Choose your side

Participantealise that they differ from one another, and from the users they design for.

Participants	**Design skill**	**Prior design experience**
Class	**Develop empathy**	**None**
Duration	**Design step**	
10 minutes	**Exploring the problem**	

Description

A space is divided into two clearly separated areas. The facilitator defines what each area presents, such as 'playing indoors' in one area and 'playing outdoors' in the other. Each participant moves to the area with the concept that best suits them. This is repeated a number of times, and the participants choose a side each time. They will see each other walking and standing. Through this, they will discover who likes what and how they differ from each other.

To start the participants will do a few rounds without paying attention to others. In the latter rounds, they will look closely at who is in the opposing area and start to discuss how they differ from each other. Proving not everyone likes the same thing!

Effect

This exercise helps participants to empathize with someone else. The differences between participants are made very visible so that the participants get to know each other better. They will also understand that there are differences between users. The exercise also strengthens the group dynamics.

Without the Choose your side   *With the Choose your side*
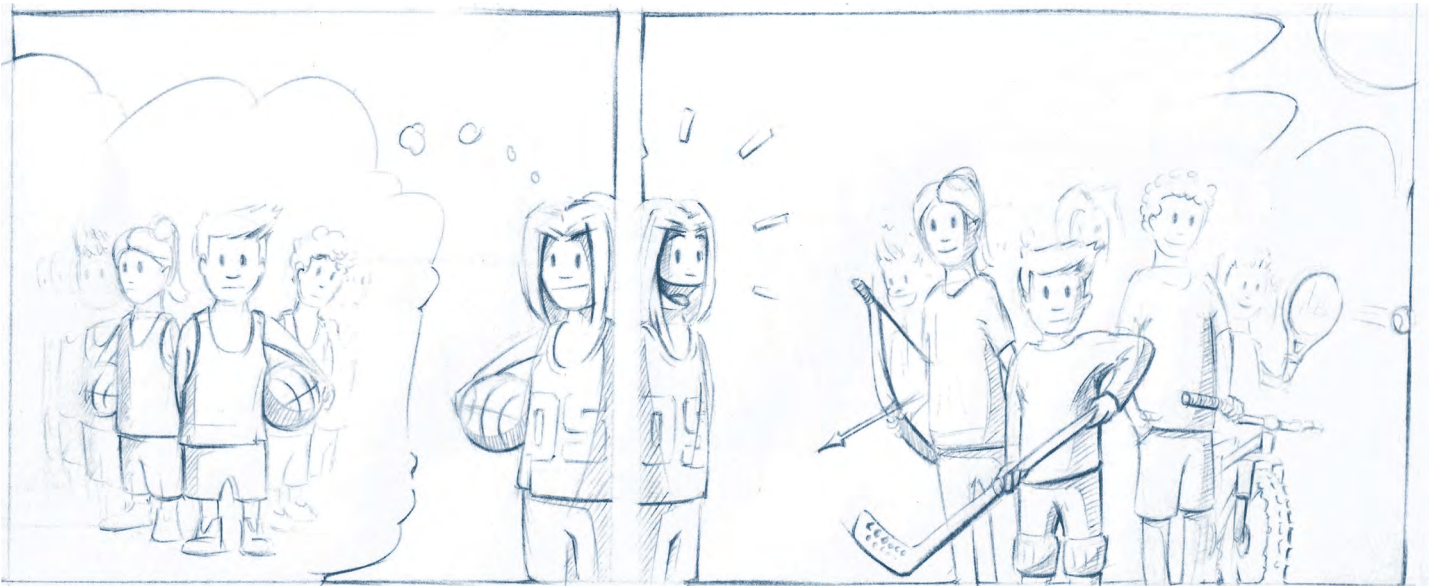
Example

The students of Mrs. Smith worked on the project 'An exercise game for everyone'. They had to think of something that would make young people exercise more. Because people are quick to think from their own perspective, Mrs. Smith started with the 'Choose your side' exercise as an energizer.

By presenting two opposite ideas each round it, quickly became clear that there were major differences between the students. For example,: computer game - board game, individual sports - group sports and dog - cat. It was especially interesting when students did not expect certain responses from others, the surprise was great.

'We will have to consider these differences when we start designing. Because not everyone likes the same thing', says Jesse.

Step by step

1 Think of at least ten opposing concepts pairs. Choose some of these pairs at random and some relating to the design theme.

2 Create the two areas in the room where the participants can walk to and mark two boxes on the floor with masking tape, this is the most fun. More simply the left and right side of a room works.

3 Explain to the participants that they will need to choose from two opposing concepts and move to one area of the room according to what suits them best.

4 Perform the exercise. Name the opposite concepts and let the participants walk to the area of their choice. Invite some participants to explain their choice. Focus on discussion especially when there is a remarkable distribution.

5 Go through all opposite concept pairs. In the last few rounds, invite the participants to take a good look at who is on the other side.

6 Have participants form pairs with someone who is often on the other side. Give them a few minutes to discuss the differences between them.

7 Discuss with the whole group what the participants noticed.

Examples of opposite pairs

Play indoors	⟷	Play outside	Reading	⟷	Watching TV
Work individually	⟷	work together	Orange juice	⟷	Cola
Climb	⟷	Crawl	Green	⟷	Blue
Beach	⟷	Mountain	Morning	⟷	Evening
Sun	⟷	Moon	Skipping rope	⟷	Baseball
Running	⟷	Hopscotch	Football	⟷	Hockey
Soft	⟷	Hard	Paint	⟷	Clay
Computer game	⟷	Board game	Math	⟷	Language
Camping	⟷	Hotel	Light	⟷	Dark
Typing	⟷	Writing	Music	⟷	Movie

Tips

▶ Choose contradictions that will actually show differences in the preferences of the group; also consider differences that are related to the intended end users.

▶ Use the contradictions between participants to form the design teams. Partner two pairs together. Variation in a team often produces better results.

Materials

▶ Tape and space to make two areas
▶ A list of contradictions, including some related to the design theme