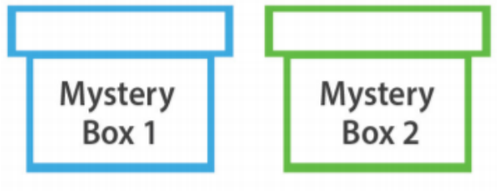
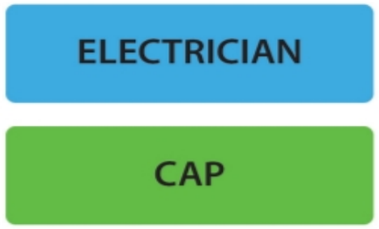
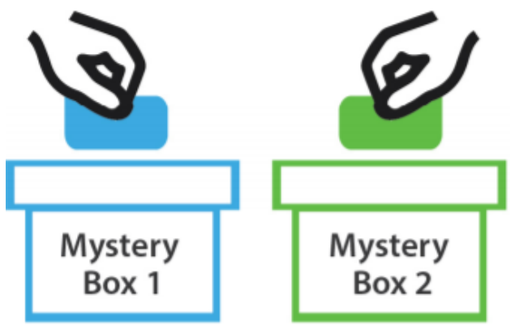
Mystery Boxes: Combine and Design



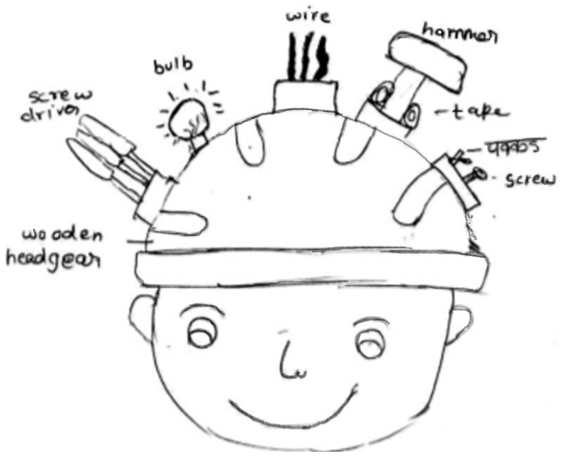
Step 1:
There are two identical cardboard boxes which are labelled as Mystery Box 1 (MB 1) and Mystery Box 2 (MB 2). The two boxes can be distinguished by the use of two different colours.



Step 2:
There are paper chits in both in both mystery boxes. MB 1 has chits of different professions (Colour 1) and MB 2 has chits of different objects (Colour 2).



Step 3:
In groups of 3 or more, come and pick one chit from each of the boxes.



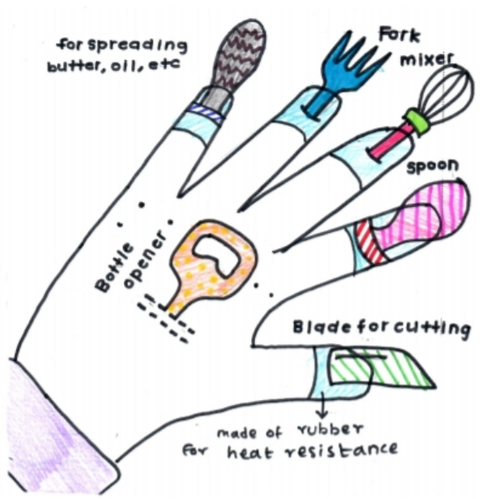
Step 4:
Now, combine the two chits and design a new and useful *object* (MB 2) for the *professional* in (MB 1). For example- Design a useful cap for an electrician.

Note: Put the chits back in the respective boxes.

Background

The activity of Mystery Boxes works on the principle of lateral thinking – a creative thinking technique popularized by Edward de Bono. Lateral thinking provokes the emergence of creative and wild ideas by bringing together two unrelated words for comparison or combination (DeBono,1990). An integral part of the "Design Thinking" process is defining a meaningful and actionable problem statement or generating a design brief.

The initial part of the Mystery Box exercise focuses on writing the design brief by combining two words. This aids in a deeper understanding of the design problem. The next part deals with designing a creative solution, a product, to solve the design problem.



Images: The sketches in this poster are works of students, designed by them during National Science day 2019: A glove designed for a Gardener (above) and a headgear designed for an Electrician (left)

Examples

Mystery Box 1: Professions
Teacher, Barber, Electrician, Farmer, Dentist, Cook, Sweeper, Gardener, Tailor

Mystery Box 2: Objects
Toolbox, Gloves, Shoes, Head gear, Glasses

References:

de Bono, E. (1990). Lateral thinking: Creativity step By step. New York: Harper Perennial.

Edward de Bono's contribution to creativity studies is his concept of lateral thinking, which according to him promotes creative thinking and problem solving. The model of lateral thinking proposed by him can be utilized by people across various domains.