

Vignette 3 - Introducing Tableaux Vivants in report

'Tableaux Vivants' is French for 'living pictures.' Historically, a cast of models represented scenes from art, literature, history, or everyday life on a stage. After the curtains went up, the characters posed silently and motionless. Often a large wooden frame depicted the perimeter of the stage, referencing the frame of a painted canvas (Tortello, 2011).

In the Cabriotraining we embedded Tableaux Vivants to explore the meaning of data in the analysing phase. It sparks discussion in a playful, interactive way, but also gives research teams a way to share their roles and relations.

In this assignment, we put a trunk in the room. The trunk is filled with costumes and props. We invite participants to choose one or more items, then explain why they picked them: What do those elements remind you of, what does a costume tell me about you? The participants are then asked to search for body and facial expressions that support these meanings. Relations with others are explored in building up the tableau vivant. When the tableau is made, people are asked to freeze, and a picture is taken. The picture can be placed in a golden frame and embedded in presentations, but the live performance is more powerful.

An advantage of the assignment is that participants may feel less anxious about taking part in a silent group activity than about presenting orally in front of the public (Tortello, 2011). However, it requires guidance from an experienced workshop trainer. We also learned to implement 'Tableaux Vivants' only when trust is established in a group and people feel comfortable exploring creative assignments.