

Illuminate Consensus Workshop Post-Discussion

Discussion created by Catherine Tornbom on 7/26/2009 12:50 PM

Catherine Tornbom

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With our recent experience in using Illuminate for a consensus workshop I would like to encourage those of us who participated to continue debriefing and deconstructing the many aspects of the experience.

During our final conversation on the process of using Illuminate, I captured some of the comments that were shared in a couple of categories:

Challenges: 1. The size of the whiteboard was too small. 2. The size of the text boxes (representing the 1/2 sheets) was hard to work with - this limits the number of ideas that can be posted. We did 30 ideas/boxes and it was almost too much given both the size of the whiteboard and size of the boxes. 3. The font and limited formatting capabilities within the text boxes resulted in inconsistencies with the text and difficulty in reading. 4. It was slow during clustering. Instead of using a red x to indicate disagreement with a pairing or grouping, Sheila suggested that having everyone using the smiley/not smiley faces. This might have sped the process up a bit.

Positives: 1. Co-facilitation is a must, and having a third person helping with the clustering is very helpful. 2. Encourage participants to have paper and pencil/pen handy to write down thoughts and questions as they come up so as not to forget. In face-to-face, it is easy to interrupt so as not to lose your thought. The thought can also be added into the Chat function if desired. The inability to interrupt was viewed as a definite positive. 3. The group experienced the workshop as more participatory. Please add your thoughts or another category. LaDonna submits feedback to the Illuminate tech folks and she had a number of tickets this time. She is willing to send more tickets based on our feedback. Thanks, Catherine

Last edited by Catherine Tornbom on 7/26/2009 12:53 PM

Sheila LeGeros

Posted by Sheila LeGeros on 7/27/2009 5:35 PM

POSITIVES

- 1) There are so many positives it is not possible to capture them all here! Catherine, thank you for your beautiful documentation of the meeting that you posted in the files. It is especially helpful to see the documentation you used behind the scenes to co-facilitate with LaDonna.
- 2) Facilitators had calm voices with very clear instructions, which minimized time lost due to participant confusion. You achieved this by doing your homework to think through every step of the process, by rehearsing, and by creating beautiful yet simple visuals to engage and lead participants through the process.
- 3) It was great that you had the focus question and prepared cards ready for us in the breakout rooms.
- 4) It was simply amazing that we could complete every core step of a consensus workshop virtually in two hours. I've never seen that done before. Hats off to you!
- 5) The guided visualization was a phenomenal way to get our eyes away from the screen for a bit, and get back into our bodies. Great that you asked us to breathe. It can be tense working in virtual, and this pause was refreshing and cleared our minds to do good thinking work.

Sheila LeGeros

Posted by Sheila LeGeros on 7/27/2009 5:36 PM

(My reply was so long I had to break it into pieces. Sorry!)

CHALLENGES 1) The questions Catherine asked participants during the clustering and naming process informed me how much we depend on our eyes and body language during any sticky wall process to confirm consensus before proceeding. It was in this consensus-

confirming process where I observed the process bog down. It took much time to pass the microphone to respond to Catherine's confirming questions before proceeding to the next pairing. In a face-to-face setting it is possible to look around the room to confirm consensus with no or minimal words being exchanged. This is not possible in a virtual meeting. 2) We could have handled more than 30 cards, but you're right it gets challenging beyond a certain point. I tested Elluminate on my own and found I could get a maximum of 45 cards in 7 columns up on the whiteboard with a little space at the bottom for maneuvering. Of course we could post more cards with a smaller font, but then on some screens it might be too small to see. It would be very challenging to do something like Strategic Directions, which tends to get tall; or Wall of Wonder or Book Charting, which tend to get wide. Nevertheless, this is the very best virtual tool I've seen for the purpose of clustering. I've never before seen the ability to move cards around so easily on the wall in a way that others can immediately see it without a long pause and confusing images coming across before things settle down. I recommend exploring more deeply the possibilities together with Elluminate. For example, is it possible for us to create a default font size for writing cards that will hold its font size during card editing (we had to constantly downsize the font even though the cards were pre-made)? 3) A one-hour orientation to the technology prior to the meeting is a must with this technology, and adds to the start-up cost/time for a group.

NEXT TIME 1) To confirm consensus on a sticky wall, consider a script like this: In this process individuals will make many suggestions about how to move the data around on the whiteboard. If we were face-to-face it would be very easy to confirm agreement simply with body language or a few words. To make this an efficient process, we will confirm agreement by using these symbols: use the green checkmark to signal agreement, and the red X to signal disagreement or uncertainty. When we see a red X we will stop to discuss or ask clarifying questions, otherwise, we will proceed. If at any time we're going too fast, or you want to ask a clarifying question, please raise your hand and I'll call on you. 2) I agree 2 facilitators are the minimum requirement to operate this tool for consensus workshop. I think the person who is responsible for the technology can also be the person who manipulates the whiteboard for the lead facilitator. 3) On the breakout room whiteboards, consider creating 3 staging areas for cards at the bottom with titles: First Round of Cards, Second Round of Cards, Third Round of Cards. Consider changing our criteria for the three rounds so that it's possible for groups to move all their cards into buckets before coming back to the large group. This eliminates the need to go back into breakout groups after each round, and makes it really easy for the two

facilitators to swoop in to each breakout room to copy and paste cards. (Vs. teaching the participants how to do this tedious task.)

Sheila LeGeros

Posted by Sheila LeGeros on 7/29/2009 8:41 AM

Hello Team,

Here's the link to the recorded Elluminate session from Friday, when we did the Consensus Workshop.

<https://sas.illuminate.com/site/external/jwsdetect/playback.jnlp?psid=2009-07-24.1704.D.1EC6>

LaDonna Coy did an outstanding job supporting our team by teaching us how to use Elluminate, by sharing with us her techniques that she has developed, and by giving us a large amount of her time. She has requested recommendations from our team on her LinkedIn site. Just look-up LaDonna Coy in LinkedIn and you will find her. I would like to encourage you to write her a recommendation.

Thank you, Sheila