

Introduction

Cooperative Inquiry is a Participatory Design method that involves children as full partners with adults in the design process.



For many years, child designers have worked together with adults in Cooperative Inquiry. However, children have not typically acted in leadership roles in design sessions – **until now**. We detail three case studies of Cooperative Inquiry in which children **led the process of design**.

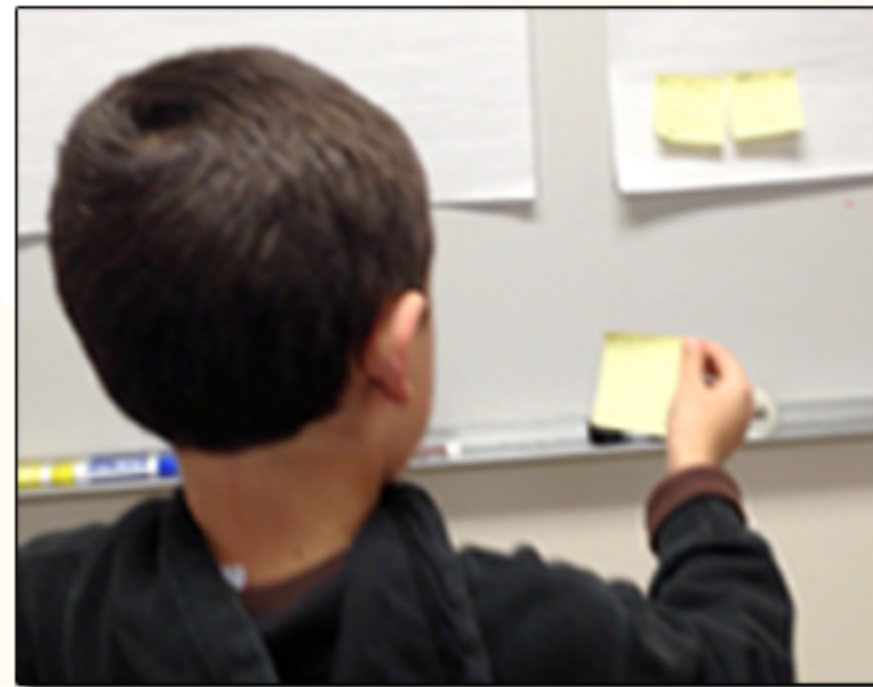
We frame our analysis from three perspectives on the design process:

- Behaviors exhibited by child leaders and their fellow co-designers;
- Supports required for child leaders; and
- Views expressed by children about the child-led sessions.

Methods and Analysis

Method: Case study of three afterschool Cooperative Inquiry sessions led by three different child leaders (psuedonyms):

Lauren (girl, age 9) Max (boy, age 9)
Merida (girl, age 7)



Four other children and nine adults participated:

Eric (boy, age 11) Jason (boy, age 7)
Snowdrop (girl, age 9) Cruz (girl, age 7)

Data collection: Videos, field notes, photos, sticky note artifacts, and interviews

Data analysis: Comparison and triangulation of collected data to examine behaviors of children, supports needed for children, and opinions from children

Findings

Behaviors in Child-led Sessions

- Children tended to give many more design ideas compared to likes and dislikes.
- Child co-design leaders showed moments of defensiveness when addressing criticism of their prototypes.
- Children who led the session chose Stickies as a design technique.

Supports Needed for Child-leaders

- All child leaders needed support in some way.
- The most apparent support needed was organizing the notes. All three child-leaders needed some sort of assistance summarizing the themes.
- Children also wanted help organizing the small groups.

Children's Opinions of Child-led Sessions

- **Positives:** Children expressed having the child peers lead was “fun” and “cool.” This was a way to help children learn about what other children’s interests were. This was a good experience to design and evaluate something another child they knew made.
- **Negatives:** Child participants expressed that child-led sessions were difficult to understand. Since the child leaders developed the initial prototypes, the artifacts were not in a polished form.



Future Work

As culture transitions from user/consumer to participatory producer, child design partners may develop further interest in being the leaders in Cooperative Inquiry.

Researchers may need to think more about the roles children play in the co-design process and the role of design techniques for child-led sessions.



Children Initiating and Leading Cooperative Inquiry

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