



.Graph-eazy



If a picture is worth ten thousand words, with Grapheazy you won't stop talking!

WHAT IS IT?



a visual *facilitation* tool



a way to encourage people to take part actively in a group *discussion*



a creative method to establish *links* between topics and to get an overview



an instrument for generating and identifying new *ideas*



a technique to stimulate *debate* on sensitive issues

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Are you going to facilitate a group discussion on a hot topic, and don't know where to start? Do you need to explore a theme more deeply, find new directions or visualize new patterns?

Then Grapheazy is the tool you've been looking for!

Specifically designed for meetings with international participants, where English is not the mother tongue of the majority of the group, Grapheazy can help people express themselves more freely during a discussion. Thanks to the power of images, this tool turns group discussions into dynamic visualizations that can be helpful in identifying new ways to tackle a problem or a theme.



WHAT DO YOU NEED?

What you need is simply a large board (but a long sheet of paper will do as well), many sticky tags, some markers and the 50 Grapheazy cards. Each card displays a metaphor, a saying, a meaning or a concept in the form of pictures and symbols. It is advisable to use the tool indoors, possibly in a large, quiet room. Participants can take part either standing or seated.

And of course, you will need a group (any size up to 50 participants) and a facilitator!

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE?

It depends on the length and on the importance of the discussion. However, a session should not be longer than 90 minutes, in order not to overwhelm participants.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

First of all, you should select a topic for the discussion. It can be a problem that needs to be solved by the whole group, a sensitive issue or a theme that needs to be analysed with more attention.

Secondly, the group should gather in a comfortable room with a big board (or the large piece of paper hung on the wall). The first step consists in laying the cards on the ground, right before the board or wall. Give enough time to everybody to have a look at the cards, then explain that you are going to start the “visual discussion” with the Grapheazy cards. The facilitator invites participants to step in. Anybody can start the discussion, by picking up a card from the ground, showing it to the group, and explaining why that specific card was chosen. Finally, the card is stuck to the board, and a second participant can join the discussion. S/he will pick up a new card and decide whether to follow the same concept, or to start a new one. Like any moderated discussion, the basic rule of one speaker at a time should be followed.



THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR WITH GRAPHEAZY

The group leads!

When facilitating Grapheazy, one should keep in mind that participants are the main actors of the discussion, and not the facilitator. His/her main role consists of helping speakers stick the card on the most appropriate place on the board/paper. Gradually, when more cards get stuck to the board, it will be possible to connect them with arrows, creating links between concepts. The facilitator should ask for feedback from the group before linking two cards, in order to involve participants in the visual discussion.

First break

When more or less half of the cards are used, the facilitator can ask the whole group to take some steps back, in order to get a clear picture of the different directions the debate is taking. Such procedure is to be repeated also at the end of the session, in order to identify patterns, new links and innovative inputs.

Conclusion

Using Grapheazy, you will end the “visual discussion” with a board full of cards, arrows and links. It is essential not to waste the large numbers of inputs and connections, therefore the facilitator can invite participants to “harvest” the results. In the final session, the facilitator can ask the following questions:

- Did we find a solution to the problem?
- Can you identify new ideas, trends, patterns?
- Did the discussion go in a specific direction?
- Did new topics or sub-topics emerge from the discussion?

According to the responses from the group, it will be possible to follow up the discussion using other methods, or to create smaller groups to analyse new topics that the visualization brought up.

Before clearing the board, it is advisable to take photos of the whole picture and of its segments, turning them into PDF files and sending them to participants in order to have “visual minutes” of the debate.

WHO CREATED GRAPHEAZY?

Grapheazy was created by Mauro Carta on behalf of Service Civil International with the support of “The Pool of Trainers and Facilitators of SCP”. As of November 2015, the tool was used in three occasions in different intercultural settings (in Europe and Asia) and it was officially tested at the “Non-formal education at the mirror” Erasmus+ project (also known as “1st SCI Tool Fair”) in Vienna in 2014.

EXAMPLES

A teacher needs to address the sensitive issue of bullying in her class, as three episodes of violence have recently occurred just outside the school building. She decides to use Grapheazy as facilitation tool. After setting up the room and introducing the topic, she invites her class to start the discussion. Everybody seems quite shy at the beginning. Then, Suzie picks up a card: it shows the famous picture of a multitude of tiny fishes counter-attacking a big shark. Suzie uses this metaphor to tell her schoolmates that the class should stay united to face this challenge. The teacher thanks Suzie and sticks the item on the board. Ricky wants to add something and picks up the “start a domino effect” card: he says that they should not suffer silently, but they should denounce the acts of bullying to the teachers and parents, thus setting an example and inviting more pupils to follow it. When Ricky concludes his short speech, the card he selected is placed next to Suzie's. The teacher links the two pictures with an arrow, to stress the connection between the two steps and invites the pupils to proceed with the discussion.

