively facilitate a co-creation session of participants with diverse perspectives, securing a safe environment".



3. Facilitating Collaboration

1.5 hr

The students facilitate the meeting as described in the preparation form. During the meeting, they carry out the chosen activities but also handle the schedule flexibly if circumstances demand it.

The students have to show they are responsive and flexible and they can create a psychologically safe co-creative process within this meeting, where all stakeholders feel safe and able to contribute constructively.



4. Evaluation

30 mins

At the end of the meeting, the students ask the different stakeholders to complete the evaluation form they made in Step 2. They can collect evaluations anonymously or share these in a conversation, depending on what fits the participants.

The students gather evaluation forms as input for their reflection.



5. Reflection

1.5 hrs

First, instruct the students to write an individual reflection. Then, in a guided group reflection, they provide each other with constructive feedback. Finally, they connect a personal intended learning outcome to their reflection.

Please note, as part of assessment as learning, students reflect using reflective questions. After this session, they can revise their answers and hand it in.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

III. Assessment

Fostering an environment of trust, respect and active learning, students first reflect individually and as a group on their role in the stakeholder meeting. Then, they connect an intended learning outcome to their individual reflection.



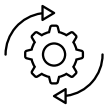
Purpose

Assessment *as* learning aims to strengthen the learning process and the development of metacognitive skills. It empowers students to direct their own learning and to become independent, critical self-assessors.



Roles

Self assessment



Characteristics

Self-regulated learning



Materials

Reflective questions

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Assessment

Individual Reflection
Write a reflective paper of up to 500 words based on the following questions:

- How did I contribute to creating an inclusive and safe learning environment during the stakeholder meeting?
- Which co-creation techniques were the most effective and why?
- How did I demonstrate empathy and active listening to understand the perspectives of different stakeholders?
- What did I learn from this activity that I can apply in the future?

Group Reflection
Go back into your student team and start a group reflection:

- Share your individual reflections within the group.
- Provide each other with constructive feedback using the following phrases:

  "I appreciate that you..."
  "I would like to see more of..."

Personal Intended Learning Outcome
Connect a personal intended learning outcome to your reflection in the form of:

- "What I want to stop doing..."
- "What I want to start doing..."
- "What I want to continue doing..."

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

IV. Key Advice

Download the **guidelines to create a safe learning** environment, the **preparation form for the stakeholder meeting** and **Icebreaker activities** (Step 1) and the **evaluation questions** (Step 2) below.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Key Advice

Seven golden guidelines to create a safe learning environment
Creating a safe and inclusive learning environment is an ongoing process. By implementing these guidelines, you can foster open communication, a sense of belonging and collective learning:

1. Set clear expectations
Clearly communicate your expectations and routines from the beginning. Ensure that students understand what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Encourage them to participate in creating these expectations, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility.

2. Build trust
Establish a trustworthy and secure environment by emphasising that anything shared within the group should remain confidential. Encourage students to make their own decisions about sharing personal experiences and respect their individual levels of comfort.

3. Foster active listening
Emphasise the importance of truly listening and understanding. Foster an environment where students feel free to express themselves without fear of judgment or criticism and discourage interruptions. Strengthen active listening skills by teaching non-verbal cues and using prompts.

4. Encourage empathy
Encourage students to consider the feelings and experiences of others and to respond with kindness, acceptance and understanding, even when perspectives differ from their own. Foster an inclusive and respectful environment where empathy is valued and embraced as an essential aspect of communication and mutual understanding.

5. Be a role model
Lead by example and embody the behaviour you expect from your students. Treat all students with respect, fairness and kindness, and appreciate their diverse backgrounds, individual strengths and contributions. Ensure the safety and well-being of all students by promptly and decisively addressing any form of harassment or discrimination. Reflect on mistakes and offer apologies when necessary.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

6. Adapt the pace and intensity

Recognise when emotions escalate and become overwhelming, adjusting the pace or intensity of the activity as necessary. For example, implement the "five-minute rule", where each student can express their controversial view in a respectful manner, or offer a short break for students to journal and reflect on their emotions, enabling them to regulate their feelings.

7. Follow up and check-in

Encourage students to reflect on the impact of the experience on themselves as well as the group. Provide individual or group follow-up and inquire about the well-being of students. Offer the opportunity for further discussion or support if needed. If you believe that the emotional intensity or well-being of the students exceeds your expertise, do not hesitate to seek advice from a student advisor, mental health professional or the appropriate support services provided by your institution.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Key Advice

Preparation form

Template format stakeholder meeting

Goal of this stakeholder meeting	
List participants and explain their stake in the meeting	1. …. 2. …. 3. …. 4. …. 5. …. 6. …. 7. …. 8. …. 9. ….
Needed materials	

Template schedule

5 mins	Welcome to all participants	*Name of group member*	
20 mins	Icebreaker: Choose a relevant/fitting icebreaker for your meeting from the form below. Feel free to design your own activity.	*Name of group member*	Getting to know each other
60 mins	Activities: Discuss the meeting guidelines Choose the right combination of activities corresponding to your goal from the form below. Feel free to design your own activity.	*Name of group member*	Main Activity
5 mins	Wrap-up (summary of meeting + next steps) Share evaluation form	*Name of group member*	Explain the next steps

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Example of completed format

Goal of the stakeholder meeting	To gather ideas from the residents of Wageningen on how 'Thuis', a welfare organisation in Wageningen, can help to improve the quality of life of all residents living in Wageningen
List participants and explain their stake	1. Bert de Ruiter, retired and resident of Wageningen - Stake: having a strong social support system 2. Femke de Boom – researcher at Wageningen University and Research (WUR) - Stake: Developing healthy habits to secure work-life balance 3. Carolien Boterbloem – student at WUR - Stake: ability to engage in extracurricular activities 4. Ching Davey – Exchange student at WUR – Stake: adjusting to new culture and language, managing homesickness, building a supportive network of friends and mentors. 5. Berry de Groot – Shop-owner in Wageningen – Stake: having a supportive business environment 6. Karel de Bruin – employee of the public library – Stake: the level of importance that a community places on having access to a high-quality public library. A public library can provide a range of resources (books, newspapers, movies) and services (community meeting spaces, educational programs, bridging the digital divide by providing access to internet services) that can enhance the well-being and satisfaction of residents in Wageningen 7. Wendy Verbeek – policy officer at Municipality of Wageningen – Stake: Engaging with the residents to identify and address their concerns and invest in long-term planning and development strategies to create a high-quality living environment for its residents.
Needed materials	Post-its, pens, paper, big paper, a thank-you gift and coffee/tea.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Example of completed schedule

Time	Activity	Name group member
5 - 15 mins	Welcome to all participants	
5 - 30 mins	Icebreaker: from the list of examples below, choose a relevant or fitting icebreaker for your meeting, or think of one yourself.	
5 - 60 mins	Activities: Present and discuss guidelines needed for a safe, inclusive, and open collaborative environment. Each is needed for the participants to experience such safety. From the list of example activities below, choose the right combination of activities corresponding to your goal, or think of one yourself.	
5 - 15 mins	Wrap – up and distribute the evaluation forms Think of a closing activity to summarise the meeting and to appreciate the contribution of all participants. Distribute the evaluation forms that the participants fill in before leaving.	

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Key Advice

Icebreaker activities

- **Throw a ball.** Ask all participants to form a circle and ensure that they are standing at an appropriate distance from each other. Hand a small ball to one of the participants and instruct them to throw the ball to another person in the circle. The person who catches the ball then introduces themselves by sharing their name and explaining their reason for attending the meeting, as well as what they hope to achieve from it. After this, the person throws the ball to another participant who does the same. This process is repeated until everyone in the circle has had the opportunity to introduce themselves and the ball has been passed around the entire group, allowing everyone to learn each other's names.

- **Alliteration game**. Each participant is asked to come up with an alliterative epithet to add to their own name. To start, one person says their name along with their alliterative epithet, and the next person repeats the previous name and epithet and then adds their own name and epithet. This process continues with each member of the group, with each person repeating the previous names and epithets before adding their own. By the end of the exercise, the last person will have to remember a long list of names with their corresponding alliterative epithets.

- Instruct participants to **bring an item or object** to the meeting that they feel represents who they are. During the introduction round, each participant will have the opportunity to explain why they chose their particular object and how it reflects their identity or personality. This exercise serves as an icebreaker activity and help to foster connections and understanding among group members.

- **Draw an animal** together in a group. No talking or non-verbal signaling/signs are allowed. The activity takes 9 minutes. There is one marker and a paper. When you pick-up the marker you can put one straight line on the paper, after your turn you put the marker down on the table. A group member picks-up the marker to put one straight line on the paper. So only straight lines are allowed. You do this as a group until the 9 minutes are done. After the 9 minutes, you are invited to share and analyse how the process went.

- **Association exercise.** All participants sit in a circle. Choose one player at random to start the game by saying a single word out loud. The next player in clockwise order must quickly respond with a word that has some connection or association to the previous word. This process continues with each player building on the previous word, forming a chain of related words. This exercise encourages participants to think creatively and quickly while also developing their ability to make connections and associations between words. It can be used as an icebreaker activity or as a warm-up exercise before a brainstorming session.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Key Advice

Example activities

- **Think, pair, share:** a group work exercise that encourages participants to actively engage with the material and each other. By taking the time to think about their own response, discuss with a partner, and share their ideas with the larger group, participants can gain new insights and perspectives on the topic being discussed. The exercise can be especially helpful for promoting discussion and active learning in larger groups.

- **Mind mapping**: a collaborative exercise that involves visually organizing information around a central idea or theme. It can be used as a tool to encourage multiple perspectives and ideas, and can help to clarify and organise complex topics. Mind mapping also allows for the use of colour and imagery to make the final product more engaging and memorable.

- **World Café**: a collaborative exercise that involves posing a question or topic for discussion and rotating participants through small groups at cafe-style tables to share their ideas and build upon those of others. Through several rounds of discussion and reflection, participants can develop new insights and strategies and promote collective learning.

- **Open space technology**: a collaborative exercise that involves setting an agenda of topics or issues for discussion, self-organising into open space groups around those topics, collaborating and sharing ideas within those groups, documenting insights and ideas, and sharing those insights and identifying action steps at the end of the exercise. The goal of the exercise is to promote group discussions and problem-solving around a specific topic or issue and develop new insights and strategies that can lead to meaningful action.

- **Talking stick**: a group work exercise that promotes respectful communication and active listening. Participants pass a "talking stick" and take turns speaking while others practice active listening. The exercise encourages productive discussions, effective communication and collaboration among participants.

- **Rich picture**: a group work exercise that helps to capture the complexity of a problem or situation in a visual way. By drawing a rich picture and exploring the various elements of the picture with the group, participants can gain a deeper understanding of the problem or situation and identify potential solutions. The exercise can be especially helpful for addressing complex problems that are difficult to fully grasp through verbal or written communication alone.

- **Fishbowl**: a group work exercise that involves a small group of participants having an open discussion while other participants observe and take notes. The exercise encourages open discussion and active listening and allows participants to gain new insights and perspectives on the topic at hand. After a set amount of time, participants rotate and switch roles, which allows for more individuals to take part in the discussion and observe. The exercise is useful for addressing complex issues or sensitive topics.

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

Key Advice

Example evaluation questions for participants

Example evaluation questions that can be included in the stakeholder evaluation form:

- How well did the students facilitate the stakeholder meeting in terms of creating a psychologically safe and co-creative environment?
- Were the chosen activities and exercises effective in engaging and involving all stakeholders? Please provide examples.
- How well did the students demonstrate responsiveness and flexibility in adapting to unexpected circumstances during the meeting?
- Did the students effectively manage the meeting schedule and ensure that all necessary topics were covered? Please share your observations.
- To what extent did the students incorporate your input and feedback during the meeting? Were your perspectives and contributions valued?
- Did the students actively listen to and understand the perspectives, needs and desires of all stakeholders? How did they demonstrate this?
- How well did the students handle any conflicts or disagreements that arose during the meeting, if any? Were they able to find constructive solutions?
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the level of engagement, collaboration and co-creation in this stakeholder meeting?
- What suggestions do you have for improvement?

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.

V. References

Liberating Structures - 23. Social Network Webbing
https://www.liberatingstructures.com/23-social-network-webbing/

Tho, C.W.S., K.P.J. Fortuin, J.T.M. Gulikers, N.C. Post Uiterweer & C. Oonk (2020) Boundary Crossing position paper. Wageningen University and Research.
https://www.4tu.nl/cee/innovation/project/13156/boundary-crossing-wur

Except where otherwise noted, content on the Transition Makers Toolbox is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. Icons by The Noun Project.