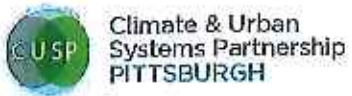
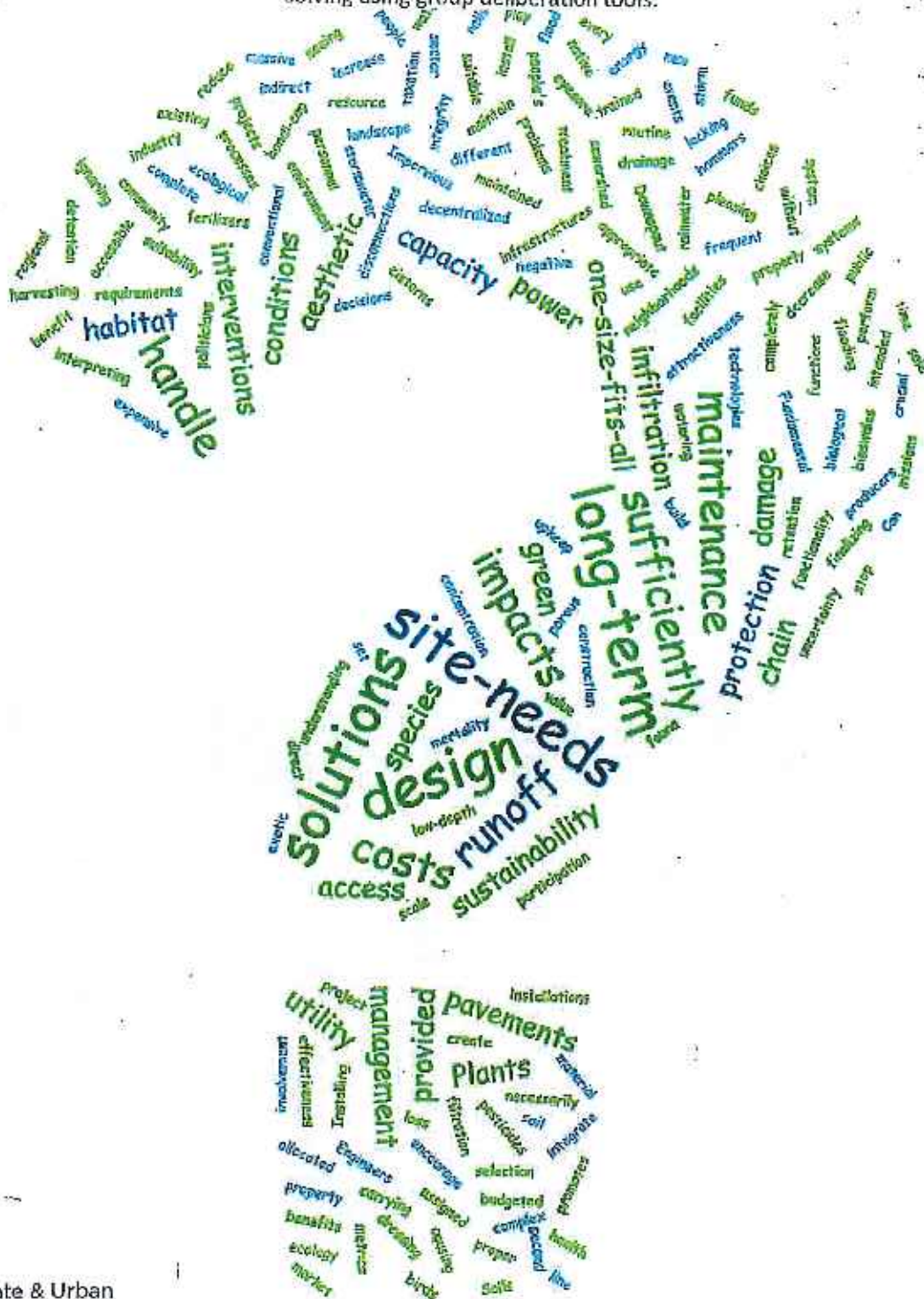
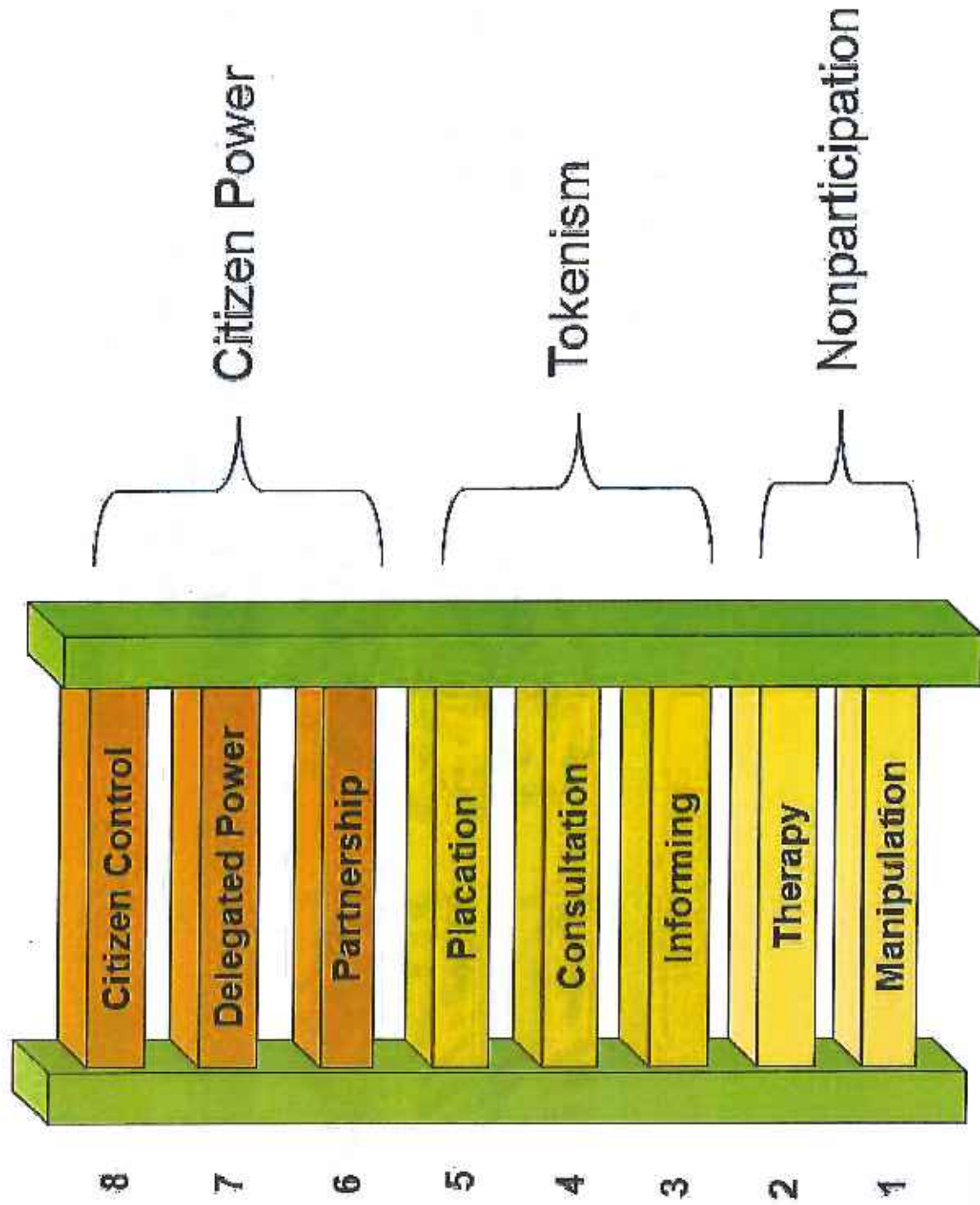


# What do People Think?

Engaging community members in understanding projects, decision making processes, and problem-solving using group deliberation tools.



# The Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein)



# Why do Community Engagement

WHO?

WHAT?

WHERE?

WHEN?

HOW?

- Consider, acknowledge and **address legacy challenges** in a community.
- Have the **right people at the right points** in the process.
- Make the **process accessible and meaningful**.
  - “Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless.” – (Arnstien, 1969)
- Work through **existing networks** and community leaders.
- Cultivate **new community leaders**. Invest in training participants.
- **Face to face interactions** yield the most genuine input.
- Go to the (public) place **where the people you want to engage are**.
- Have **more than a token representation** of minority groups so their voices aren’t drowned by perspectives used to having power.





## The 15 Steps

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*The following are the 15 steps to crafting emotionally resonant, personalized, and effective messages on climate change.*

### 1 Start with people, stay with people

If you want your audience to care about climate change, then care about them. Start from their perspective, not yours. Infuse your entire communication with tangible, relevant concerns. Move from people to climate, not the other way around, and keep going back to people.

### 2 Connect on common values

If you really understand your audience's priorities, concerns, and values, you can open their hearts and minds by talking about those values and showing you share and honor them. Common values, such as family, community, choice/freedom, health, and fairness, are powerful motivators and connectors. Affiliation or "tribal" connectors such as being fellow congregants, business leaders, organization members, or professionals are also helpful.

### 3 Acknowledge ambivalence

People approach climate from different perspectives and have different levels of concern. And we all have other priorities. Don't be self-righteous. Respect their perspectives, and allow them their own space. A simple line like "Some of us are more worried about climate change than others" allows people to be comfortable and listen with an open mind.

### 4 Make it real

Many Americans are latently concerned about climate change. We need to move them from concern to action. By focusing on local realities they can see with their own eyes—simple, irrefutable facts about changing seasons, local fauna, or record weather—you can make climate change relevant for them. Assume the realities, don't argue the science. Use a light hand with one or two examples; then pivot quickly to solutions.

### 5 Emphasize solutions

Many people don't yet realize we've developed solar and wind energy systems that cost less than even cheap natural gas. Transportation and energy storage systems are just around the corner. We also have proven policies that reduce carbon pollution while accelerating economic growth. There's a suite of economic, health, nature, and security co-benefits that come along with the energy solutions. Make a powerful case with tangible examples that show real solutions are here and now to inspire your audience.

### 6 Inspire and empower

Americans are repeatedly told that they can't make a difference on climate change, when the exact opposite is true. Every day, almost everything you do, from the way you drive to what you eat and how you talk about climate change, impacts the problem and the people around you. America can lead on climate solutions, and so can your state, town, family, and you!

### 7 Focus on personal benefit

As they burn good money that could be used on vacations, education, healthier food, or a bigger savings account, most Americans actually think action on climate change comes with a cost to their lifestyles and pocketbooks. The opposite is true. You save money by saving energy and are healthier with active transportation and better food. Always emphasize the personal benefits of climate solutions—your audience will take note.

8

**End with your “ask”**

Always empower your audience. Encourage them to turn the information and understanding into action. Give them examples, ideas, and steps they can take to make a difference. Remind and show them how behavior change is easier and cheaper than they think.

9

**Sequence matters**

Research reveals that you can take the same set of six facts, arrange them in different ways, and end up with very different results. Connect on common values, acknowledge ambivalence, then move from impacts to solutions, and focus on personal benefits. If you start negative and impersonal, it's very hard to get back to the positive, personal, and relevant. Follow the first 8 steps in order.

10

**Describe, don't label**

Use their language, not yours. Jargon and labels confuse people. Avoid terms like “mitigation” or “adaptation.” Statements like “We need to slow and stop the pollution that is changing our climate and prepare for those changes we can't prevent.” are clearer. Rather than “alternative energy,” say we need clean, inexpensive energy from the wind and sun. The most persuasive language is vivid, familiar, and descriptive.

11

**Have at least 1 powerful fact from a trusted messenger**

One or two obvious facts with relevant and emotional power add significant weight to a message. Highly trusted messengers or organizations lend credibility and importance. Use at least one memorable and relevant example, fact, or quote from someone your audience trusts,<sup>b</sup> such as Pope Francis, the American Public Health Association, Apple, or a respected local leader.

12

**Ditch doom and gloom**

We've all heard advocates try to provoke climate action by portraying it in dire or fatalistic terms. That's true, and you can acknowledge it, but emphasizing these aspects promotes fatalism and emotional numbing, causing people to turn away and disengage. Solutions, benefits, and personal empowerment are the message you want them to leave with.

13

**Use stories to strengthen engagement**

Stories help make your message relevant and vivid. They connect with audiences, allowing you to build bonds, enhance empathy, and open people to new perspectives. Deepen your message by weaving in your personal story—how you became concerned about climate change, for instance, or an account of how you've seen climate solutions benefit someone or some community that your audience relates to.

14

**Stay above the fray**

Focus on the big picture, on what's important. Don't get caught in a trap of arguing or preaching about details or sidetracked by an individual in the audience who tries to poke holes in your thesis. Avoid demonizing opponents, blaming, and arguing. Distractions actually distract, cause you to lose your audience, and make you ineffective.

15

**Message discipline is critical**

Stay on your talking points. Repeat key points. Don't explain the same thing in different ways—this can be more confusing than enabling. Follow the steps outlined in this guide. Be consistent across all messaging platforms and coalitions, but be sure to tailor to your audience.

b. To find more information on who Americans trust see ecoAmerica's *American Climate Values 2014: Psychographic and Demographic* report. Additionally, Pew and Gallup both conduct research on the institutions and leaders Americans trust.



## RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEF | Boundary Object Theory

In community development work there are often multiple boundaries between stakeholders. While part of the challenge of this work, these differences in experience and understanding can also be assets as cross-boundary knowledge is a fuel for innovation. Boundary object theory offers structures that convene people, organize tasks and externalize thinking to meet multiple stakeholder goals.

In computer sciences and distributed work scenarios, boundary objects allow participants to contribute to a shared effort despite different experience and motivation. For instance, the YouTube platform can be seen as a boundary object that allows people all over the world to share and comment on digital media on any topic [Star 2010]. YouTube is highly flexible in terms of allowing the public to frame and comment on ideas of interest to them and yet consistent in terms of platform design and the content sharing norms.

As the theoretical term, boundary object, entered cross disciplinary learning contexts (medicine, systems analysis, education...), studies found boundary objects not only help groups coordinate work but help them identify differences in thinking, define problem parameters, and identify strategies to address that problem. In this way, boundary objects open up conversation and lead to action. For instance, when systems modeling engineers worked with other professionals, they found that the computer technology was daunting to collaborators, leaving them hesitant to engage with the ideas. Systems engineers created “messy examples” as an entry point to encourage active collaboration. These hand drawn models of a familiar situation held just enough content to define the problem but left room for collaborators to improve upon the model (Richardson, 2014). Externalizing thinking, is seen as a key element in learning (Sandoval, 2004). With this entry point, each professional group can learn from the other’s experience and novel ideas, built on their two areas of expertise, can emerge.

With YouTube and the messy example, the boundary object is flexible in the content it gathers from users but structured in the way it sets the stage for contribution. While an on line platform or a piece of paper full of information is a thing, their role as a boundary object is not about the *thing*, but how the thing reveals or supports the process of groups. In this way, a boundary object is a thing of action [Star 2010].

### **Why does this matter?**

We often collaborate with audiences and partners from different fields. When we are thinking about the design or implementation of a project, it is important to make sure all stakeholder voices are heard and that differences in opinion are noted and addressed (even if not resolved). By providing a common reference point where all ideas can play a part a boundary object can support groups in defining the problem at hand and generating innovative solutions that draw on the whole groups’ experience.

### **Summaries of Key Papers**



## RESEARCH TO PRACTICE BRIEF | Boundary Object Theory

1. Star, S. L., & Griesemer, J. (1989). *Institutional ecology, 'translations', and boundary objects: Amateurs and professionals on Berkeley's museum of vertebrate zoology*. *Social Studies of Science*, 19, 387-420.

*Seminal Paper:* Boundary object theory emerged from an historical study of the development of a natural history museum. Star and Griesemer noticed that the data attached to each specimen in the collection was essential to the success of each stakeholder in the museum's dispersed team. The naming protocol was required of the trapper to get paid by the museum and required by the gentlemen collectors to feel they were contributing to a bigger meaningful endeavor. For the institution itself, the data was central to interpreting the collection, required by the educator and scientist to better understand how the animals and their context reveal evolutionary and environmental understanding, and ultimately provided a base for endless research questions to pursue. Star and Griesemer built a theory from this observation of one system providing the flexibility to engage multiple, dispersed stakeholders while providing the structure to ensure individual interests of stakeholders were met.

2. Akkermann, S.F. & Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary crossing and boundary objects. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 123-169. DOI: 10.3102/0034654311404435.

This literature review of all the mentions of boundary objects and boundary crossing since the Star Griesemer (1989) introduction of the theory, identifies four learning mechanisms that can take place at boundaries: identification, coordination, reflection, and transformation. These mechanisms move beyond simply coordinating dispersed work and illustrate how boundary objects support engagement across sociocultural differences and can lead to boundaries functioning as resources for developing new practices, identities and ideas.

3. Wenger-Trayner, E., & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015). In E. Wenger-Trayner, M. Fenton-O'Creevy, S. Hutchinson, C. Kubiak, & B. Wenger-Trayner (Eds.), *Learning in landscapes of practice; Boundaries, identity, and knowledgability in practice-based learning*. New York and London: Routledge.

Communities of practice have cultivated shared language and practices, yet they reside in a landscape of practices that intersect at the boundaries. The learning agenda across boundaries must consider both the boundaries and the shared spaces between practices. Boundary objects help to surface differences in language about ideas, in approach to ideas, and to solution strategies. They are instrumental in identifying interests, problem definition and solution strategies even in groups without full agreement.

### Cited papers:

Star, S.L. (2010). This is not a boundary object: Reflections on the origin of a concept. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 35(5), 601-617. DOI: 10.1177/0162243910377624.

Richardson, G. P. (2014). "Model" Teaching. *System Dynamics Review*, 30, 81-88. DOI: 10.1002/sdr.1512

Sandoval, W. A. (2004). Developing learning theory by refining conjectures embodied in educational designs. *Educational Psychologist*, 39(4), 213-223.