

Patterns of Collaboration

Discussion created by Sheila LeGeros on 7/3/2009 12:49 PM

[Sheila LeGeros](#)

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I am starting this as a new topic, per Doug's suggestion. Sheila

“Patterns of Collaboration”

As I worked on our revision of the Design Pattern template, I began thinking a bit about the “Patterns of Collaboration” section. The set we’re using was developed out of the Collaborative Engineering perspective and they are a tremendous contribution to the field. I think this is a valuable section for us. Sheila is going to clean up the language and make the idea more accessible.

I am wondering – not pushing – if we might give some thought to redefining them to be more ToP specific. The best example is the pattern of collaboration related to “Gestalt – Integration – Synthesis.” I can certainly see it, rationally, as a subset of “Organize.” At the same time, for ToP facilitators, it is a pillar of our approach. Of course we use other patterns of organizing information and ideas.

This pattern of collaboration is well described in Doug's paper, Organizing Patterns of Interaction. It's in the Files section in the Research and Support Papers folder. At our Toronto meeting, I passed out a photocopied couple of pages from "Scenarios - The Art of Strategic Conversation" by Kees van der Heijden. In the book, it's on pages 182 - 185 - Analyzing the Set of Interviews. I'll find a way to share it. It's a worthwhile book to own in any case.

Gestalt is and has been one of the keys to our approach since the beginning. It may well be one of our unique contributions to the field of facilitation and collaborative engineering. It is built on a distinct set of assumptions and has a distinct set of processes.

Falling into the trap of "sorting" is one of the most common slips made by inexperienced facilitators. There is a strong tendency in groups to go this way as well. The difference between sorting and gestalting in relation to the rational and experiential aims is massive and really obvious. Gestalting produces a result that truly answers the focus

question and a sense of genuinely new understanding in the group. They literally see their world in a new way when they complete a well-done gestalt.

I believe this distinction and the supporting theory and practical procedures is critical to sustaining ToP into a new generation.

I don't know the evolution of this process in our history and I'm trying to track down it's roots - in theory and practice. Fred Buss once told me of an early use in 1965 with a youth group on the West Side of Chicago. Perhaps there were earlier uses as well.

I think this is a conversation we need to have. I think there are other differences as well. We have traditionally used the term, "Clarify" to point to the activity of increasing objective level understanding. As I read it, that's only a minor part of the definition in current use.

Wayne Nelson

[Sheila LeGeros](#)

Posted by [Sheila LeGeros](#) on 7/3/2009 12:50 PM

ToP Specific--

I greatly appreciate Wayne's thoughtfulness in this work being done!

I want to support the notion of being as "ToP" specific as possible. I agree that the distinction, supporting theory and practical procedures are essential to document and translate for future generations of potentially less skilled ToP facilitators.

For those of us who have been tagging along behind the path of the inventors/creators/refiners of ToP, it has required rigorous attention to the nuances. As the world continues to speed up, we will have less time and inclination to do our personal deep digging to find out what the "differences that made the difference" to borrow from a new science perspective. Too many of our mentors have taken for granted nuances that are so natural to their practice, they don't recognize how essential they are and how uncommon from other's experiences. Let us create a comprehensive documentation that holds the best of past experience.

Cheryl Kartes

[Sheila LeGeros](#)

Posted by [Sheila LeGeros](#) on 7/3/2009 12:51 PM

ANOTHER GROUP DEVELOPED A WEBSITE FOR PATTERN LANGUAGE AND IS INVITING SUBMISSIONS

Nancy White is in this group. It's interesting that they have started in the same place as we did -- with work done in 1977 on pattern language, and have come to a similar but different place. Our work is much more detailed and methods/process/steps oriented. Their work is much less methods oriented, and speaks more to the experience of being a facilitator.

Sheila

From: Tree Bressen <tree@ic.org>

Subject: pattern language list (lo)

To: ... Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2009, 5:34 PM

Greetings everyone,

It's been quite a while since I've been in contact with most of you. Lest you think that the pattern language for group process has been languishing during this time, let me reassure you that is far from the case. Rather, a smaller group of us have been developing the infrastructure for collaborative pattern writing on the web, and I am delighted to announce that we are just about ready to go public with the launch! Well, maybe not exactly public (because there are only a few patterns written so far), but to share it with all those who want to get involved.

For those of you who expressed interest in helping write patterns online, you will soon be receiving an invitation to set up an account on the site at

<http://grouppatternlanguage.org/Home>

Unlike our last effort at a collaborative website, an account is only required if you want to edit pages and write patterns; anyone may view any page on the site without logging in. If you don't receive an invite by next week and you want one, feel free to contact John Abbe (johnca@ourpla.net) or myself, or click "Sign Up" in the upper right corner of the site.

Aside from actual pattern writing online, if you are receiving this message that means

you requested to be on the "Pattern Language" LOW list for announcements related to the project. (There is also a HIGH list for those who want to participate in discussions related to the project.) The lists have finally been activated at riseup.net, and i am about to sign up everyone who requested it. If your subscription preferences change, you can either self-manage that at the list site <https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/pattern-lo> or else email me for assistance.

Thank you for your interest in this project! I am really appreciative of our progress thus far, and want to offer a public thank you to the most recent crew of people who have helped get us this far: John Abbe, Kaliya Hamlin, John Kelly, Amy Lenzo, Nancy White, and Sue Woerhlin.

Cheers,
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