Improvement Matrix: Prompting New Ways of Thinking about Knowledge Exchange

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Abstract: The improvement matrix is a framework used for improving knowledge exchange tools in order to develop engagement practices. It consists in a new improvement practice, in which engagement practitioners collaboratively improve the functions, instructions and flexibility of tools to develop their own practices. This research aims to look at potential applications of the improvement matrix in other design practices to establish its academic validity. In this research project, we will present the improvement matrix to delegates, and engage participants to provide critical feedback on the research claims presented in the framework. This can happen as a 1-on-1 or as a group discussion at any point in the conference to be negotiated with participants. Participants will gain new knowledge on how to improve tools through reflecting on how the framework can be applied to their own practices. The potential outputs will allow the researchers to reconsider certain elements of the framework.

Keywords: Knowledge Exchange, Creative Engagement, Improvement of Tools

1. Introduction

Knowledge exchange (KE) approaches allow people within communities and organisations to share ideas, concepts, expertise to collaboratively engage in the decision-making of projects, programmes and policies that affect their lives (Author, 2012; 2017). KE tools are often used to facilitate the engagement process, enabling an innovative and expressive dialogue among individuals in order to achieve a desired outcome. This exchange of information opens up a wide range of engagement possibilities where creative and collaborative design and decision-making processes can occur. In this research proposal, we are looking at whether there is a potential for a framework called improvement matrix to prompt new ways to approach and enhance knowledge exchange.

The improvement matrix is a framework, where engagement practitioners collaboratively improve knowledge exchange (KE) tools to develop their own practices (Author, in press). It involves the improvement of functions, instructions and flexibility of tools within different layers of engagement

activities through the co-design of specialised or adaptable tools for particular contexts, such as appropriate tools for engaging with young people or for healthcare practitioners (Author, in press). This new approach is positioned as part of the shift away from traditional knowledge transfer — where researchers tell individuals and organisations the best practices — to learning together with individuals how to develop their own improved practices.

This research proposal will investigate the potential applications of the improvement matrix, and how the improvement matrix can be useful to improve other design and engagement practices. It will look at the research question: **Is there a potential for the improvement matrix to prompt new ways of thinking about knowledge exchange?** This research proposal aims to establish academic applicability of the improvement matrix framework as a part of a larger action research project.

In this research project, we plan to present the improvement framework with instructions to delegates in advance, and interview them to understand how people respond to it throughout the conference. The critical feedback from academic peers will allow us to proceed with the research and refine elements of the improvement matrix. The outputs of this research will contribute to contemporary improvement theories and practices, as well as to open design and innovation approaches. We invite delegates, who work with groups of non-designers and design researchers specialised in participatory approaches, to give critical feedback on the framework. Participants of this research will reflect on their own design practice, and learn new knowledge on how to make better KE design and activities through reflecting on new ways of thinking of knowledge exchange in their current practices.

2. Methodology and potential outputs

We will produce a leaflet containing information about the improvement matrix and instructions on how to use it, and distribute them to EAD delegates. These leaflets could be put in the welcome pack and costs for printing them out will be covered by us. We will invite delegates — who attend to activities linked to specific track themes (e.g. workshops about tools) and are sympathetic to this research — and arrange a time at their convenience to discuss about the improvement framework. Once the time and location are defined, we will run the activity as follows:

Part 1: **Introduction**

- Research project and objectives
- Ask participants to complete a consent form
- Present the Improvement Matrix Framework

Part 2: **1-on-1 or small group discussions**

- This activity consists in talking through the improvement matrix individually or in a group. We will stimulate participants to reflect on their own practice and to get the most out of the improvement framework.
- Provocative data capture: we will creatively capture data to be studied on the leaflet, observations and on video/audio recordings.

Potential outputs and take away for participants

- Understanding on how to improve knowledge exchange approaches through reflecting on their current practices.
- Critical feedback on the framework for improving tools.
- A short report on the results of this workshop for the EAD website.

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