

From Flipover to **BOUNDARY OBJECT**

3 ways to think together when things are complicated

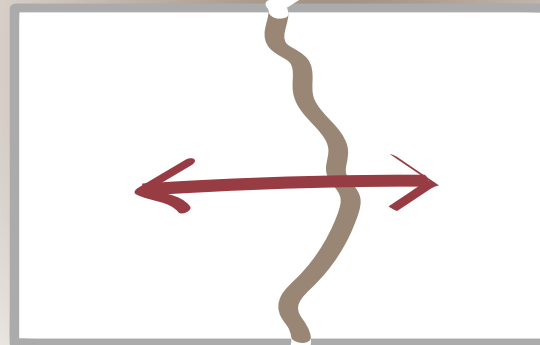


With a **BOUNDARY OBJECT** you bridge different thought worlds

People's perspectives diverge easily. For instance between R&D and sales teams. Or between trained specialists and experts by experience in mental healthcare.

Boundaries between worlds of thought inhibit cooperation.

It is not easy to step out of the frame of your own mind. Your knowledge has developed in the context of your work. It helps you to assess a situation.



Someone else interprets that situation from her own context and knowledge.

A boundary object helps to understand each other better. It is something you work on together. Everybody can relate to it from their own area of expertise.

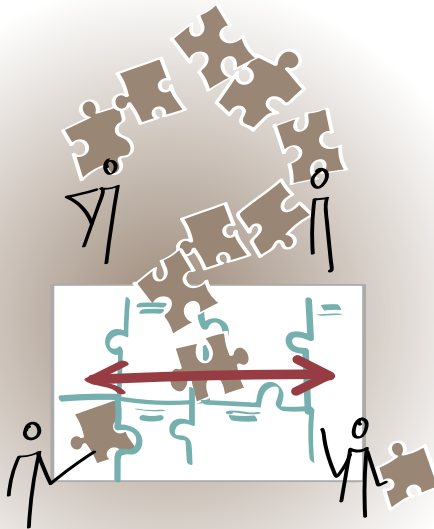
Think of database, a maquette or a conceptual model.

You can also make a boundary object from your flipover.

In this pdf you find 3 ways to accomplish that.

With a **BOUNDARY OBJECT** you can:

TRANSFER
Knowledge



When it is clear what it is about and what is supposed to be done.

TRANSLATE
Knowledge



When you do not understand each other correctly because your perspectives diverge.

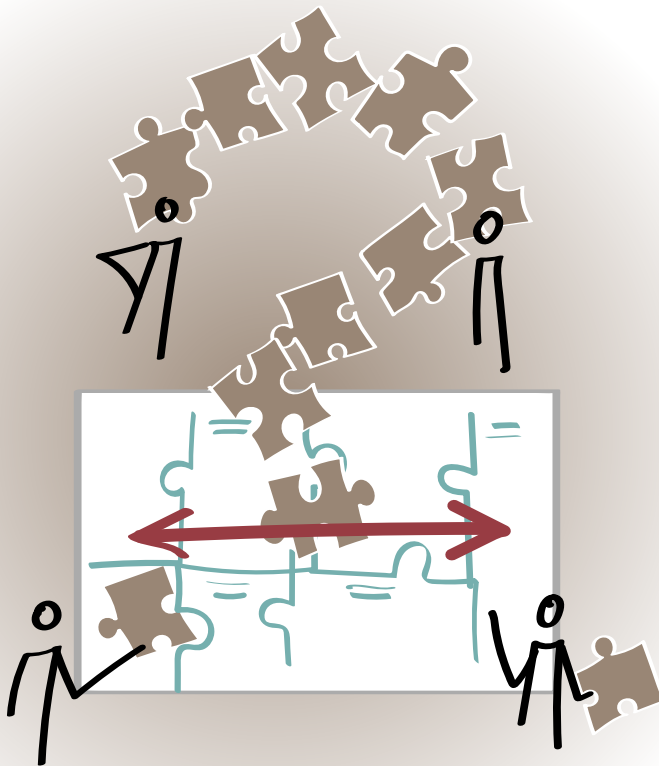
TRANSFORM
Knowledge



When you need something new, because current approaches no longer work.

Transferring Knowledge: the **VISUAL TEMPLATE**

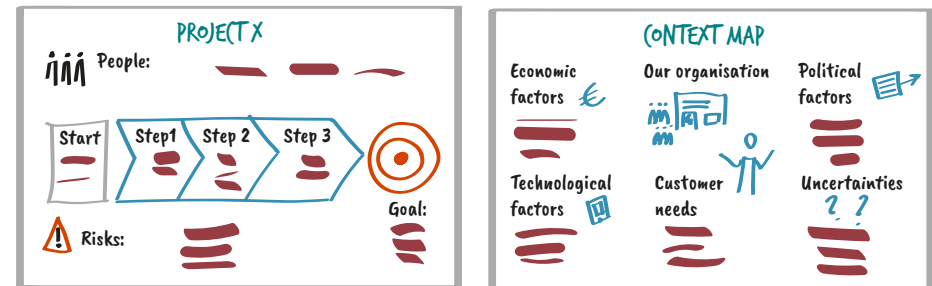
Is the issue clear enough and is the knowledge you need distributed over different people?



Use your flipover as a visual template to process information. That facilitates the transfer of knowledge during a meeting.

A visual template is a kind of form you fill in.

You collect the input in a logical structure, like in a project map, a context map, or in the business model canvas.



It works best when you make the template yourself.

- Around what questions or themes do you need information?
- How do they connect?
- Bring them together in a visual structure (look [here](#) to see how you do that).

You can also develop the template with others or propose a sketch and refine them together.

Leave room on the paper to add information.

Fill in the template together with the people involved.

Make sure you can see all contributions.

What is missing? What is needed? What is the next step?

Translating knowledge: paper as PLATFORM

Is the issue ambiguous? Does everybody have a different perspective? Is it hard to understand each other correctly?

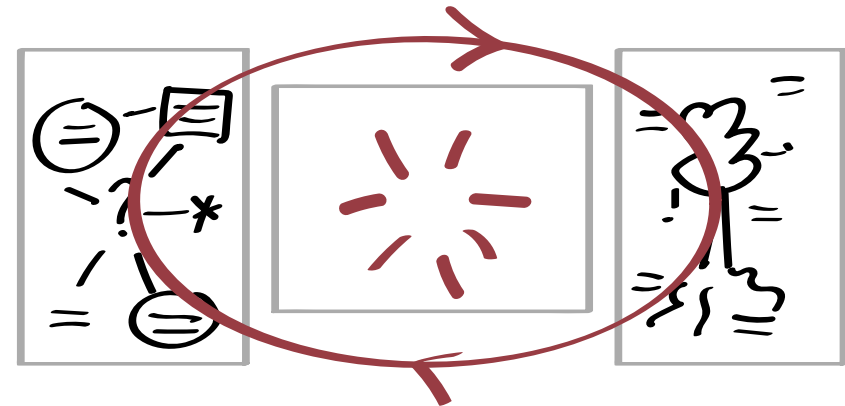


Make the ways of seeing explicit. Explore each interpretation and look how you can develop a shared image of the situation.

Map out the different visions on paper

Do it in such a way that you can look at it.

No full sentences but in a rough mindmap or a metaphor with key words. Ask people to comment on their images and explore them together.



Hearing different points of view creates tension. Seeing them next to each other makes it easier to take them in.

What are the differences?
Where do we see connections?

What is the core of the issue?
What could a cooperative sketch look like?

Transforming Knowledge: paper as PROTOTYPE

Are you not able to move an issue forward with the current way of working?



The goal is to develop new knowledge. Helping people look beyond fixed interests and open up to new insights.

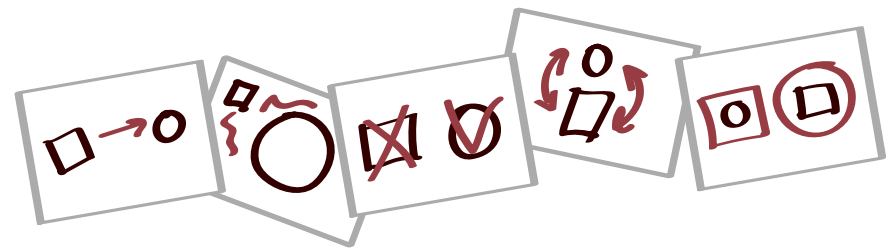
Make a map of the boundary area

You map out the dependencies around the issue. Between what is going on, the parties involved and their efforts.

For instance:

- map out the different parties and interests in a force field analysis
- model the decision making process around a governance issue
- puzzle on the dynamics in a causal diagram.

When you change the meaning you attach to a situation, new approaches emerge to address it. On paper it is easy to vary in representations and connections between entities. By doing that you develop a broader understanding of what it is about.



It is ok if it is messy. That is part of the deal when you try things out, learn and create new knowledge.

A SPIRIT OF INQUIRY is essential

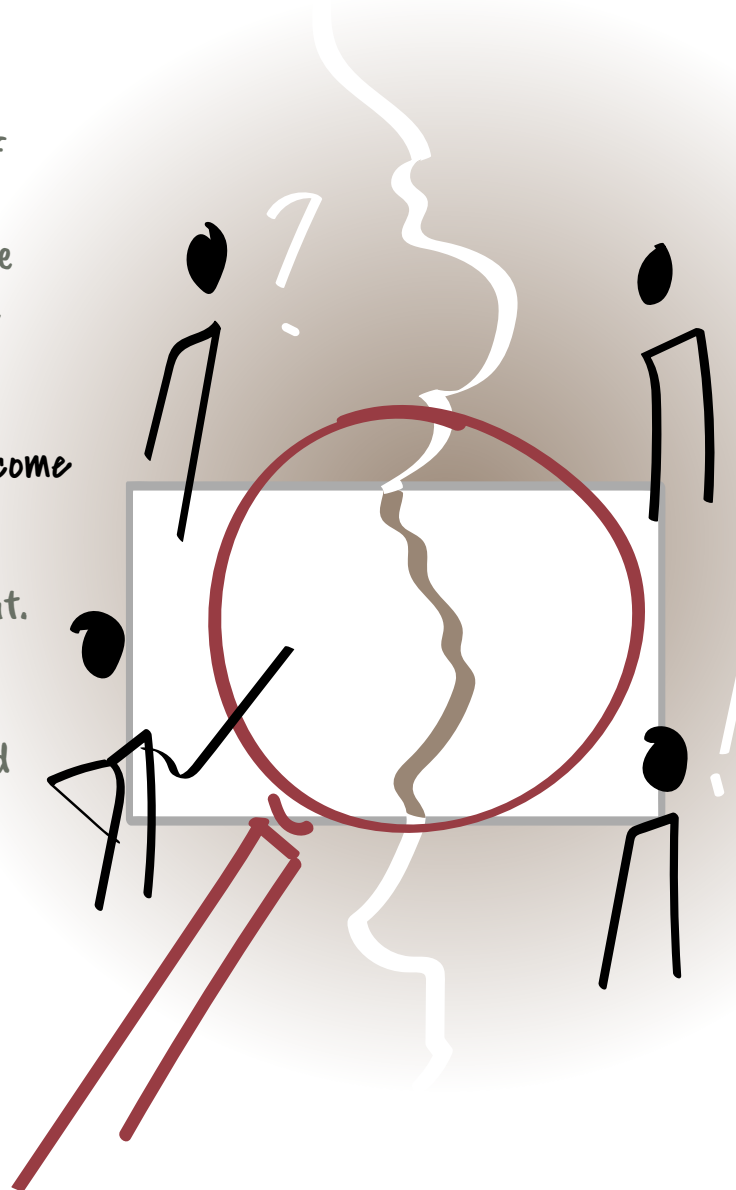
A boundary object facilitates exploring together

People look at the paper instead of at each other. You can take some distance from your own perspective and you are more open for someone else's point of view.

But your flipover does not become a boundary object by itself

Good facilitation remains important. The moderator creates a level playing field: he or she makes sure that everyone gets equal space and that you look at all the input.

When the thinking lines of each participant are visible you can explore and enrich them and find connections. That makes it easier to move along the boundaries together.



Now what?

Try to visualize the knowledge in the room in your next meeting.

[Click here to see how to do that](#)

I am happy to think about an approach that works for you.

I can also make visual materials that invite people to map out their thoughts.

Call or mail me if you want to visually explore what is possible.



Kim van den Berg

www.VISUALSINPROGRESS.com