IAF Think Tank
Report on Types of Facilitation or Facilitation: What's on the Smorgasbord?

Background: We proposed the question and then heard a taxonomy description from Mary Margaret Palmer. We decided to begin an analysis/description of types with the Models / Methodologies portion of the taxonomy. We included one sample Process / Technique as well.

First Product: A set of questions for creating some commonality to the data collected on each type of facilitation. We tested the initial 20 questions on several different models/ methodologies and found it useful. After hearing reports from these initial tests, we added several items to the list of information we would want to assist us in learning about a facilitation type with which we were unfamiliar.

The questions:

1. Common Name
2. Epistemological Framework - Belief System - Assumptions
3. Intent or Purpose
4. Recognizable Components
5. How is success evaluated and measured?
6. Usual - Expected Outcomes
7. On the participation continuum from highly directive to non-directive, where does this fall?
8. Time frames
9. History of Development
10. Ideal Condition
11. Materials/Tools/Setting
12. Types of Participants
13. Particular Applications (main application plus others)
14. Resources (contacts, books, formal education, trainings, certification?)
15. Type of Facilitator-Client Relationship
16. How flexible is the process?
17. Documentation needed?
18. Follow-up?
19. Facilitator Personality Fit
20. Level of Pre-work
21. Rich examples of successes and failures
22. Potential Pitfalls
23. Recommended Size of Group

Example 1

Common Names:
JAD (Joint Application Development)
IBM FAST - MG Rush Systems Inc.
The Method - Atlas Performance Resources
RAD (Rapid Application Development)

Belief System: To expedite computer application systems development and external design using an unbiased facilitator through a joint effort between system programmers and end-users.
Intent: To provide a structured, streamlined process (pathway) to develop application systems.

Components:

1) Scoping and Planning
2) Current Workflow Analysis
3) Education of Participants on the Process/Techniques
4) Development and Design Sessions
5) Evaluation/Next Step/Closure

Evaluate: Technique is often compared to traditional methods/processes in terms of budget, time and resources. Estimating software tools and metrics are sometimes used for evaluation and benchmarking.

Outcomes: An application requirements and external design document

Directive: "Step-By-Step"- very directive over process, due to large amount of change introduced

Timeframes: 3-6 months

History: Developed by IBM in 1987 by Tony Crawford

Ideal Conditions: Off-site, away from interruptions, strong executive sponsorship and dedicated participants

Materials/Settings: Flipcharts, overhead projector, scribe w/PC, "U"-shaped table w/chairs, participant materials (i.e. scope, data flow diagrams, etc)

Types of Participants: Computer programmers, analysts, the end-users (business experts), executive staff/sponsorship, facilitator and scribe

Applications: Computer application development, computer system conversions, computer system vendor selection, project management and some portions of Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)

Resources: FAST, the Method and JAD training
      No formal certification at this time
     Previous experience in facilitation or systems analysis
     Many books published on JAD, CASE tools, application development
     some authors are Yourdon/DeMarco, Tony Crawford, Dorine Andrews

Relationship: Needs to be trusting, important to get buy-in through out the process, must be able to continuously "sell" the technique. The technique is often questioned throughout the process.

Flexible: Approach can be very flexible to environment/client, facilitator has a variety to tools to utilize, i.e. team building, CASE software, ice breakers

Documentation: Application requirements and external design document

Follow-Up: Turn project over to client, facilitator should follow-up to identify the effectiveness of facilitation against traditional systems development, i.e. how much time was saved? How well did we stay with the budget?

Personality Fit: Analytical/Logical thinker, interest and knowledge of computer systems, must be detail oriented

Prep Work: Facilitator must schedule all workshops, identify and get
to know the participants, identify time frames and the expected outcome

Example 2

Common Name: Participatory Strategic Planning (from Technology of
Participation [ToP]); LENS (formerly Leadership Effectiveness & New
Strategies)

Epistemological Framework/Belief System/Assumptions: The necessary
wisdom exists within the group

Intent or Purpose: to create a 3-5 year strategic plan

Recognizable Components: Environmental Scan, Vision, Contradictions
(Barriers, etc.), Strategies (Proposals, Strategic Directions), Short-Term
Objectives (1-year Benchmarks, Charters), Implementation (Action Plans)

How is success evaluated and measured (if at all)? 30-, 60-, and 90-day
checks with Task Forces; @ 90-days, evaluate and plan next 90-days
(repeat quarterly), relook at total picture at end of one year

Usual/Expected Outcomes: A plan (documented); high buy-in; specific
responsibilities, deliverables

**On the participation continuum from highly directive to non-directive,
where does this fall?** Participants have low participation in the process,
high participation in the content. Note that the facilitator has a highly
directive plan for the process, but checks frequently with participants and
adjusts as necessary to serve the content.

Time frames: Five 4-hour sessions,
usually over 2 1/2 days (plus design, orientation and follow-up)

History of Development: Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) developed the
process in and for community development, tested it internationally for 15
years or so. Now it is applied in all sectors.

Ideal Conditions: Buy-in at the highest level, representation of all
stakeholders, opportunity for training in-house facilitators

Materials/Tools/Setting: Materials - Adequate room, participants at tables
where they can see each other and still work in teams, large blank wall,
markers, half-sheets, masking tape, flip charts; Tools - ToP techniques such
as Basic Discussion Method, Workshop Method; Setting - prefer off-site

Types of Participants: Representative of the diversity of the group

Particular Applications (main application plus others): Participatory
Strategic or Operational Planning

Resources (contacts, books, formal education, trainings, certification?):
Books: Winning Through Participation by Laura Spencer; Participation
Works ed. by James P. Troxel; Training - advanced ToP course
(Participatory Strategic Planning), contact ICA West in Phoenix for

national schedule

Type of Facilitator-Client Relationship: close, built on trust; client owns content, facilitator provides process in consultation with client

How flexible is the process? depends on the client and the facilitator - usually follows the components

Documentation needed? yes, of all phases of the planning at the level of consensus and back-up material; generally provide first draft on site

Follow-up? as arranged with client, usually at least the 30-60-90 day cycle to provide a template for on-going monitoring of outcomes

Facilitator Personality Fit: someone who can function and be flexible within a structure

Level of Pre-work: Design conference with client segment, sometimes additional interviews