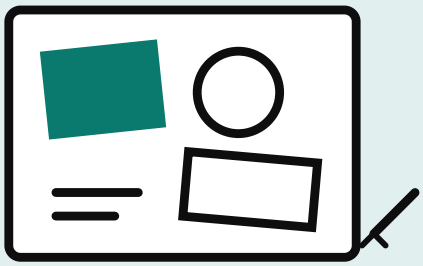
Method

Generative tools

Kits of materials (images, words, pieces) that people use to create collages, maps or models to express experiences, feelings and ideas that are hard to put into words.



In Spanish
Herramientas generativas

Origin
Sanders (2002); Sanders and Stappers (2008)

Output
Collages, maps or models made by the participants themselves

What it's for

It brings out needs and desires that don't come up in an interview, because what people say and do doesn't tell the whole story.

Key elements

Make, not just talk
Creating something by hand helps people think and remember.

Open materials
Ambiguous images and words that invite interpretation.

Tell what was made
The person's explanation is the most valuable part.

Tool, toolkit, technique and method
Tools are the materials; the toolkit, a set designed for a purpose; the technique, how they are used; the method, how they are combined in a project.

How it's done

1 

Prepare the kit. Images, words and a clear prompt.

2 

Create. Each person builds their collage, map or model.

3 

Tell it. The person explains what they made and why; it is recorded.

Applications in design

When to use it

Early in the project, to explore experiences, emotions and desires.

Avoid

Analyzing the collage without the explanation of the person who made it.

Don't fall for it

Test the kit first: too many pieces overwhelm and too few limit.

Connections

Builds on

- Say vs. do

Used by

- Design anthropology
- Social design
- Design research

Related to

- Co-design
- Participatory design
- In-depth interview
- LEGO® Serious Play®
- Cultural probes

Authors and works

2002	**Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders**	Argued for moving from user-centered design to participatory design, in which people create.
2008	**Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers**	Proposed that designers make tools so that non-designers can express themselves creatively.
2010	**Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders, Eva Brandt and Thomas Binder**	Organized participatory tools and techniques by their form (making, telling or enacting), their purpose and their context.

Sources

Original sources

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- Sanders, E. B.-N., & Stappers, P. J. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. CoDesign, 4(1), 5–18. View source (https://doi.org/10.1080/15710880701875068)

- Sanders, E. B.-N., Brandt, E., & Binder, T. (2010). A framework for organizing the tools and techniques of participatory design. In Proceedings of the 11th Biennial Participatory Design Conference (pp. 195–198). Association for Computing Machinery. View source (https://doi.org/10.1145/1900441.1900476)

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