

Using Design to Create Interdisciplinary Research in Ageing

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Objectives

Research in ageing can very often require interdisciplinary approaches to navigate complexity. However, achieving interdisciplinary engagement across differing epistemological domains can be difficult. McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA) identified Design as a means to address complexity through interdisciplinary action. DesignCORE at the Institute of Technology Carlow have been working with MIRA to assist them with this. With 70 researchers in ageing across 6 faculties, the objectives of the study were to use Design approaches to create interdisciplinary research proposals. Furthermore, 12 months on, to assess how Design has assisted in creating interdisciplinary research, and how it can assist in the future.

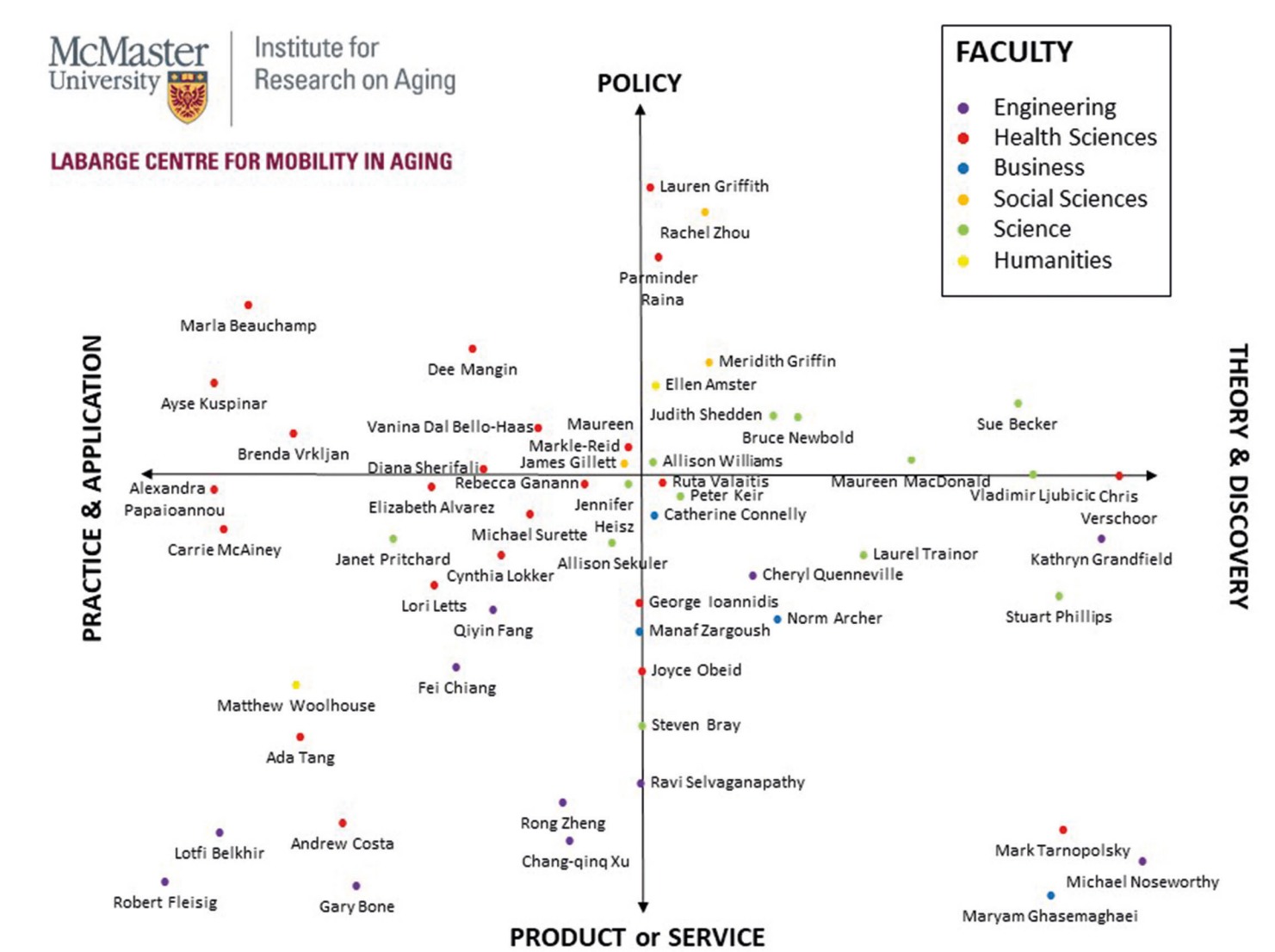
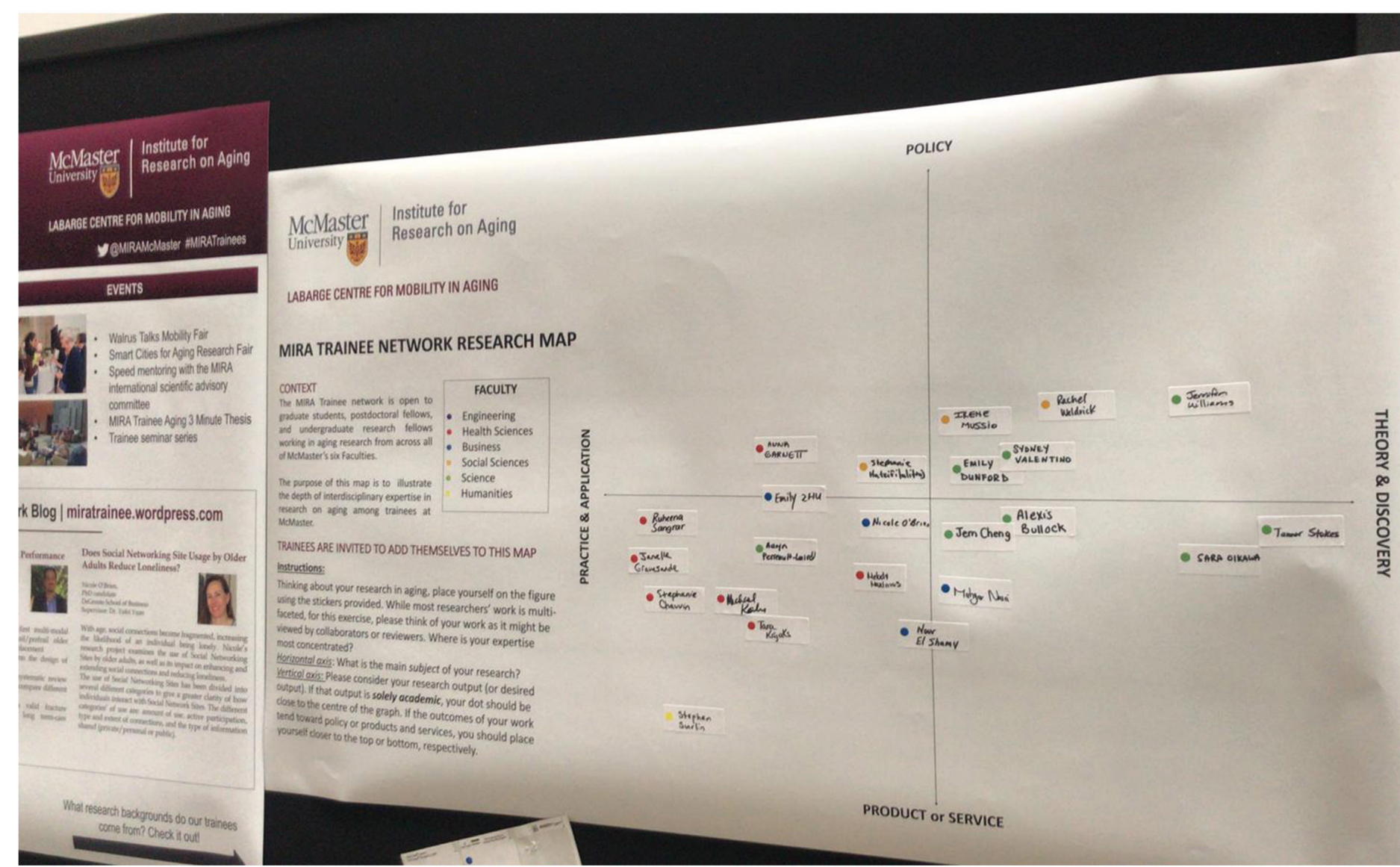
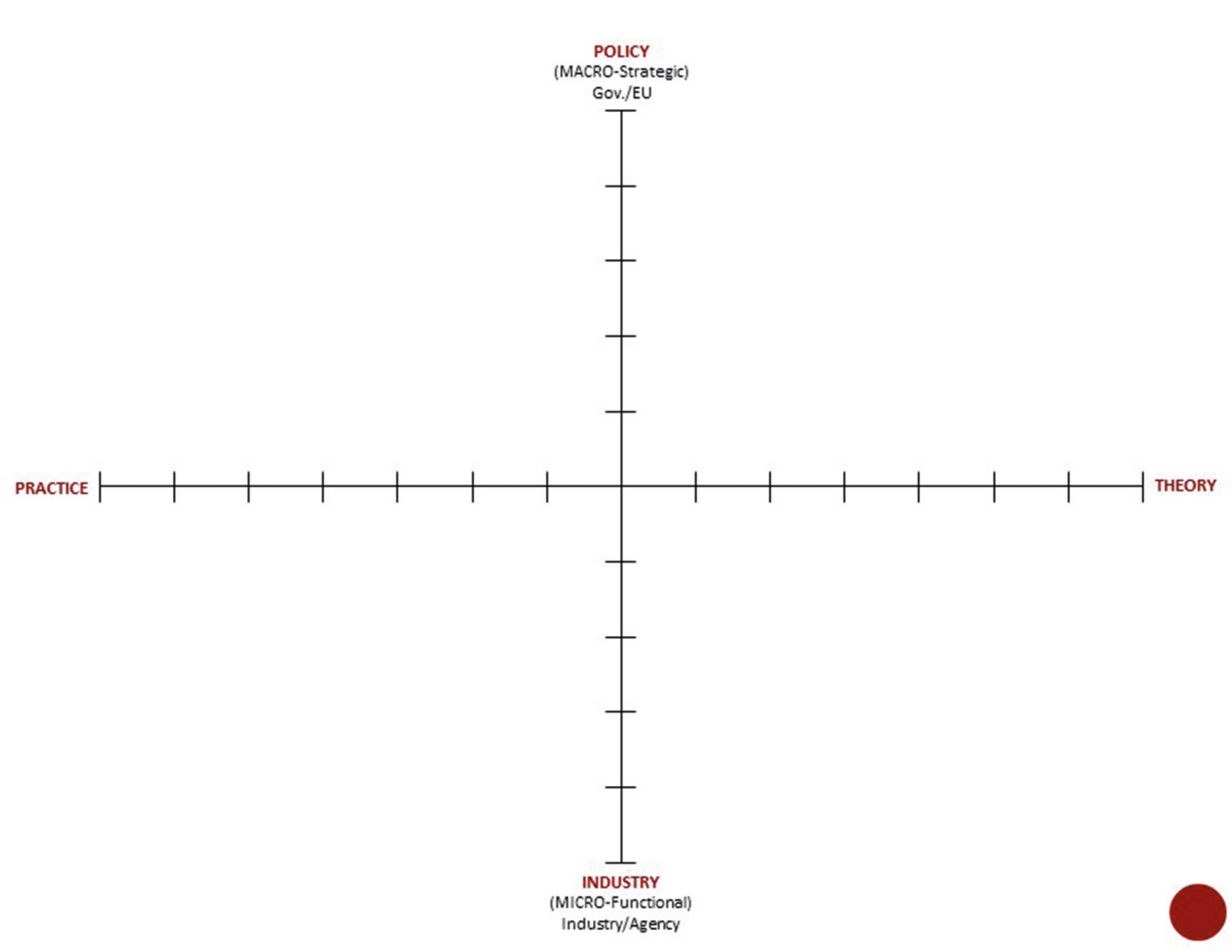
Methods

Firstly, a **research map** was designed to iteratively plot all interdisciplinary activity across faculties. Design led workshops with specialised activities were then conducted. These **focused on interdisciplinary communication** e.g. fulfilling tasks without verbal communication and visually communicating research to other disciplines. An **Interdisciplinary Research Proposal Canvas**© was designed to encourage disparate groups to openly explore and begin the process of creating joint proposals. 12 months after these workshops, ethnographic research was conducted to assess how Design had influenced research culture and how it could be evolved.

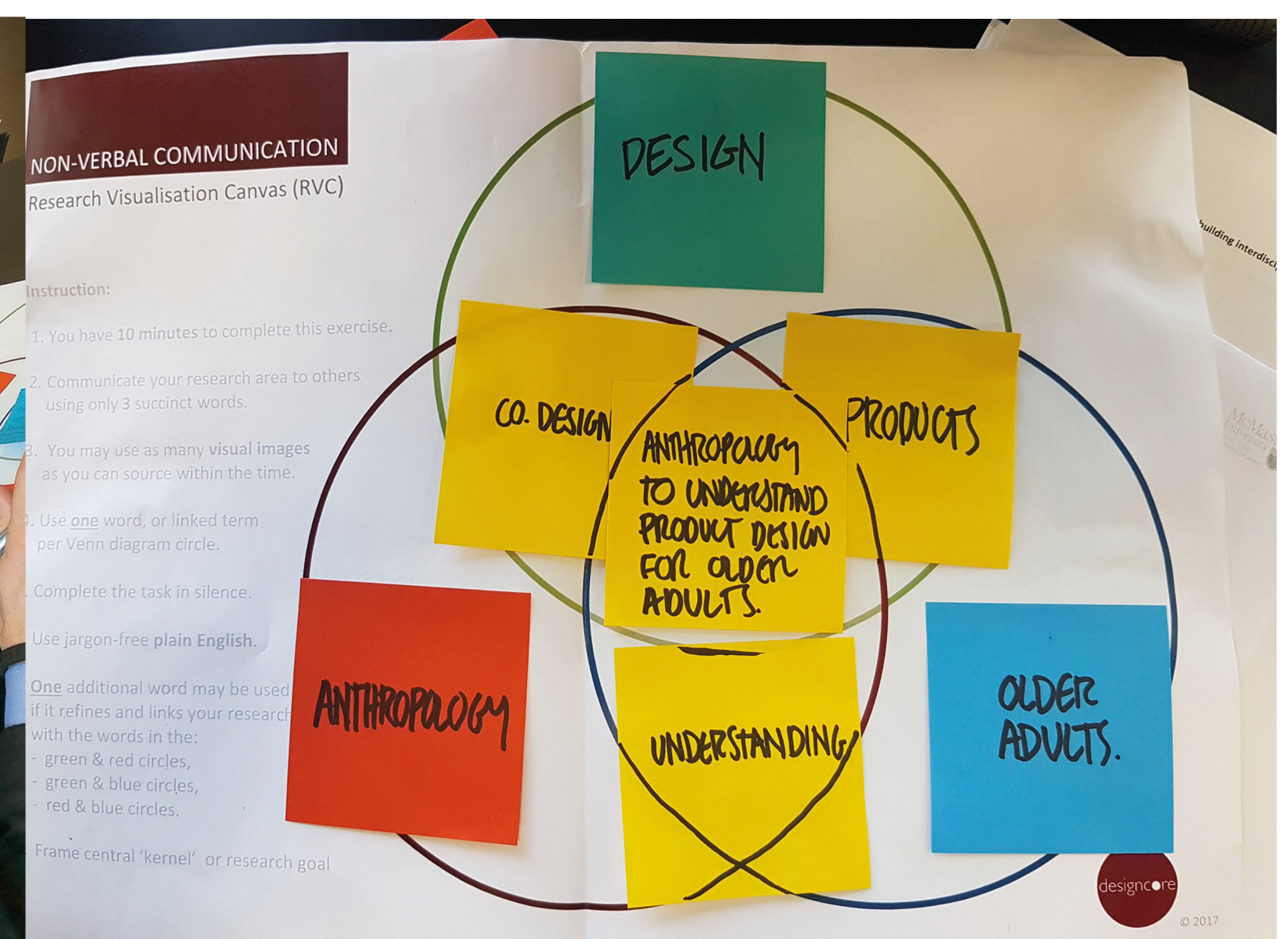
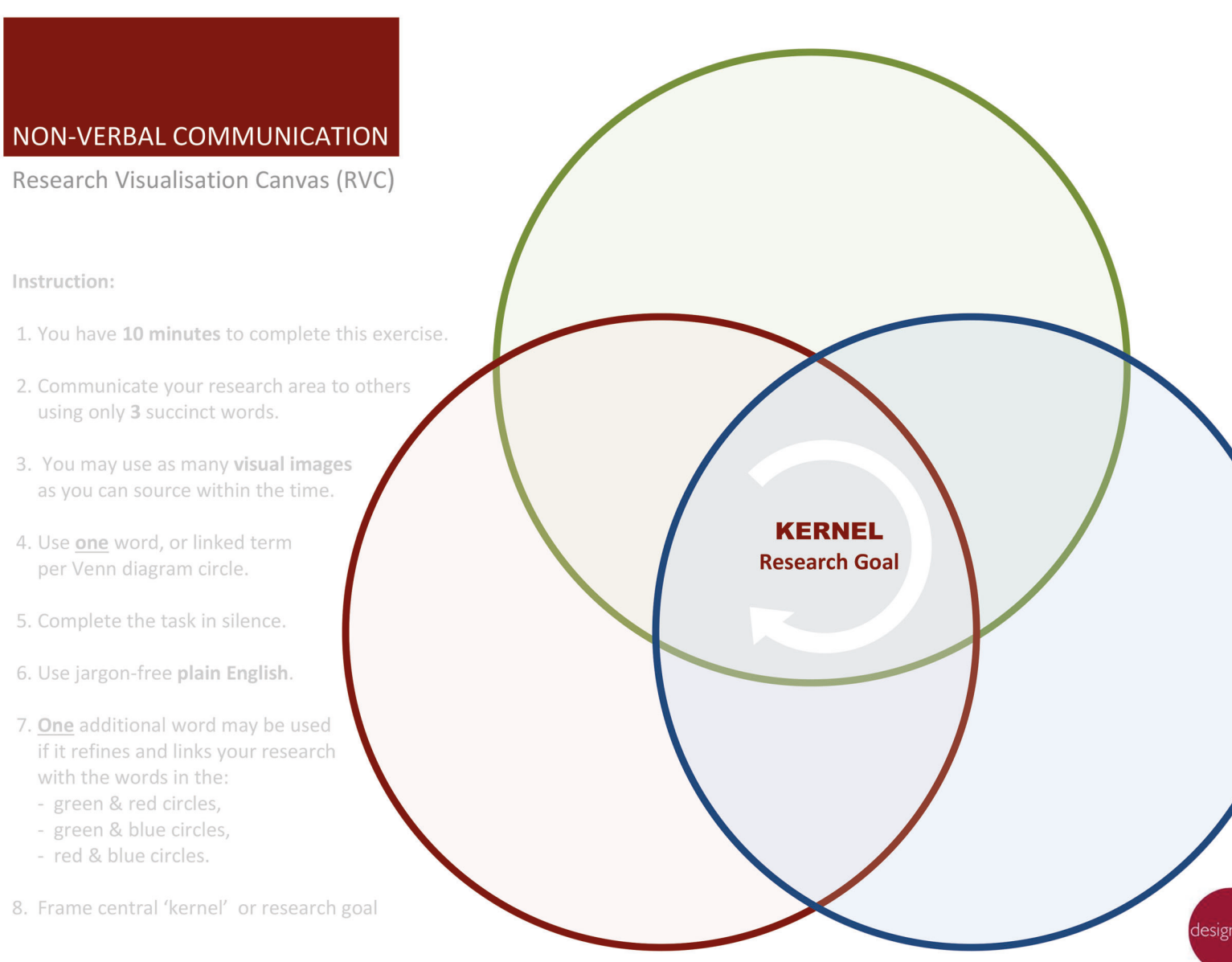
Results and Conclusions

Following the workshops, two interdisciplinary research groups were formed within area of Technology and Mobility in Ageing. Each group developed and submitted a 4-5 year research proposal to an international scientific committee and these were successfully funded. An assessment of progress after 12 months showed that although creating interdisciplinary research can be complex; using Design to find 'common languages' can be beneficial in group communication. In addition to this, stakeholder engagement should be used as a unifying common language, and, both virtual and physical safe spaces to learn, understand, reflect, and share should be created.

Research Mapping



Interdisciplinary Communications



Interdisciplinary Research Proposal Canvas©

