

# Visual Space

## Group Graphic Generation for Facilitation & Collaboration

### Visual Space: Described

**Visual Space** is a group facilitation technique in which participants meet for a defined purpose, set the agenda for themselves, organize themselves into groups, and explore concepts visually, usually on the walls (butcher paper works particularly well), and usually in large format. The working groups are mobile and ever-changing, driven by the interests and needs of the participants.

The facilitator's first role is to describe the methodology and get the session started. During the session, the facilitator helps to keep everyone involved; pays attention to process, group dynamics, and the working environment; works to ensure forward momentum in the room; debriefs the learning and discoveries; documents and distributes the outcomes; and assures that action planning is completed.

### Influences

Visual Space, first codified by Paul Reali and Chris Dewar, incorporates some of the best elements of other group facilitation and collaboration tools.

#### Elements from Group Facilitation

First and foremost, Visual Space is a group facilitation tool. Facilitation is the process of leading groups to necessary outcomes. Good facilitation elicits participation from each person, taps into individual and collective creativity, recognizes and respects group dynamics, and brings about a sense of ownership for all involved. A facilitator, ideally, is responsible for overseeing and guiding the *process*, while the participants are primarily responsible for the *content*.

#### How to Get Started

Visit [omniskills.com/visualspace](http://omniskills.com/visualspace) to see examples and download a copy of this document.

#### Elements from Open Space Technology

Like Open Space Technology, Visual Space is a self-organizing meeting structure in which the participants set and carry out the agenda, to address a pre-determined central theme; provides a "marketplace" of concurrent spaces (working groups) that participants move freely between, learning and contributing as they "shop" for information and ideas; allows participants to create new spaces as needed; and follows "The Law of Two Feet:" when an individual is neither learning from nor contributing to a space, he or she goes someplace else.

#### Elements from World Café

World Café is a methodology for hosting conversations about questions that matter. Conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues at hand. The design principles of World Café, all of which are incorporated in Visual Space, are: set the context; create hospitable space; explore questions that matter; encourage everyone's contributions; connect diverse perspectives; listen together for insights; and share collective discoveries.

#### Elements from Graphic Facilitation

Graphic Facilitation is a technique for capturing the content of a group session in visual form, carried out by the facilitator. In Visual Space, *the participants* create the visuals. Ideally, this is done on the walls, vision writ large.

#### Elements from Visual Thinking & Concept Mapping

Visual thinking is using pictures to help you to see, capture, clarify, connect, solve, discover, explore, and explain. All forms of drawing are valid, including concept mapping, Mind Mapping, flowcharts, storyboards, cartoons, lists, and whatever suits the expression of the ideas.

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