



60 MINUTES

# Get Started: Inventory of Participatory Design Experiences

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\*Adaptation note: There are a number of studies of participatory design on which this tool's skills are based (highlighted in the Additional Reading & Works Cited sections)

## Activity Rationale and Aims

### Aims

01. Engage team collaborators in an activity to identify the experiences and capabilities of team members for participatory design (PD)
02. Understand the experiences collaborators have and would like to gain
03. Create a public record of how expertise in PD is distributed on the teams, as well as what experiences and skills they hope to gain through working together

### Activity Summary

This activity engages collaborators in taking an inventory of their own experiences that are relevant to the practices of participatory design. As part of it, individuals complete [an activity sheet](#) of experiences they have had and would like to gain. Collaborators discuss with others on their team who brings what experiences, and what goals different people have for participation, making a public record of their expertise and experiences.

### Rationale

This activity presents an approach to support teams that have not used PD before in connecting to the skills and experiences they bring. Collaboratively working on a PD inventory helps create a public record. A PD framework presents an opening for learning scientists to rethink design and learning as processes (Zavala, 2016).



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# In Person Steps

1. Facilitator introduces the idea that participatory design includes both skills that support routine work, and skills that support occasional/as needed work, and that many of us have developed these skills.
2. Collaborators complete their inventory of experiences and goals for their own development (use activity sheet).
  - a. If conducted during a meeting, allow at least 15 minutes for collaborators to complete their activity sheets.
  - b. Some collaborators may prefer more thinking time, and asking people to complete the activity sheet between two meetings could benefit those who prefer more time.
3. Collaborators share in pairs or with the whole team their experiences and goals, as a facilitator creates a public record of those on butcher paper.

## Modifications and Virtual Adaptations

- If conducting this activity in a virtual environment, create breakout rooms to share and use a tool like Google Jamboard or Miro (instead of butcher paper) to create public space for recording ideas.
- If collaborators come as individuals (rather than as a team), then there may be no need to create a public record of the skills and goals.
- The public record is something that a team could revisit throughout a project, to remind the group of the expertise of the group as well as what expertise is developing.
- Once the team gains experience with PD, you could focus on a skill in a meeting and ask what it means to show that skill in the work. People's sense of these skills and experiences is likely to evolve over time in ways that can support group learning.
- Once the team gains experience with PD, the group could complete another survey anonymously to identify whether the group has people who are using the skills in the inventory.
- This activity could be used with any size group, but the discussion session would need to be modified for a larger group (could do smaller groups or pair-shares to ensure more equity of voice and recognition of different learning styles).



## Facilitator Preparation

### MATERIALS

- Pens
- Butcher block paper and sticky notes, or Google Jamboard or Miro for digital recording of responses

### HANDOUTS OR SLIDES

- Self-Inventory of Participatory Design Skills - [Experiences Activity Sheet](#)
- [Slides](#)

## Facilitation Tips

- Share how this activity has been useful in the past when introducing it.
- You may want to model sharing a row or two of a completed activity sheet.
- When sharing out, give collaborators the option to include their name on a sticky note with their relevant experience or expertise, if they wish to serve as a resource for others in the context of participatory design.

## Example from the field

As part of a course to introduce teachers, youth, and researchers to a model for collaborative design (co-design) of curriculum materials called *storylining*, the instructor introduced the tool as part of an introduction to participatory design purposes and methods. The course took place on Zoom, and after being introduced to the activity, design teams met in breakouts to complete their activity sheets individually. They added to a Jamboard some skills and experiences they saw as strengths and also skills and experiences they hoped to develop through

co-design. The group discussed patterns they noticed in what skills they brought, as well as what they hoped to learn. Many identified “structuring ideation processes that amplify voices without power” as a skill they hoped to develop, and so a new activity was designed to discuss more deeply what collaborators hoped to learn.



## Commitments to Equity and Wellness

This tool supports self-reflection and group discussion of behaviors and practices that would foster an equitable environment that would support collaborators to fully thrive, drawing on their strengths and lived experiences. The tool centers equity by highlighting the expertise and experiences of each participant and cultivates wellness in the collaborative context by providing the conditions by which to align roles with skills, interests, and experiences. The reflection categories themselves focus on equity (e.g. facing differences) and equal valuing of strengths. Engaging in this activity towards the start of a project has the potential to repair traditional divisions of labor and hierarchies within research (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016), generating a context that invites collaborators to show up in their “zone of genius.”



# Additional Reading

- Björgvinsson, E., Ehn, P., Hillgren, P., Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, School of Design and Crafts, Konstnärliga fakulteten, Göteborgs universitet, Högskolan för design och konsthantverk, Gothenburg University, Faculty of Culture and Society, Malmö University, & School of Arts and Communication (K3). (2012). Agonistic participatory design: Working with marginalised social movements. *Codesign*, 8(2-3), 127-144.
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- Penuel, W. R., Roschelle, J., & Shechtman, N. (2007). Designing formative assessment software with teachers: An analysis of the co-design process. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, 2(1), 51-74.
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# Works Cited

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Zavala, M. (2016). Design, participation, and social change: What design in grassroots spaces can teach learning scientists. *Cognition and Instruction*, 34(3), 236-249.



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