

The Lift Every Voice Charette

The *charette* is a collaborative session where a group of designers develop potential solutions to a design problem. The LEV charette is specifically focused on the question:

How can we build deeply inclusive organizations, schools, and communities?

The charette centers on a set of ideas that are a “work in progress.” The goal is to examine the contours of a problem or challenge by looking at it through multiple lenses. Participants most likely will not leave the charette with a clear solution—rather, the charette is designed to push our thinking forward in a way that will allow possible solutions to emerge that can later lead to an action plan.

The charette is aimed at supporting the presenter. The fresh perspectives that are offered should leave the presenter feeling inspired.

Total time: 60 min.

- 1. (Pre-session) Choose a presenter.** Focus on one person or organization’s challenge. By working in-depth on one problem, we actually deepen our understanding of our own challenges as well. If a series of problems are offered, choose one.
- 2. (15 min.) Presenter presents.** The presenter offers the challenge(s) they are facing regarding **deep inclusion** in their organization as well as giving the context to the situation. Note that there isn’t time to present all the work of the focal organization. Keep focused on the particularities of a given challenge. The rest of the group silently listens and takes notes.
- 3. (10 min) Clarifying questions.** The group asks the presenter clarifying questions. These are fact-based questions (Where is your organization based?) rather than aspirational questions (What would you like your organization to be in ten years?) Group members ask the questions; presenter answers with short replies.
- 4. (25 min) Design possibilities.** Whip around the group, person-by-person. During this phase the group speaks and the presenter listens and takes notes. Each person might do one of the following:

- *Frame a question.* Often a “solution” doesn’t immediately present itself. Rather the challenge will inspire a series of additional puzzles or questions. Begin with a statement, “I’m wondering . . .” or “What puzzles me is . . .” or “A question I have is . . .”
- *Offer a possibility.* We will not be able to fully understand the context of the situation or organization without being in the presenter’s shoes. However, ideas might emerge as you listen to the presenter or others speak.
- *Reflect on your own work.* Perhaps you have insights about your own challenges when you hear someone else’s story. Begin with phrases like, “Your story helps me to think about . . .”

If time allows, circle around the group again or move to a general discussion. The presenter should only listen.

5. (5 min) Presenter responds. The presenter shares what they took from the conversation—perhaps new insights or ideas. Avoid defensive responses. The presenter only takes what they need from the group’s feedback. Presenter expresses gratitude for the group’s time.

6. (5 min) Debrief the charette. The facilitator asks the group and the presenter to debrief the charette structure itself. “If we were to repeat this process, what worked for you? What would you change?”