Including and Unleashing Everyone: Facilitation with Liberating Structures

A Playbook for the Code4Lib 2022 Workshop, May 23, 2022

Facilitators

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Overview

Including everyone in a collaborative project can be a challenge in technology, as well as in many other fields. People may self-select out of conversations if they're unsure that they can contribute. If you're a manager or project leader, it can also feel intimidating to get people to start thinking and sharing ideas. What can we do to get people unstuck from those uncomfortable silences to be engaged, curious, and excited about the future?

This workshop will focus on introducing participants to Liberating Structures, a facilitation methodology designed to include and unleash everyone. Using a series of 33 methods that can be sequenced and adapted to a variety of contexts, Liberating Structures provides a balance between freedom and structure to provide space for new ideas to grow and develop. The workshop will focus on about five specific methods from Liberating Structures, and participants will learn the methods in a hands-on setting by participating in the methods themselves.

The workshop's facilitators each have experience facilitating Liberating Structures sessions in their own institutions, and learned more by serving as facilitators on the IMLS-funded Lighting the Way project. Lighting the Way applied Liberating Structures to get participants to imagine futures for archival discovery and delivery, and to identify strategic opportunities and challenges. We're excited to bring these methods to the Code4lib community through learning through doing, and to help build an informal network of other facilitators.

Learning objectives

Participants will learn about five specific methods from Liberating Structures that can be adapted to a variety of contexts. We will also provide some additional context on how to facilitate effectively.

Acknowledgements and rights

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Workshop purpose:
  - introduce new methods so you can build familiarity to address routine and creative ways to new challenges
  - Demonstrate how different microstructures shape our interactions
  - unleash and include everyone so you can do the same in your own local contexts
- Our expectations of you
  - As a part of this workshop, we'd like you to be present - we know that can mean or look like different things to different people.
  - As part of that, we invite you to take opportunities to contribute and help make space for others to do the same.
  - If you need a break at any time (to use the restroom, get a drink of water, etc) please go ahead and take care of your needs first. We will have a break towards the middle of the workshop for everyone.
  - In addition, please remember that this workshop is subject to the [Code4lib code of conduct](#) - and if you have any concerns at any point, please let us know.
- Acknowledging Supermarket shootings
  - We also want to acknowledge the racial violence that occurred just over a week ago on Saturday right here in Buffalo.
  - We wanted to bring this in at the start to say that the world "out there" is very much connected to what we are doing here today. We wouldn't have to talk about inclusive facilitation practices if the organizations we work in were already inclusive or if white supremacy wasn't so deeply embedded in our country.
  - It also means that these events can affect us individually. Please keep in mind that, "being present" might look different for you than it normally does, so we want to underline that you should feel feel free to step away or take a break if you need to.
- Workshop structure
  - We think the best way to learn the Liberating Structures facilitation methods is to dive right in.
  - We won't spend a lot of time explaining a specific structure so you can experience them directly.
  - On occasion, we may debrief at the end of the structure, or at the end of a string, or series of structures. If we don't directly debrief, make sure you take a moment to reflect personally.
  - We'll also repeat some of the methods on occasion to demonstrate how small shifts change what the structure can do.
  - Finally, we'll have a little bit of time at the end of the workshop for questions, and we will share our slides and facilitator playbook with you, as well as links to other resources at the end of the workshop.
- Reflection
  - Pay attention to how the microstructures shape the interactions and notice the details of your experience walking through the methods. Pay attention to how you feel about them as we walk through them too. There may be specific details that you experience as we go through the workshop, so hold onto them so you can reflect on them later. There may be times where you're confused, surprised, or unsure - and that is entirely normal.

WHAT (55 minutes)

- **Format:** Individual reflection → Small groups → Small group debrief (roughly a large-scale [1-2-4-All](#))
- **Goals:** demonstrate a LS string; encourage reflective interaction
- **Outcomes:** familiarity with a string of exercises
- **Supplies/artifacts needed**: Paper (index cards?) and writing implement; bells

Structuring invitation

Presumably, everyone is here because they believe in the importance of including everyone in working on a project or problem. We know that many of us have varying experience with facilitation ourselves, just as we have varying experience with being or feeling included in this kind of work.

We invite you to get started by **grounding yourselves in our interests and experiences in facilitation and inclusion through reflection.** Once we have taken our own personal notes on this, we'll discuss and reflect on our **answers in pairs** about what this means to us before we **debrief in groups of 5 or 6 people** about these shared experiences.

Spiral Journal (10 minutes)

External reference material: [Spiral Journal Description](#); [Spiral Journal Slides](#)

1. Take a piece of paper and create four quadrants - either by folding in half twice, or by drawing a horizontal and vertical line on the page, an X, or a loop. (~1 min)
2. To ground yourself, start by putting your pen or pencil on the page, and as slowly and as tightly as you can, draw a spiral as tightly and slowly as possible. Alternatively, you can also draw tiny concentric circles, squares, or any other shape on the paper that you like. (2 mins)
3. Then, in each of the four quadrants, starting with the top left and going clockwise, respond to the following 4 prompts. (90 secs each?)
   a. **I am in this workshop because …**
   b. **Something I'm uncertain/unclear/skeptical about inclusive facilitation is …**
   c. **I have felt most included and engaged in working with other people when…** (identify an example)
   d. **I have included others in my work through …**

Impromptu Networking (20 minutes)

External reference material: [Impromptu Networking (LS)](#)

1. Now that we have written some individual reflections, we'll invite you to share with one another in pairs. We'll go through three rounds, addressing the same set of questions each round. *(If people ask, they can use their reflections to inform their conversations in this structure.)*
2. When you find someone to pair with, try to find someone you don't know or who does different kinds of work than you do.

3. The questions you'll be considering are: **What do the words "inclusive" and "facilitation" mean to you personally? Are there thoughts or feelings that come to mind? What's challenging about inclusive facilitation?**
4. In each round, you'll have about 5 minutes total - so just over two minutes each to share and respond to one another. We'll ring a bell at the end of 5 minutes, signaling that you should start the next round. **[ring bell at 5 minutes]**
5. You should start the next round now - and remember, you'll have 5 minutes before the next bell rings. … **[ring bell at 5 minutes]**
6. You should start the last round now - like the last two rounds, you'll have 5 minutes. … **[ring bell at 5 minutes]**

What/So What/Now What? (25 mins)

External reference material: What, So What, Now What? (LS)

1. OK! So we've now had some time to reflect individually, and to discuss some of those reflections with a colleague. Since we've done that, let's reflect on those shared experiences together and see if we need to make any adjustment.
2. We'll be splitting into groups of about 5 people. In each round, we'll give you a minute for silent reflection, and then about 4 minutes for you to discuss with your group. We'll repeat this for three rounds, and then, we'll discuss your answers across the entire workshop for 5 minutes in that round.
3. The first question is: **What?** What happened? What did you notice? What facts or observations stood out?
   a. Take a minute alone to reflect.
   b. Next, take 4 minutes in your small group to discuss.
4. The second question is: So what**?** Why is that important? What patterns or conclusions are emerging for you? What hypotheses are you making?
   a. Take a minute alone to reflect.
   b. Next, take 4 minutes in your small group to discuss.
5. The last question is: **Now what?** What actions make sense for you *(in terms of changing your practices around inclusive facilitation)*? What do we need to do to move forward?
   a. Take a minute alone to reflect.
   b. Next, take 4 minutes in your small group to discuss.
6. Now, let's share each our discussions across the group.
   a. **[3 minutes]** Let's start with **What?** What did you notice? What stood out to you and your group?
   b. **[3 minutes]** Now, let's discuss **So What?** Why were the things you noticed significant?
   c. **[3 minutes]** Finally, let's talk about **Now What?** What actions did you and your group identify. Do we need to think about changing course?

Overview of LS (5 minutes)

● Congratulations - you've just gone through your first "string" of Liberating Structures! We're going to take a brief breather here to talk a little bit about them.

- Liberating Structures are a framework used to invite people to understand how things mean something to them. They can be used as a set of tools to help change the way we work and interact with one another.
- LS is a set of established **microstructures** that allow us to both ***enable and constrain what is possible***. You may be familiar with other microstructures outside of LS, like presentations, status reports, and brainstorms - and LS fits differently across two axes balancing *distributed vs centralized control* and *the number of people included in shaping next steps*. **[Show slide with axes and example structures**]
- Facilitators use these microstructures as building blocks by ***stringing them together*** to generate new interactions and perspectives. They are intended for us to take intentional shifts together - some small, some large - that help generate new interactions and perspectives.
- Within LS, the 33 microstructures are suited towards different kinds of purposes:
  - *Discovering everyday solutions*
  - *Noticing patterns together*
  - *Unleashing local action*
  - *Drawing out prototypes, and*
  - *Spreading innovation*
  - We often supplement LS with additional microstructures which help us *ground ourselves in the present moment*, or *reflect upon something*.
- While we won't have time to demonstrate all the LS microstructures today, we're hoping to expose you to around five or six of them so you can get a flavor of how they operate.
  - So far, you have gotten exposure to three: Spiral Journal, Impromptu Networking, and What, So What, Now What (W3)?
  - As you can see, there are many different methods running at different timescales or level of granularity.
- The different microstructures in LS all have a set of five ***design elements*** that define their core attributes. These are:
  - A structuring invitation
  - How the space is arranged and what materials are needed
  - How participation is distributed
  - How groups are configured, and
  - A sequence of steps and time allocation.
- In addition to the design elements, the Liberating Structures framework is informed by a set of ten principles. These are:
  - Include and Unleash Everyone
  - Practice Deep Respect for People and Local Solutions
  - Build Trust As You Go
  - Learn by Failing Forward
  - Practice Self-Discovery Within a Group
  - Amplify Freedom AND Responsibility
  - Emphasize Possibilities: Believe Before You See
  - Invite Creative Destruction To Enable Innovation
  - Engage In Seriously-Playful Curiosity
  - Never Start Without Clear Purpose
- It is important to note that these principles are *not* themselves rooted in anti-oppression work, so following these principles alone will not necessarily ensure your facilitation is fully inclusive. We

need to keep this in mind and notice overlaps, and often support the crafting of inclusive spaces for collaboration using additional tools.

WHY (30 minutes)

- **Format:** Small group
- **Goals:** demonstrate agreements; demonstrate extended relational interaction
- **Outcomes:** n/a
- **Supplies/artifacts needed**: talking objects

Structuring invitation

Now that we've reflected on our experiences of feeling included, we can see that it is important. We all have individual experiences, but **we also believe that people who are in this workshop believe that inclusive facilitation methods are important**. There may be many reasons *why* inclusive facilitation is important as well.

So with this in mind, ask yourselves **"What do you do when you are working on a collaborative project to ensure people are included? Why is that important?"** We want you to dig deeper to see if there's an underlying purpose or reason for including people intentionally. We'll gather in small groups to discuss.

Conversation Cafe (30 mins)

- **External reference material:** Conversation Cafe (LS); Conversation Cafe Hosting Manual

1. Let's break into groups of about 5 people - hopefully a new group than the one you were in last time.
2. There will be four rounds of conversation in each group. In the first two rounds, which will be about **5 minutes** each, you'll use a "talking object" to ensure that only one person speaks at a time. The third round will be open conversation for about **15 minutes**, and the last round will be **5 minutes** using the talking object.
3. As a part of this activity, we ask you to follow six agreements with your group:
   a. Suspend judgment as best as you can
   b. Respect one another
   c. Seek to understand rather than persuade
   d. Invite and honor diverse opinions
   e. Speak what has personal heart and meaning
   f. Go for honesty and depth while being brief (avoid going on and on)
4. In each group, we ask one of you to volunteer as a "host" - a full participant who can gently intervene if someone isn't observing one of the agreements. Hosts can raise their hand or get the attention of one of the facilitators if you need assistance.
5. OK - let's start the first round. Each person should get about a minute to respond to the following questions: **What do you do when you are working on a collaborative project to ensure people are included? Why is that important?** Remember to use the talking object and pass it to the next person when you're done.

6. **[after 5 minutes]** Now that you've listened to everyone in your group, share your thoughts and feelings. Each person gets about a minute - and remember to use the talking object and pass it when you're done.
7. **[after 5 minutes]** This is the third round - we'll have an open conversation for **15 minutes**. If you'd like, your group can use the talking object if you find it useful.
8. **[after 15 minutes]** We're now in the fourth round. Share any takeaways with your group. Each person again gets about a minute. Use the talking object in this round and pass it to the next person when you're done.

Break (5-10 minutes)

HOW

- **Format:** Pairs → Small Group → Entire Workshop → Fast Interaction → Large Group
- **Goals:** reflection on current challenges and how they might be addressed
- **Outcomes:**
- **Supplies/artifacts needed**: Paper (index cards?) and writing implement
- **Notes:** This whole section is in fact TRIZ wrapped somewhat differently.

TRIZ (20 minutes)

- **External reference material:** 1-2-4-All (LS)

Structuring invitation

Now that we've talked about what inclusive facilitation means to us and why it is important, I want to invite us to think together about **how we can foster collaboration through inclusive facilitation practices**. To do this, we're going to ask you to activate your inner supervillains and ask "what can we do to maximize barriers to collaboration?" What are some facilitation practices which help to **make collaboration as hard as possible**? What can we do to **put an end to any collaboration** that might be happening?

Once we have taken some time on our own to think about this, we'll discuss and reflect on our **answers in pairs** about what this means to us before we **debrief in small groups**, and finally as a **whole group** about these shared experiences.

Steps

1. **On your own**, take five minutes to write down as many ways as you can think of to maximize barriers to collaboration.
2. Then, **in pairs**, we'd like you to discuss what you came up with. See if you can build on your individual lists. Again, you will have two minutes, so try to keep your sharing brief to make sure you both get a chance to talk.
3. Next, we'll be reflecting together on these lists in **groups of 4**, to see what else can be added. Again, you'll have 4 minutes total in these groups, so keep your answers short.

4. Last, as a whole group, let's see if we can come up with a comprehensive list of ways that we can be evil.

25/10 Crowdsourcing (30 minutes)

- **External reference material:** [25/10 Crowdsourcing (LS)](#)

Structuring invitation

Now that we have a long list of negative behaviors, let's see if we can do a bit of sorting and filtering to **see what ideas have the most resonance to the group**.

I invite us all to take **five minutes on our own** to reflect on this list we created together, and **make a second list of everything** that we are currently doing that resembles in some way one or more items on that list. These could be things that you personally do, or things that happen at your institution or within communities with which you're familiar.

Steps

1. Take a single index card and **write down one item** from the list of behaviors that you just created that you think is **common or prevalent** in our field.
2. Then, everybody will get up, **mill around, and pass cards from person to person**. No one reads the cards, they just pass. This is called "Mill and Pass".
3. When the bell rings again, we'll **stop passing cards and read the card in our hands, and rate the behavior** identified on the card with a score from 1 to 5 based on **how commonly you've encountered it** in your own context (1 is almost never and 5 is all the time), writing the score on the back of the card. This part is called "Read and Score".
4. When the bell rings again, cards are passed around for another round of "Mill and Pass" until the bell rings and the "Read and Score" scoring cycle repeats. This is done for a total of **five scoring rounds**. I encourage you to resist the urge to look at previous scores for a behavior before deciding for yourself how common that behavior is.
5. At the end of cycle five, participants add the five scores on the back of the last card they are holding.
6. Now, we're going to start counting down from 25 (the total number of possible points) to see which behaviors resonated across the group.

Discovery & Action Dialogue (25-70 minutes)

- **External reference material**: [Discovery & Action Dialogue (LS)](#)

Structuring invitation

I now want to invite you to **identify things we can do to create more inclusive collaborations** which may be hidden within ourselves or our communities. Let's take the most problematic behavior we just identified [from 25/10 Crowdsourcing] and see if we can pull it apart a bit.

Steps

Identify recorder - document insights, action ideas, and who else needs to be included.
Identify facilitator - asks questions, makes sure everyone is included.

Ask the following questions:
1. How do you know when ___ is present?
2. How do you contribute effectively to solving ___?
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 ___ and overcome barriers? What behaviors or practices 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?

Wrap-up (5 min)

Social Network Webbing (5 minutes)

As we move towards the end of our time together, I want to invite you to help make visible the resources which exist within our network of relationships, some of which might be hidden, which can help us act on some of the inclusive facilitation practices we've learned about today.

Option 1:

Everybody will need to be up and on their feet for this exercise, as it will require moving around the room.

1. First, go to the person you work with most closely. (1 min)
2. Now, go to the person who said or did something during the workshop that you want to acknowledge, thank, or express gratitude for. If you feel comfortable doing so, consider offering that acknowledgement or thanks. (1 min)
3. Finally, go to the person that inspired you or that you want to follow-up with after the workshop. (1 min)

Option 2:

To do this we're going to create a kind of network diagram, so please find a blank piece of paper and something to write with.
1. First, write down your own name somewhere on the blank piece of paper.
2. Then, write down the name of the person in this workshop with whom you work the most closely. Think about how you are connected to this person and create some kind of visual representation of that connection which might indicate directionality, closeness or strength of that connection (or something else entirely, up to you!) (1 min)
3. Now, write down the name of the person or people who said or did something during the workshop that you want to acknowledge, thank, or express gratitude for. Again, think about how

the individuals on your paper are connected and find a way to visually represent those relationships. (1 min)
4. Finally, write down the name of an individual that inspired you or that you want to follow-up with after the workshop, and then connect that name to the rest of your relationship graph. (1 min)

We have a couple of days together here at Code4Lib, so I encourage you to reflect on these relationships we've identified and take the opportunity to connect or reconnect with folks who are important resources to you.

Resources

Speaking of resources, here's a list of resources you might find useful. We'll be following up with an email to all of you containing our "playbook" for today, which includes these links as well as a detailed script for all of the exercises we did together in the workshop today.

Liberating Structures

- Liberating Structures site - https://www.liberatingstructures.com/
- Liberating Structures Slack - http://bit.ly/lscommunityslack
- Helping Others Get Started - https://www.liberatingstructures.com/helping-others/
- Virtual Liberating Structures - https://virtual-liberating-structures.com/
- Liberating Structures Selection Matchmaker - https://www.liberatingstructures.com/storage/articles-nascent-ls/LS%20Selection%20Matchmaker%20v%209.pdf
- Liberating Structures in Virtual Settings - https://www.liberatingstructures.com/storage/articles-nascent-ls/DESIGN%20of%20LIBERATED%20VIRTUAL%20MEETINGS%20v2.pdf

Facilitation

- Anti-Oppressive Facilitation for Democratic Process: Making Meetings Awesome for Everyone: https://web.archive.org/web/202101/https://aorta.coop/portfolio_page/anti-oppressive-facilitation/
- The Art of Facilitation LibGuide: https://simmonslis.libguides.com/theartoffacilitation

Lighting the Way

- Lighting the Way Project: https://exhibits.stanford.edu/lightingtheway
- Lighting the Way Forum Playbook - https://doi.org/10.25740/nx655rf2881
- Lighting the Way Working Meeting Playbook - https://doi.org/10.25740/td604nc7124
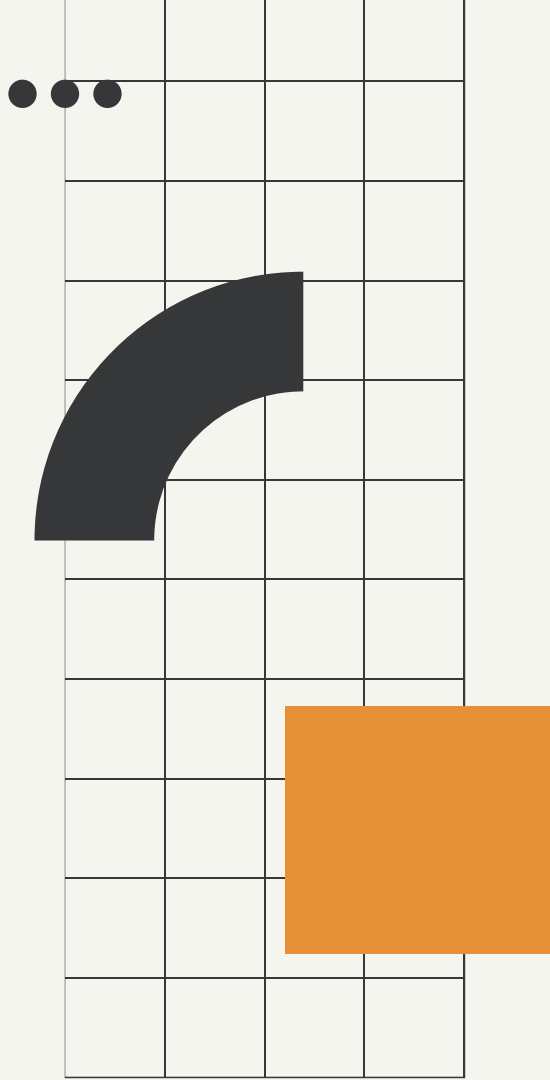
Including and Unleashing Everyone

Facilitation with Liberating Structures

M.A. Matienzo and Hillel Arnold
Code4Lib – May 23, 2022

1

Workshop purpose

Introduce new methods to build familiarity so you can apply them in routine and creative ways

Demonstrate how <u>microstructures</u> shape our interactions

Unleash and include everyone so you can do the same in your own local contexts

Our expectations of you

- Be present in whichever way that means to you
- Take opportunities to contribute and make space for others to do the same
- Please take care of your needs first — if you need a break, take one
- Follow the Code4Lib Code of Conduct

Workshop structure

- "Immersion" directly into methods: experience structures without much explanation
- Debrief and reflection on interactions and structure
- Repetition and variation to show impact of changes
- Feel free to ask questions as you need to, but we'll have time at the end for in-depth questions

Reflection

- Pay attention to how structures shape interactions
- Notice details about your experience
- Pay attention to how you feel about them as we progress
- Notice when you might be confused, surprised, or unsure

Why are we here?

We all believe in the importance of including everyone in working on a project or problem.

Let's ground ourselves in our interests and experiences with inclusive facilitation through reflection.

We'll then discuss in pairs and debrief in small groups.

Spiral Journal

Take a piece of paper and create four quadrants, either by folding in half twice or by drawing a horizontal and vertical lines on the page.

To ground yourself, put your pencil or pen on the page and draw a spiral as slowly and tightly as you can.

You can also draw concentric circles, triangles, etc. instead.

Starting with the top left and going clockwise, silently respond to the prompts by writing in the associated quadrant.

You'll have 90 seconds for each.

1	2
4	3

1. I am in this workshop because …

1	2
4	3

2. Something I'm uncertain, unclear, or skeptical about inclusive facilitation is ...

1	2
4	3

3. I have felt most included and engaged in working with other people when …

1	2
4	**3**

4. I have included others in my work through …

The image shows a 2x2 grid. Top-left cell contains "1", top-right cell contains "2", bottom-left cell (highlighted in yellow) contains "4", bottom-right cell contains "3".

Impromptu Networking

Now that we've reflected individually, let's discuss our reflections in pairs.

We'll discuss the same set of questions in 3 rounds.

Find someone to pair with.

Preferably, pair with someone you don't know or someone who does different work than you.

In three rounds of 5 minutes each, discuss your answers to a set of questions.

We will ring a bell to signal the end of a round and to start a new one.

- **What do the words "inclusive" and "facilitation" mean to you personally?**
- **Are there thoughts or feelings that come to mind?**
- **What's challenging about inclusive facilitation?**

What/So What/Now What?

Let's reflect on shared experiences thus far through an intentional progression through three questions.

Split into groups of 5.

In each of 3 rounds:
- **Take 1 minute for silent reflection.**
- **Take 4-5 minutes in your group to discuss.**

After, we'll discuss all together.

What?

- **What happened?**
- **What did you notice?**
- **What facts or observations stood out to you?**

Take 1 minute alone to reflect.

Then, take 4-5 minutes to discuss in your small group.

So What?

- **Why is that important?**
- **What patterns or conclusions are emerging for you?**
- **What hypotheses are you making?**

Take 1 minute alone to reflect.

Then, take 4-5 minutes to discuss in your small group.

Now What?

- **What actions make sense for you to take?**
- **What do we need to do to move forward?**
- **How will you apply what you learned?**

Take 1 minute alone to reflect.

Then, take 4-5 minutes to discuss in your small group.

As a group, discuss each question for 3 minutes:

- **What?** What stood out to your group?

- **So What?** Why were the things you noticed significant?

- **Now What?** What next steps did your group identify?

Congratulations!

You survived your first "string" of

Liberating Structures.

Liberating Structures Overview

What are Liberating Structures?

- A set of **microstructures** that **enable and constrain what is possible**

- Building blocks that facilitators **string together** to generate new interactions and perspectives

Distributed control

Control of content

▲
Open discussion

○
Liberating Structures

▲
Brainstorm

1 person   Number of people included in shaping next steps   Everybody

▲
Status report

▲
Managed discussion

▲
Presentation

Centralized control
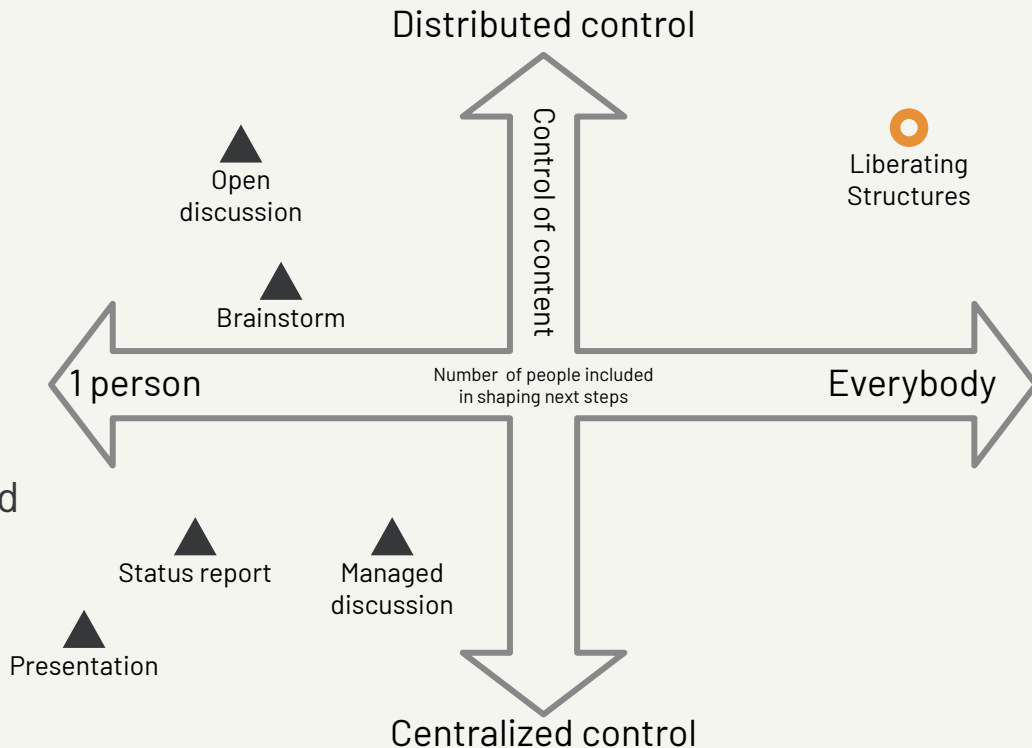
What can LS help us do?

- **Discover everyday solutions**
- **Notice patterns together**
- **Unleash local action**
- **Draw out prototypes**
- **Spread innovation**

We may supplement them with other methods to **ground ourselves** or **reflect upon something**

1. Impromptu Networking 5-20 min.	12. Min Specs 20-50 min.	23. Discovery & Action Dialogue 25-70 min.
2. 9 Whys 5-20 min.	13. Wise Crowds 10-60 min. per person	24. Integrated~Autonomy 60-80 min.
3. What, So What, Now What 15-45 min.	14. Wicked Questions 20 min.	25. Generative Relationships 25 min.
4. TRIZ 30-45 min.	15. Drawing Together 30-40 min.	26. Critical Uncertainties 60-100 min.
5. Appreciative Interviews 30-60 min.	16. Improv Prototyping 15-20 min. per round	27. Purpose-to-Practice 25-120 min.
6. 1-2-4-All 10-12 min.	17. Agreement-Certainty Matrix 30-45 min.	28. Ecocycle Planning 60-95 min.
7. User Experience Fishbowl 25-70 min.	18. Shift & Share 35-90 min.	29. Panarchy 1-2 hr.
8. 15% Solutions 15-20 min.	19. Heard, Seen, Respected 25 min.	30. What I Need From You 45-70 min.
9. 25-to-10 Crowd Sourcing 20-30 min.	20. Social Network Webbing 45-60 min.	31. Celebrity Interview 25-60 min.
10. Troika Consulting 15-30 min.	21. Design Storyboards 25-70 min.	32. Helping Heuristics 15 min.
11. Conversation Café 35-60 min.	22. Open Space 90 min. to 3 days	33. Simple Ethnography 1-6 hr.

LS design elements

All LS microstructures have a set of **design elements** that define their core attributes:

- Structuring invitation
- Arrangement of space and other materials needed
- Distribution of participation
- Configuration of groups
- Sequencing of time

Example: Impromptu Networking

- **Invitation:** What do "inclusive" & "facilitation" mean to you?
- **Space, etc.:** seating to pair, bells
- **Participation:** everyone
- **Groups:** 2-3 people
- **Time:** 5 minutes per cycle

LS principles

1. Include and Unleash Everyone

2. Practice Deep Respect for People and Local Solutions

3. Build Trust As You Go

4. Learn by Failing Forward

5. Practice Self-Discovery Within a Group

6. Amplify Freedom **&** Responsibility

7. Emphasize Possibilities: Believe Before You See

8. Invite Creative Destruction To Enable Innovation

9. Engage In Seriously-Playful Curiosity

10. Never Start Without Clear Purpose

When considering LS principles …

- Remember that Liberating Structures are not rooted in anti-oppression work
- However, there may be overlaps and connections to these approaches

See our Resources List at the end for other references on anti-oppressive facilitation!

Conversation Cafe

We've established that people in this workshop believe inclusive facilitation methods are important.

Let's ask ourselves what we do to ensure that, and why that's important.

Split into groups of 5 people, hopefully different from your last group.

There will be 4 rounds to discuss your responses to these questions:

What do you do when you are working on a collaborative project to ensure people are included?

Why is that important?

In rounds 1, 2, and 4, use a "talking object" to ensure that only one person speaks at a time.

We ask you to follow 6 agreements in this activity:

1. Suspend judgment as best as you can
2. Respect one another
3. Seek to understand rather than persuade
4. Invite and honor diverse opinions
5. Speak what has personal heart and meaning
6. Go for honesty and depth while being brief

Designate 1 person as a "host" who can gently intervene if the agreements are not followed.

Round 1 (5 minutes)

What do you do when you are working on a collaborative project to ensure people are included? Why is that important?

Each person should get about a minute to speak, but can pass temporarily or for the round if they like. Remember to use the talking object and pass it to the next person when you're done.

Agreements

1. Suspend judgment as best as you can
2. Respect one another
3. Seek to understand rather than persuade
4. Invite and honor diverse opinions
5. Speak what has personal heart & meaning
6. Go for honesty and depth while being brief

Round 2 (5 minutes)

Share your thoughts and feelings after listening to everyone in the last round. Each person gets about 1 minute to speak.

Remember to use the talking object and pass it to the next person when you're done.

Agreements

1. Suspend judgment as best as you can
2. Respect one another
3. Seek to understand rather than persuade
4. Invite and honor diverse opinions
5. Speak what has personal heart & meaning
6. Go for honesty and depth while being brief

Round 3 (15 minutes)

This round is for open conversation. You don't have to use the talking object this round, but you can if you'd prefer.

Agreements

1. Suspend judgment as best as you can
2. Respect one another
3. Seek to understand rather than persuade
4. Invite and honor diverse opinions
5. Speak what has personal heart & meaning
6. Go for honesty and depth while being brief

Round 4 (5 minutes)

Share any takeaways with your group. Each person gets about 1 minute each to share.

Use the talking object in this round and pass it to the next person when you're done.

Agreements

1. Suspend judgment as best as you can
2. Respect one another
3. Seek to understand rather than persuade
4. Invite and honor diverse opinions
5. Speak what has personal heart & meaning
6. Go for honesty and depth while being brief

•••

Break

TRIZ

Now that we've identified what inclusive facilitation means to us, how can we foster it?

What can we do to *maximize* barriers to collaboration?

On your own, write down as many ways as you can think of to maximize barriers to collaboration.

In pairs, discuss and build on your individual lists.

Where do your lists converge and diverge? What might you be missing?

In groups of four, reflect and continue to build on previous conversation.

As a whole group, let's develop a comprehensive list of ways to maximize barriers to collaboration.

How can we be evil by maximizing barriers to participation?

25/10 Crowdsourcing

Now that we have a list of negative behaviors, let's see what ideas have the most resonance for the group as a whole.

Negative Behaviors

On your own, make a list of everything that we are currently doing that resembles something on the list of negative behaviors.

From the list you've just created, write down one item that you think is the most common or prevalent in our field.

Mill and Pass: pass cards from person to person

Read and Score: rate the card in your hands

We'll repeat these two steps five times.

Total up the number of points on the back of your card.

Counting down from 25, let's see which ideas scored the highest.

Discovery & Action Dialogue

Let's identify things we can do to create more inclusive collaborations.

Some of these things may already exist in ourselves or our communities.

Roles

Facilitator

Recorder

How do you know when that problematic behavior is present?

How do you contribute effectively to solving this problematic behavior?

What prevents you from doing this or taking these actions all the time?

Do you know anybody who is frequently able to solve the problematic behavior and overcome barriers? What behaviors or practices made their success possible?

Do you have any ideas?

What else needs to be done to make it happen? Any volunteers?

Who else needs to be involved?

How do you know when that problematic behavior is present?

How do you contribute effectively to solving this problematic behavior?

What prevents you from doing this or taking these actions all the time?

Do you know anybody who is frequently able to solve the problematic behavior and overcome barriers?

What behaviors or practices made their success possible?

Do you have any ideas?

What else needs to be done to make it happen? Any volunteers?

Who else needs to be involved?

Social Network Webbing

Let's make visible the resources which exist within our network of relationships which can help us act on what we've learned about today.

Go to the person you work with most closely.

Go to the person who said or did something during the workshop that you want to acknowledge, thank, or express gratitude for.

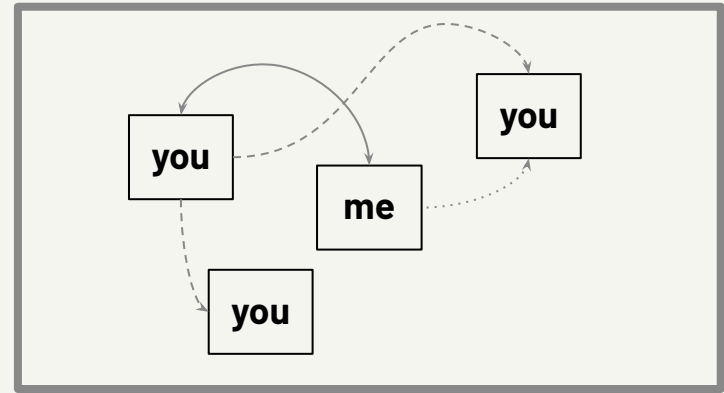Go to the person that inspired you or that you want to follow-up with after the workshop.
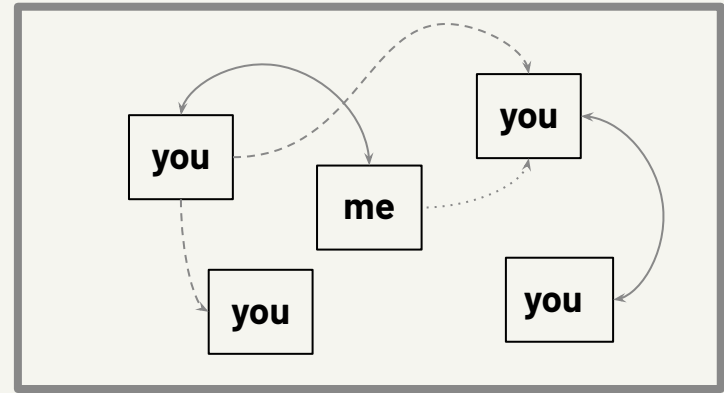
Write down your name somewhere on a blank piece of paper

me
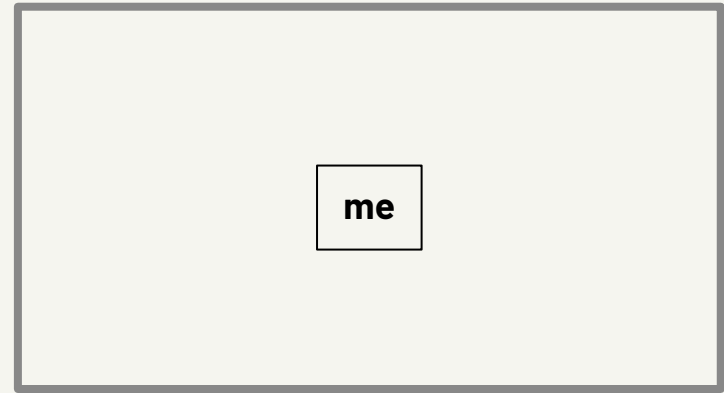
Add the name of the person with whom you work the most closely and connect them to you

you

me
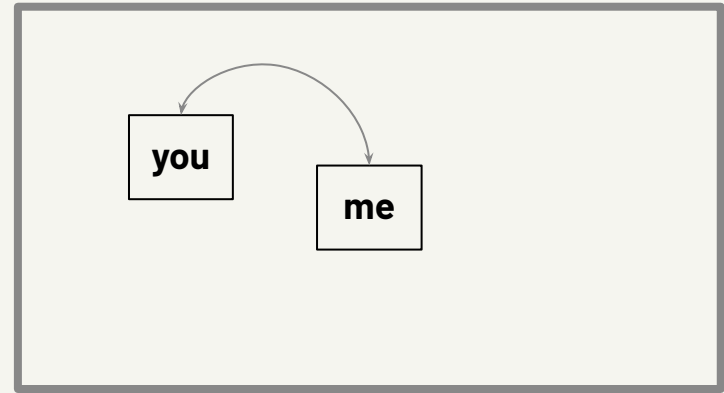
Add and connect people who said or did something during the workshop that you want to express gratitude for

Add and connect someone who inspired you or that you want to follow-up with

Resources

Liberating Structures site – https://www.liberatingstructures.com/

Liberating Structures Slack – http://bit.ly/lscommunityslack

Anti-Oppressive Facilitation for Democratic Process:
https://web.archive.org/web/202101/https://aorta.coop/portfolio_page
/anti-oppressive-facilitation/

The Art of Facilitation: https://simmonslis.libguides.com/theartoffacilitation

Lighting the Way project – https://exhibits.stanford.edu/lightingtheway