

# New Metaphors

## Playing with the Trouble

Supplemental instructions



## Generate ideas and reframe problems • A 20–60 minute activity for 1+ people

Is this the activity for your group?

- 20–60 minute duration
- Number of people: no upper limit, but for better discussion, groups of 4–6 are best
- No facilitator required (although with a larger group it may be useful)
- Medium setup
- Low difficulty
- Medium imaginative load
- Low trust required

Why play this?

- **Collective Imagining:** Using new metaphors to imagine and reimagine topics and approaches
- **Surfacing worldviews:** Understanding each other's current imaginaries around a topic, through exploring existing metaphors

Full instructions for *New Metaphors* are available in the accompanying booklet. This page is a supplement specifically focused on using the *New Metaphors* cards in the 'unusual collaborations' context of the Playing with the Trouble project, with some extra concept cards and worksheets.

### Background and objectives

What if you could expand your conceptual vocabulary – thinking, imagining, and making connections in new ways? *New Metaphors* is a creative tool for generating ideas and reframing problems, using images and language to offer new perspectives. Many challenges facing humanity today and in the future are complex, involving relationships, complexities and timescales

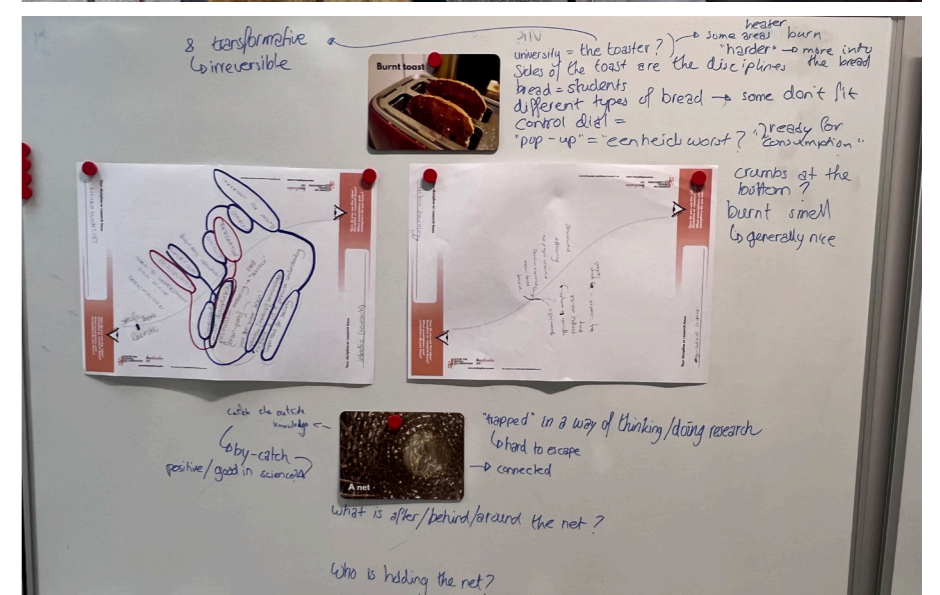
which are difficult to visualise or make sense of in simple terms. We often use metaphors, unconsciously or otherwise, to make sense of these issues. But these metaphors can also cause particular ways of thinking and framing ideas to become entrenched, sometimes getting us stuck in the same old loops. In such cases, new metaphors can be helpful. *New Metaphors* can help inspire us to take creative approaches to imagine the future, creating new collaborations, strategies, services, communication campaigns and ways of explaining ideas, and more widely, help reframe societal issues. All metaphors are wrong, but some are useful. Coming up with—and discussing—new metaphors together is a disruptive improvisation technique which provides an expanded conceptual vocabulary to help us think differently and reframe issues, together or individually.

In the **Playing With The Trouble** context, we intend *New Metaphors* to be useful for both **facilitating collective imagining**, and

**surfacing worldviews.** For **collective imagining**, this could be through creating new metaphors to imagine and reimagine topics and approaches, about new forms of collaboration or institutions (see video: <https://rb.gy/mxeihv>) or more specifically about a particular topic in research or education. For **surfacing worldviews**, the *New Metaphors* activity can help participants understand each other's current imaginaries and assumptions around a topic, through exploring existing metaphors and new ones.

### Notes on use

See the accompanying booklet for illustrated examples of how the *New Metaphors* cards can be used. Use the **Playing with the Trouble** concept cards similarly to the other concept cards, but where you specifically want to focus on exploring—and finding new metaphors for—the collaboration topics. The **Future(s) of Collaboration** and **New Metaphors for Sustainability** worksheets can be used in a similar way to the other



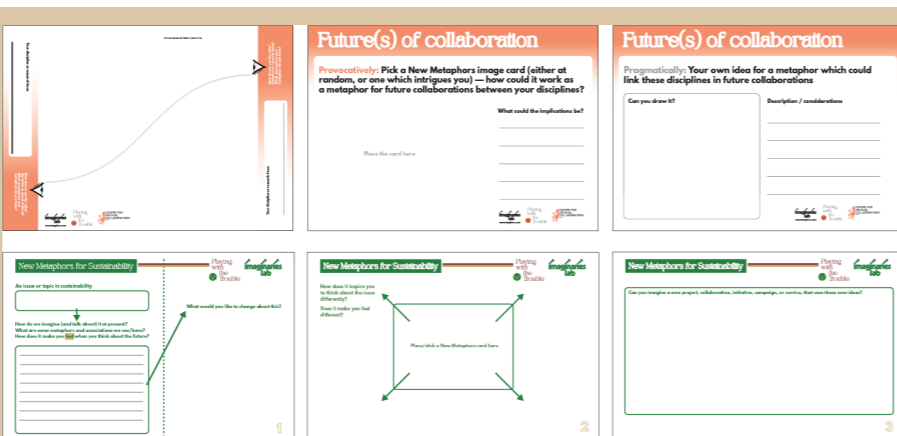
A CUCo workshop using *New Metaphors* with the **Future(s) of Collaboration** worksheets, exploring new ways to think about interdisciplinary collaboration.

worksheets, but have a slightly higher level of guidance built in. **New Metaphors for Sustainability** combines aspects of worksheets A & B, but with a focus on sustainability specifically, while **Future(s) of Collaboration** asks participants to go through a process of “seeing” other disciplines for existing metaphors to be surfaced, then a two-stage random provocation, and then more considered metaphor, as a way to arrive at a new kind of collaboration. The worksheets include instructions.



### Components

- 100 image cards (see booklet)
- 50 red concept cards (see booklet)
- 5 extra red **Playing with the Trouble** concept cards, added for this edition, based on the project purposes
- Pens or pencils
- Worksheets which guide participants through different ways to use the cards—not essential, but



The 5 extra concept cards based on the *Playing With The Trouble* project purposes (left) and **Future(s) of collaboration** and **New Metaphors for Sustainability** worksheets (above)

when first doing the activity, the standard worksheets A and B can be useful (see booklet). We have added two new sets of worksheets developed via workshops run during *Playing with the Trouble*: one set covers the **Future(s) of Collaboration between disciplines**, and the other focuses on **New Metaphors for Sustainability** (but could easily be adapted to other large, nebulous concepts).