

Creative Facilitation

Cover picture: Biblioteca España - Giancarlo Mazzanti (2007) – Medellin, Colombia.

The Spain Library is located on top of one of the highest mountains surrounding the city of Medellin. It is both a social centre and a landmark supporting and symbolizing the efforts from the city of Medellin in developing one of the most violent quarters of the city into a safe and sound community. It sits at the top of an extension of the Medellin Metro, a Cable Car that runs up the mountain like a blood vessel feeding and connecting this neighborhood with the rest of the city.

The Biblioteca España, as it is called in Spanish, contains a library, a concert hall, day care for children and other social institutions to support the community. And through its architectural qualities - aesthetics, fit in the surrounding scenery, a landmark overlooking the city, and its careful and practical execution - it is also a wonderful demonstration of a city that wants to invest and care for its people.

More info:

www.giancarlo Mazzanti.com/

www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/2008/02/19/biblioteca-parque-espana-giancarlo-mazzanti/

Creative Facilitation

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Preface

Why write a book on Creativity when there are so many on the market? A first reason is a personal one: to realize a synthesis of the many thoughts, ideas, models and experiences I have adopted and practiced over the years; it is about cleaning up conversations between practice and theory and the development of new approaches in the projects I have been involved in. The second reason is to have a document which addresses the specific educational demands of design engineering students at our faculty of Industrial Design Engineering when learning to design new industrial products. And finally, it comes forth from the idea that, although there are great books on the matter, I haven't come across 'my' ideal book. Now, I am not implying that this is exactly that book, but in its development over the years, at least it does approach this idea more closely.

This document is a work in progress. When coaching or running sessions, I often find myself discovering, or even explaining things live in a way that I haven't seen documented that way before. Sometimes it is questions from participants that make me discover new important issues. So, this book has seen a whole range of editions, starting in 1998, at first in Dutch, later on set forth in English. In each edition, new ideas have been included and others skipped, and it will probably continue to evolve this way in the future.

My roots in the field can be traced back to my youngest age, both in hobbies and in professional life. Designing speakers or surfboards, or when coming up with an easier production system for mechanical parts, creativity has always been part of my equations.

A more systematic approach of creativity and facilitation can be traced back to the participation in courses on Creative Problem Solving by Jan Buijs and Kees Nauta at the Delft University of Technology (1989). Other important inputs come from a course on 'Expertise in the Application of Creative Techniques' with the Centre for the Development of Creative Thinking (COCD, Antwerp, Belgium, 1991) with Roger de Bruyn, Manu De Bruyn and Pros Vanosmael, a course on Creative Visualisation by Ghislaine Bromberger, and my collaboration with the TNO Innovation Consulting Group (TNO-IAG) with Patrick Colemont and in parallel my assistance and participation in a number of Creativity & Innovation Conferences organized by the European Association for Creativity and Innovation (EACI, 1991 - 1997), which in turn led to contacts with people like Chris Barlow and Janet Finley at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), Robert Alan Black from Cre8ting (Athens, Georgia, USA), and Will McWhinney with whom I have conversed and collaborated on Creativity, Organisational Development, Systems Thinking and setting Paths of Change

for many years. Will passed away in 2007, but his friendship, ideas and critical assistance continue to resonate profoundly throughout my being.

Although theoretical knowledge and understanding are important and useful, the real learning happens in a conversation with experience. That's why I am immensely grateful to the clients who gave me the opportunity to be a facilitator in key innovative projects, among many others: Pierre Brisson (European Space Agency), Igor Heller (RWS–RDZH), Rolf Jongedijk (City of Rotterdam), John Weebers in the project Wegverlichting, RWS (Ministry of Infrastructure), André Noordegraaf and Ad de Rooij with projects like Kritallisatie 21 and 4B Consulting, also from RWS and Hester van Leeuwen and Rob van Berlo from the City of The Hague.

Another source of learning and testing assumptions are the countless almost daily conversations when coaching IDE students through their first facilitation steps at the faculty of Industrial Design Engineering in our course on Creative Facilitation. Time and again they are the living proof of how fruitful creative practice is in both professional and personal development.

In 2006 Paul Karis and myself produced the original English text in three weeks time! I want to thank Paul for his wonderful enthusiasm and commitment to take up such an almost impossible task and assist me in producing this English material for our Master course at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering: Creative Facilitation. Also a word of thanks to Joanna Facey and David Bloch for their insightful comments and Hanneke Bergmans who took up to redo the lay-out and produced many extra illustrations and overviews to facilitate the reader's experience.

I owe a lot to my partner and colleague Helga Hohn, with whom I reflect on these subjects all the time, supporting and complementing each other in our respective projects, (me being more an object oriented engineer, she being more a people's person) and who has been a continual support in developing ideas for this book.

And a special word of thanks to Jacques Schievink of the VSSD for helping me getting this publication 'on the road' and delivering the finishing touch with each new edition.

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