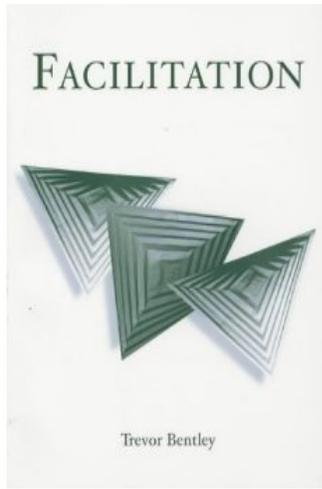


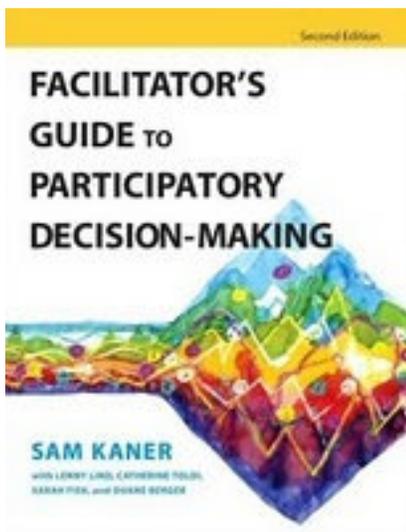
A few favorite facilitation resources



Facilitation: Providing Opportunities for Learning by Trevor Bentley

An incredibly unique resource that is now out of print (but can still be bought used on Amazon.com), Bentley's book moves between description of an actual facilitation with a group and narrative about the facilitation approach and choices he adopts. It's about as close to fishbowling an actual facilitation as you can get in printed form.

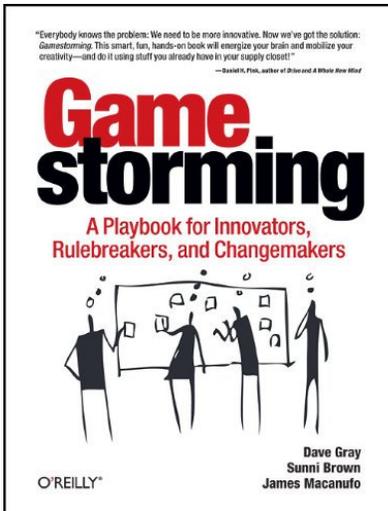
Bentley deeply believes that facilitators should generally operate from a position of restraint, not overly managing a group, and one of the many useful models he offers is a Facilitation Spectrum that illustrates the myriad of choices a facilitator has available to select from when contemplating intervening with a group. His philosophy, approach, and technique indeed show us how we can make groups and conversations a safe place for individual and collective growth.



Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making by Sam Kaner, et al

Simply put, this is one of the most invaluable resources you can have to guide you through how to work with groups to help them reach a decision, in terms of both content and a process. Most importantly the values, tools, and techniques explored will help groups achieve *sustainable agreements*, not just make a decision in the moment that will unlikely be implemented after the conversation.

Kaner and his colleagues describe the dynamics associated with group decision-making, highlighting the important shift from divergent to convergent thinking and the "groan zone" that has to be traveled between the two, one of the most challenging spaces for a facilitator to help a group navigate. The book is chock-full with insightful narrative of facilitation values and beliefs complemented by very useful sections outlining common facilitation techniques and even case studies of group decision-making in action. Check out a preview of the much of book's content via [Google Books](#).

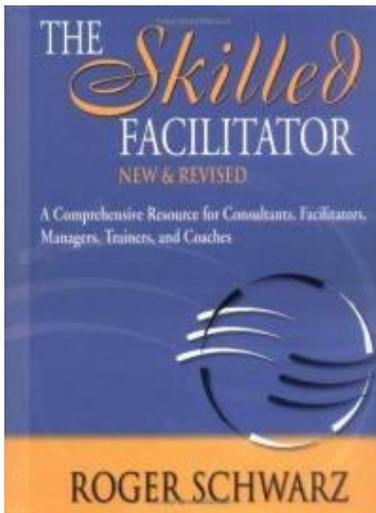


[Gamestorming](#)

by [Dave Gray](#), [Sunni Brown](#), and [James Macanuso](#)

Gray is the founder of [Xplane](#), the visual thinking company, one of the first firms to create infographics for complex concepts and stories. His work fits nicely with [Dan Roam's](#) writing in [The Back of the Napkin](#). Subtitled as "A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers," the book defines gamestorming as "about creating game worlds specifically to explore and examine business challenges, to improve collaboration, and to generate novel insights about the way the world works and what kinds of possibilities we might find there."

While some of the more than 80 activities outlined in the book are definitely games, I'd suggest more of them could be described as exercises or activities, an important distinction given the potentially negative connotation (unjustified in my opinion) some associate with the game label. Some of the activities have been excerpted on the [Go Gamestorming website](#).



[The Skilled Facilitator](#)

by [Roger Schwarz](#)

Schwarz is perhaps one of the better known facilitation trainers, and this new and revised book is an excellent guidebook not only for facilitators, but also trainers and consultants. What I particularly appreciate about this book is that it takes a systems perspective for the work of facilitation, acknowledging that any action a facilitator takes can affect a group in multiple ways that have multiple consequences.

His method, the Skilled Facilitator Approach, is anchored in four core values: valid information, free and informed choice, internal commitment, and compassion. The behaviors, techniques, and tools offered in the book reflect these values. Schwarz is particularly effective in dissecting the considerations involved in diagnosing a group's needs and determining if, when, and how to intervene as a result.

Additional Resources

Appreciative Inquiry by Jane Magruder Watkins and Bernard J. Mohr

The Art of Convening by Craig and Patricia Neal

Best Practices for Facilitation by David Sibbet

Building Consensus: Conflict and Unity by Monteze M. Snyder

Collaboration Handbook by Michael Winer and Karen Ray

Facilitating with Ease by Ingrid Bens

Helping by Edgar Schein

Large Group Interventions by Barbara Benedict Bunker and Billie T. Alban

Mapping Inner Space by Nancy Margulies with Nusa Maal

Open Space Technology: A User's Guide by Harrison Owen

Resolving Conflict in Nonprofit Organizations by Mario Peters Angelica

Principles of Facilitation by David Sibbet

Seven Languages for Transformation by Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey

Systems Thinking Basics by Virginia Anderson and Lauren Johnson

Visual Meetings by David Sibbet

The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations that Matter
by Juanita Brown with David Isaacs

[Grove—The Visual Meetings Company](#) is a great source of graphic facilitation templates; facilitation supplies (markers, tape, etc.), and books and workshops on effective facilitation and graphic facilitation.

[International Association of Facilitators](#) is the primary professional organization for facilitators, offering a annual meeting, journal, short courses, and certification.

[VizThink](#) is one of the major resources/communities devoted to visual thinking.