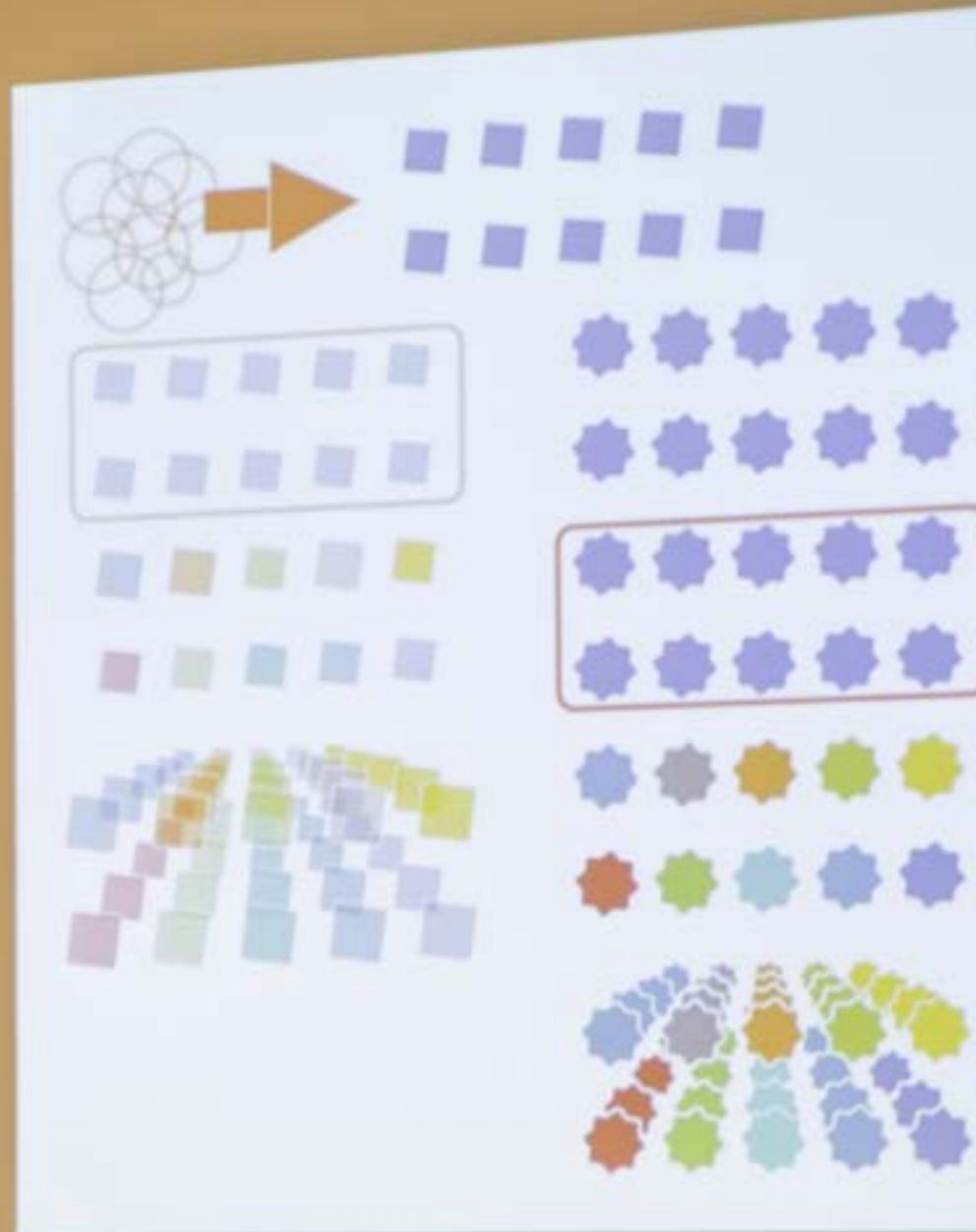# Improve It
Leapfrog Short Project

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Improve It

Testing a new improvement process to support a collaborative redesign of engagement tools

Background

How can the ideas that underpin a tool, the facilitation assistance of a tool, and the use of a tool by participants be improved?

In the Leapfrog project, we have co-designed many creative engagement tools with our partners and stakeholders. They were designed with suggestive and motivational instructions, and editable elements in order to support people in creating their own application of tools. Improving these co-designed tools, providing better engagement practices requires a different collaborative approach.

In this short project, Leapfrog suggested a framework for improving tools, exploring innovative ways to make engagement practices better. This framework explores three layers of an engagement process (Concept, Facilitation, and Participants), improving tools in three different dimensions (Function, Instructions, Flexibility). The relationships between any pair of a layer and a dimension form nine possible components, which compose the matrix of improvement.

Dimensions / Layers	FUNCTION	INSTRUCTION	FLEXIBILITY
CONCEPT	Interaction models	Challenge / Briefing	Build Resilience
FACILITATION	Resources produced by facilitator	Facilitator notes	Encourage facilitator confidence
OPERATION	Design of material	Example or use notes	Enable contrary activity

The aim of this project was to test this matrix through a series of workshops consisted of sessions of testing and improving Leapfrog tools, and design new versions of Leapfrog tools.

This report documents the process with some detail about the preparation for Improve It workshops.

Contents

The Pilot

How can the ideas that underpin a tool be improved?

In September, the pilot workshop focusing on improving the concept of tools was delivered by Rosendy Galabo, the PhD researcher for Leapfrog. This was held in the creative facilitation space of ImaginationLancster in Lancaster University and 5 participants attended to the workshop.

The aim of this pilot was to try out the structure and facilitation of the workshop before delivering it to external partners.

The initial plan for the workshop was comprised of the following stages:
•   Arrival & coffee – Participants arrived on the venue for the pilot, and signed consent forms.

•   Introduction – Participants were asked to sit in two different tables, and gave a quick introduction of Leapfrog project, Improve It short project, and a summary of the activities of the day. Then, he presented two tools, asked the participants of each tool, to choose a tool they wanted to work with.

•   In the first stage of the activity, he asked the participants to respond to three challenges proposed on three large sheets by drawing out the ideas of the tool they chose to work with. Participants spent approximately 8 minutes on each challenge. Then, he asked the groups to present to the participants in the room their findings, and exchange their tools with the other group.

•   In the second stage of the activity, he asked them to improve the tools based on the other group's feedback. This stage was designed to happen in three different steps.

•   In the last stage of activity, a part of the improvement framework were presented to the participants, and participants were asked to evaluate it: how easy was it to understand the challenge? how appropriate was the category presented to them? And how effective was to use the category?

Insights and feedback

Participants provided a great deal of feedback on the workshop that helped to redesign the second workshop. Some of the feedback can be seen as follows:

• A more detailed introduction: The facilitator needs to provide clear information on the purpose of the workshop, and definition of tools.

• More information on the tools: Participants need to understand the intention to be able to improve the concept. Providing a more detailed scenario and context of use before the start of activities will reduce the time spent to understand the tool.

• Clarity: The lack of explanation about the intentions behind of each tool made the tasks harder to respond. Participants took more time to respond to the initial challenge, Participants completed to the second challenge faster after finishing to the first one.

• Evaluation and improvement: Participants evaluated the tool in three different ways, created a list of issues and misunderstandings, and exchanged the materials with the other group. However, one group of participants suggested a set of improvements for all three sets of issues from the previous activity in one go, while the other group re-evaluated and improved the tool without following any list of issues. This might have happened due to the lack of information, clarity or just a common behaviour. The outcome of this workshop would not have been easy to be analysed. Therefore, the workshop structure needed to be redesigned.

Leapfrog team decided to start the Improve It workshops from the bottom layer of the improvement matrix, as we noticed that improving the concept layer seemed to be more complicated to understand. Therefore, we redesigned the next workshop to focus on improving the use of tools by participants.

Care leavers engagement tools workshop

How can the use of a tool by participants be improved?

In this workshop, Lancashire County Council worked in partnership with Leapfrog to collaboratively redesign some of the young people's tools to invigorate the pathway planning process of care leavers and support workers, as the current YP tools are viewed as inappropriate for their work.

A leapfrog workshop focusing on improving the use of tools led by PhD student Rosendy Galabo, co-facilitated with Professor Leon Cruickshank, with support of Debbie Stubbs was delivered on Monday 27th November at ImaginationLab. The workshop was attended by 10 care leavers support workers from Leaving Care Service (PPA), North Lancashire. The focus of the session was to explore the inappropriateness of three YP tools (Everybody, Storyboard contract, and Topic Tally), and come up with ideas to improve these YP tools according to support workers' practice.

In this half-day workshop, the group of support workers came up with a set of proposals for improving Leapfrog tools in three different ways, and the day concluded with them presenting their suggestions to improve YP tools.

Workshop Structure

Focus	Activity
Arrival	• Participants arrive
Introduction	• A welcome, orientation and briefing • A warm up activity with individual introductions and expectations for the day • A brief description about Leapfrog, tools definition, objectives, and three YP's tools
Round 1	• Evaluating and Improving the wording of the tool
Round 2	• Evaluating and Improving the design of material
Round 3	• Evaluating and Improving the flexibility of the tool
Re-evaluation	• Groups looked across the set of proposals, discuss and rate each suggestion
Wrap up	• Conclusion and appreciation for participants' help

Warm-Up

Participants began the day by using the 5 lines tool, describing themselves in 5 words, 5 lines and introduce themselves in 5 seconds. This resulted in everyone running to stick their responses on the board and feeling engaged to start the activities.

Above: 5 lines tools

Round 1

Three groups were randomly formed, and each group used a folded-table-sized template with one of the three tools (Everybody, Storyboard Contract, and Topic Tally) stuck to it. The template was used to capture their thoughts and ideas about the evaluation and improvements of specific tool according to their practice.

In the first activity, we asked them to review the wording, highlighting the words they wanted to change and describing why they wanted to change. We encouraged them to scribble and take notes, and presented examples on how to review the wordings using different workshop materials, such as sharpies, sticky notes or another copy of the tool. This activity lasted 15 minutes.

In the second activity, we asked them to unfold the template, and give suggestions to improve the issues highlighted in the previous activity. Once again, we presented different ways to give suggestions to improve the wording of the tool. This second activity lasted 10 minutes, and after that, we asked them to change tables, doing a clockwise rotation.

Above: Words evaluation

Above:Examples of suggestions for improving the words

Round 2

Once the participants performed the rotation, we started the second round of activities. Due to the rotation, each group worked on a different tool. Participants had to familiarise themselves with the tool and perform a new challenge. For this challenge, we ask them to imagine the use of the tool with a care leaver.

For this challenge, we ask them to imagine the use of the tool with a care leaver, and explore the design of material, highlighting where they wish they could change it, and why they wanted to change it. One more time, we encouraged them to scribble and take notes, and presented ways to use and explore the design of material using different workshop materials. This activity lasted 15 minutes.

Then we asked them to unfold the template, and provide suggestions to improve the issues highlighted in the previous task. Once again, we presented different ways to give suggestions to improve the design of material, such as changing the paper format. This second activity lasted 10 minutes, and after that, we gave them 10 minutes break before starting the third round of activities. After the break, we asked them to stay in the same group they started until the end of the workshop, and move to the next table.


Above: Participants working on the design of material challenge
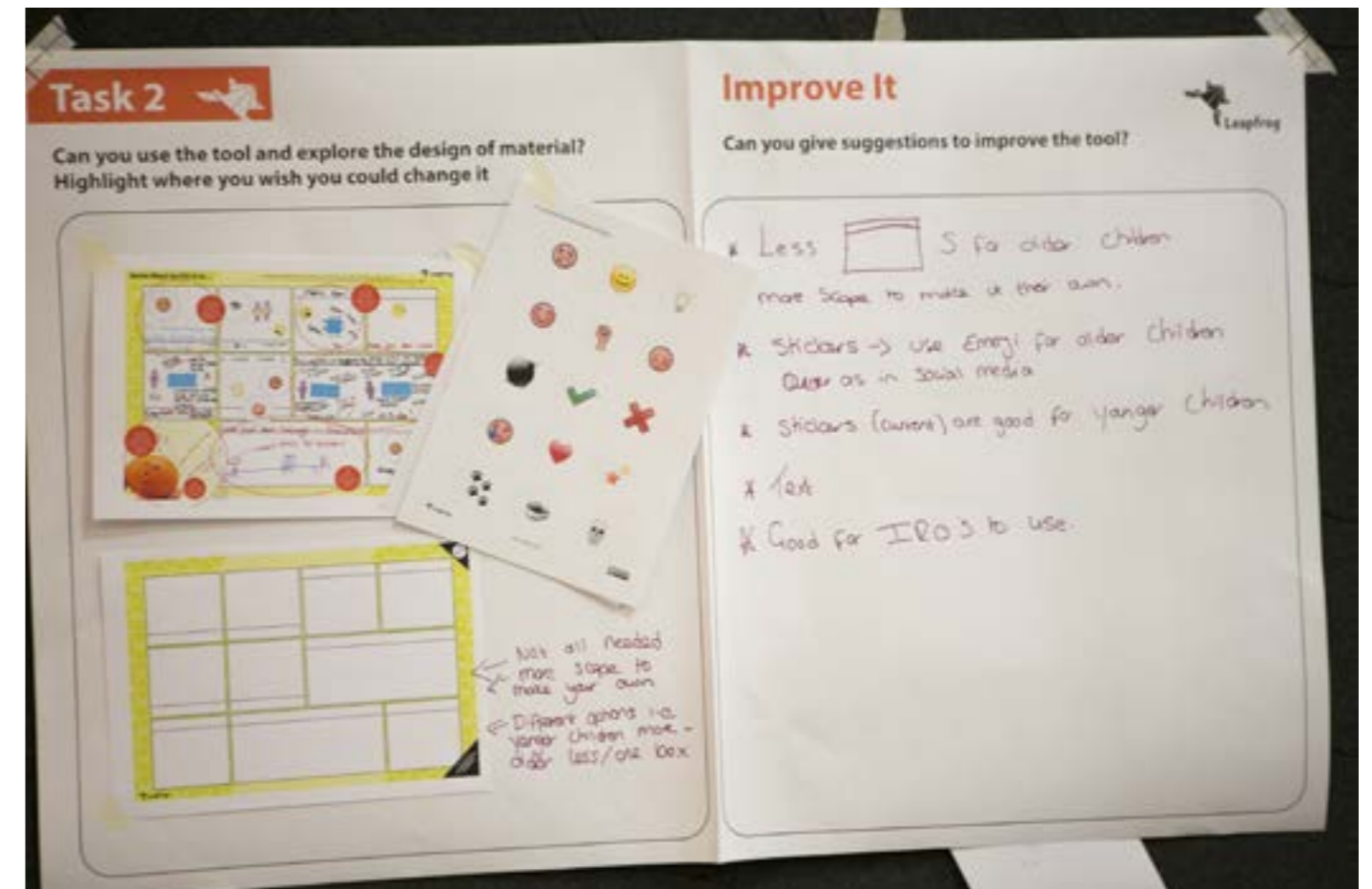
Above: An outcome of the second round of the workshop

Round 3

In the last round of evaluation and improvement, participants had to familiarise themselves with the third tool, and look at its flexibility. We asked them to imagine the use of the tool by care leavers in a way it was not intended to be used, and improve the tool to support this practice. We provided some examples, such as using a tool being used for playing games. For this activity, we asked them to do this in one go instead of doing it in two steps. This activity lasted 20 minutes. We asked them to return to the table where their initial tool were to start the last part of the workshop.
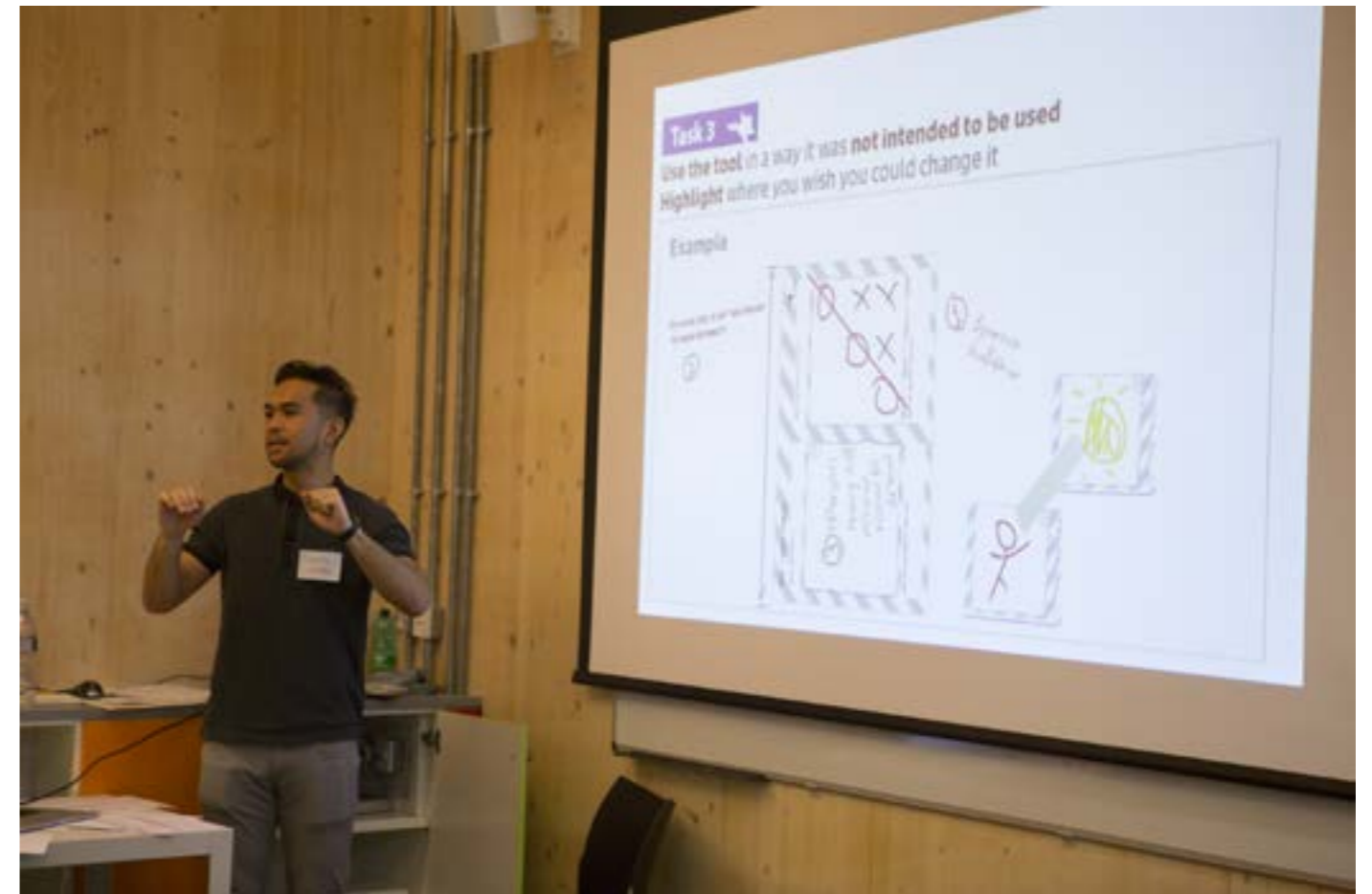
Above: Rosendy introduces the flexibility task to the group
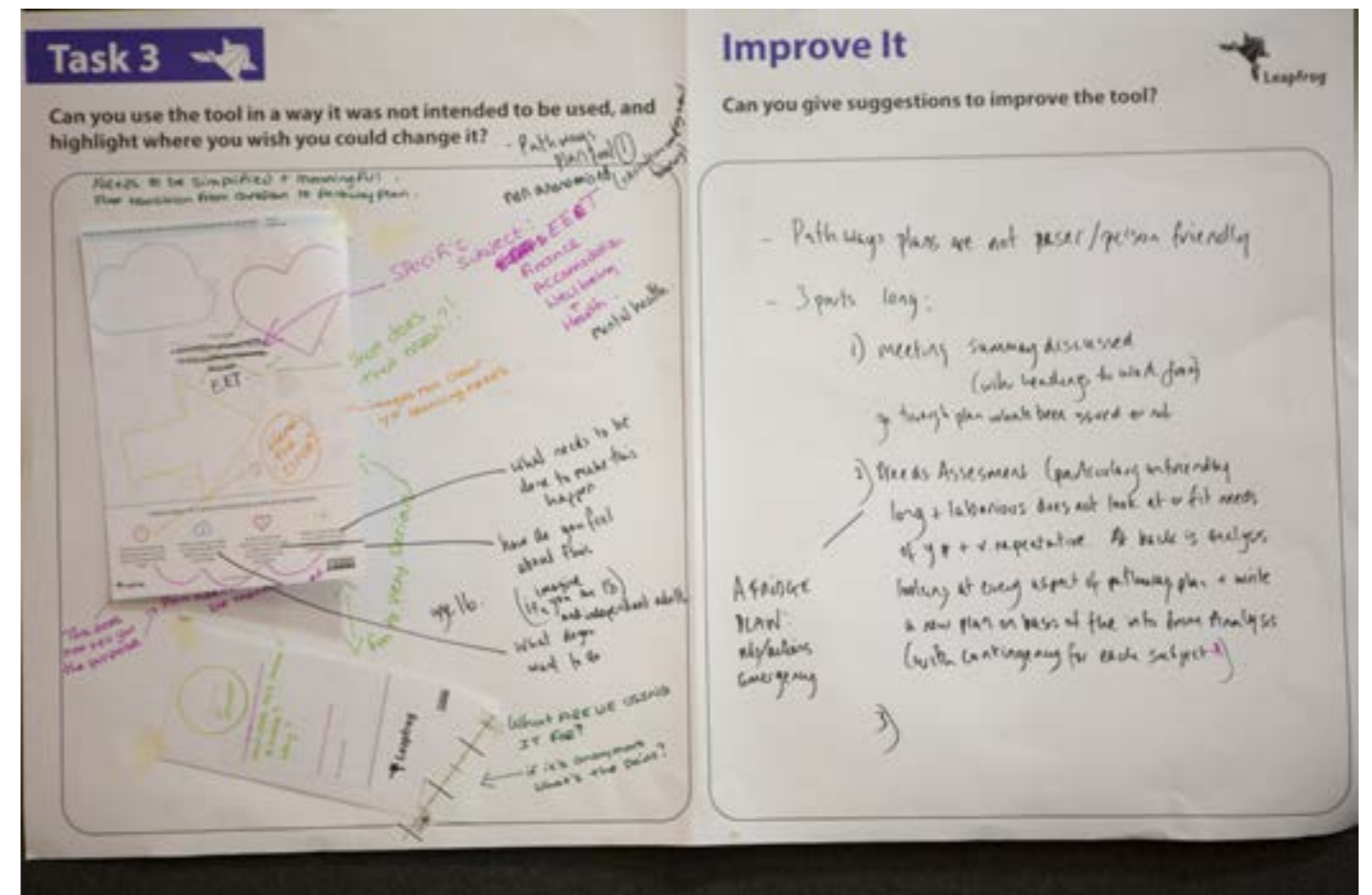
Above: Resource created by one of the groups of participants

Re-evaluation

Once all the groups returned to their initial tool. We asked them to look across all the improvement suggestions of the tool, and present them to the participants in the room. We provided an evaluation template to capture their thoughts and feelings about the improvement suggestions.

We realised we would not be able to finish the work shop in time, and participants were struggling to look across all the suggestions. As a result, we decided to improvise in this last stage of the workshop.

We asked the groups to choose someone to present all the suggestions and another person to take notes in each group while participants were discussing. Due to the short period of time for looking across all the suggestions, participants could not present what the other groups had done to their initial tools. Therefore, we changed the activity again, and asked each group to present their improvement suggestions for a specific tool in each of the three rounds. Then, once all the suggestions of one tool were presented, the same activity was performed more two times to allow other groups to present their suggestions for the other two tools.

In the last part of this activity, we asked the groups to rate each set of proposals using stars out of 5 to measure the usefulness of the suggestions according to their notes and group presentations.

The initial plan was to encourage participants to discuss the set of proposals, so each group could re-evaluate the improvement suggestions and agree on the rating stars, describing the reasons for it.

The resources produced in the last stage of the activity were an essential reference for the redesign of Leapfrog tools.

Above: Participants looking across all the set of suggestions for improvement

Above: Set of proposals for improvement

Listening to their improvement suggestions

After the workshop we coded the wide range of ways of evaluating and improving engagement tools that co-designers had generated in the workshop, in order to answer the research question: **How can the use of a tool by participants be improved?** This coding created a sequence of linked categories as follows:

How to evaluate the wording	How to improve it
Review the instructions • Wordiness in the instructions	Reduce wordiness or change the instruction style
• Lack of instructions or headings	Add headings to boxes, shapes, lines
Wordiness	Reduce wordiness
Review the word appropriateness • Words that can incite bad experiences • Misleading words • Formal language	Change the words
Find ways to empower participants	Add possessive pronouns to the sentences

How to evaluate the design of material	How to improve it
Explore the visual appropriateness • Age appropriateness • Gender appropriateness	Use actual ways for participants to express themselves Change it to a generic or androgynous looking form
Overwhelming design • Review the need for lines, boxes, words, and pictures	Remove material, provide more space
Assess clarity of features	Highlight features, add headings or prompts
Review your practice	Add features to make adequate to your practice

Listening to their improvement suggestions

After the workshop, we coded the wide range of ways of evaluating and improving engagement tools that co-designers had generated in the workshop, in order to answer the research question: **How can the use of a tool by participants be improved?** This coding created a sequence of linked categories as follows:

How to evaluate the flexibility	**How to improve it**
Highlight were you could choose different topics, subjects or categories	Allow change of the subject (topics)
Review the genericity of the tool	Make it more adaptable - allow add or remove boxes, lines, and change formats

Overall, the suggestions can be categorised into three major concepts for improving the use of tools by participants. These categories involve providing **clarity** to the participant, reviewing the **type of communication** according to the experience of engagement practitioners, and evaluating the **visual design** (overwhelming versus simplistic). These concepts, the notes from each workshop challenge, and the three different ways of evaluating and improving engagement tools were taking into consideration on the redesign of the Everybody, Storyboard Contract and Topic Tally tools.

Tools Redesign

The graphic design and text of each tool were redesign with participants' feedback. All the tools were simplified and less busy to engage. Each redesign is explained below.

EVERYBODY

The anonymity elements of the tools such as the word "secret" and envelopes have been removed from the collection of tools. Step guide has also been removed, providing more space for care leavers to say what they want or need. We have added some image prompts to help care leavers think about what they want or need. Workshop participants suggested the use of actual emojis from social media. However, these emojis are copyrighted, and Leapfrog tools are under creative common commons licence.

Think about **your need or what you want**

What do you want to do?
Write or draw your **ideas or questions**

Ideas or questions

How do you feel about this?
Write or draw your **emotions and feelings**

Feelings

What needs to be done to make this happen?
Write or draw **things you think should happen**

Actions

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Tools Redesign

STORYBOARD CONTRACT has been renamed to MY DISCUSSION

Previous headings were removed, and new ones replaced the old ones. The tool was evaluated as too busy, overwhelming and difficult to engage. Two groups suggested to reduce the number of boxes into three boxes, similar to a tool they use all the time called 'The three houses'. By following these participantss suggestions, the concept of the tool has changed; therefore, we felt like the name needed to be changed.

My discussion

What is working well?

What is not working?

What needs to change to improve things?

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Tools Redesign

TOPIC TALLY has been renamed to PLAN INTO ACTION!

Lines have been replaced by boxes, and the wordiness has been reduced. We have added picture prompts for care leavers to think about things they want or need to talk about.All the groups suggested changes to the words in the heading, in other words, the name of the tool. They did not like the word meeting or tally or anything in the title. Participants suggested the name 'Plan!', Today's visit or include the word discussion. The choice of the new name came out from the idea of adding a task feature that was suggested by two groups. The idea is to use the tool as a visit template that can be used on every visit to measure the progress.

Me	PLAN!	You
	Date _____	
Things I need to talk about	What has been helpful?	Things I want to talk about
What I need to do	**ACTIONS!** Time? Who? When? Where?	What I need to do

Next Steps

The workshop structure is good for tool sharing events, as long as we leave time at the end for proper evaluation. Therefore, the research on how engagement tools can be improved will continue after the conclusion of this short project.

The Leapfrog design team will re-launch the new versions of tools on the website as outcomes of the project, and track the downloads to evaluate their use.

Other tools for engagement can be found on the Leapfrog website: **www.leapfrog.tools**

Special thanks to...

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Nicola Tattersall, Gillian Dowling, Faith Todd, Matt Walker, Joy Viles, Iona Adamson, Carrie Thompson for their input throughout the co-design process.

This workshop was delivered at ImaginationLancaster, Lancaster University.

For more information about Leapfrog, visit
http://leapfrog.tools/