

**Center for Technology in Government
MIII Justice Modeling Project**

Focus Group Meeting Minutes

Date: December 10, 2003
Place: CTG Meeting Room
Time: 9:00
By: Luis Luna

List of Attendees:

David Andersen	(DA)
Donna Canestraro	(DC)
Brian Burke	(BB)
Fikret Demircivi	(FD)
Tamas Bodor	(TB)
Yi-Jung Wu	(YW)
Anthony Cresswell	(AC)
Mohammad Mojtahedzadeh	(MM)
Theresa Pardo	(TP)
George Richardson	(GR)
Luis Luna	(LL)

LL Made a brief summary of the previous meeting showing some of the pictures of different parts of the process.

DA Asked to the team to make any comments about the meeting minutes, and commented that the objective of the meeting was to establish a dynamic hypothesis.

AC Asked about the importance of the policy question. He asked if they will come out in the exercise, or if they will be addressed separately.

GP Commented that the policy questions were related to the way in which the model will be used. He asked to the team to give these policies to the modeling support team at any time to be included into the model.

DA Explained that the session would start with work in groups to promote some divergent thinking, and then it would be a second round of group thinking to come with an initial dynamic hypothesis for the model. For the group exercise, the team would start with the behaviors over time sketched in the previous meeting to cluster them by similar behavior or by similar story line. As a part of the clustering exercise, he asked the groups to draw relationships among those concepts. Three groups were formed, and each group

was provided with a set of pieces of paper containing the graph over time, and notes from the conversation that took place in the previous meeting around each graph. Additionally, each group was provided with nonpermanent glue stick and two flip charts.

TP asked if a concept could be part of 2 different stories. DA answered yes, commenting that it would be a nice kind of relation.

The team worked in groups for about an hour. The groups were conformed in the following way:

<i>Pink group</i>	<i>Blue group</i>	<i>Green group</i>
Donna Canestraro	Tamas Bodor	Fikret Demircivi
Theresa Pardo	Brian Burke	Mohammad Mojtahedzadeh
Yi-Jung Wu	Anthony Cresswell	



Figure 1. An image from the group work.

After the group work, each group posted its work in the wall, and shared their thoughts with the rest of the team. Other team members asked questions and clarifications about the clusters and relationships created by each group.

Green Group

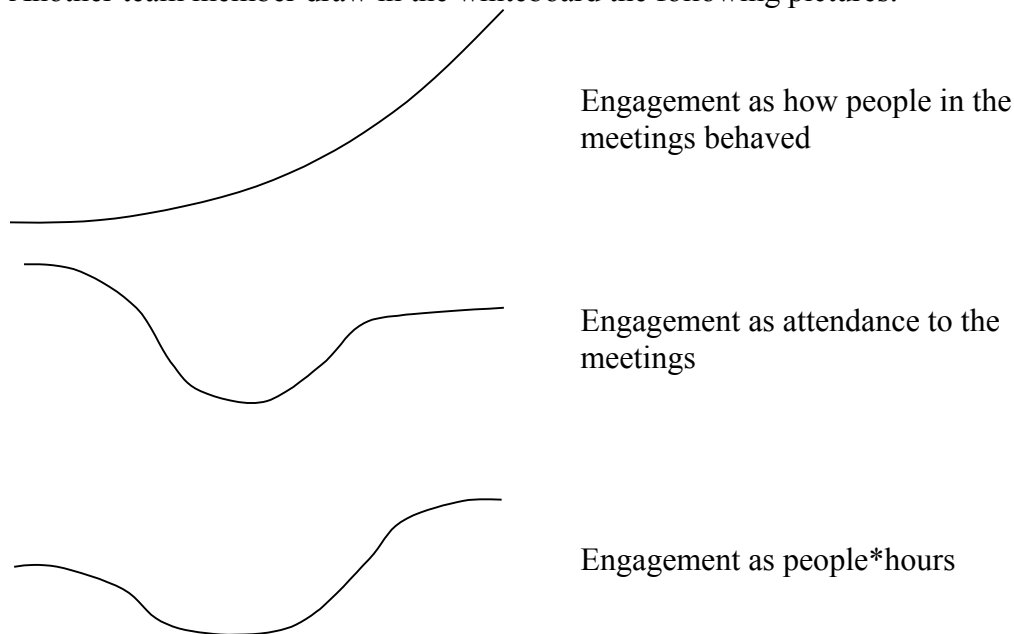
The green group started the exercise by making some comments about their image (figure 2). The following paragraphs summarize the conversation about the green group work.



Figure 2. Image created by the green group.

- Engagement drives understanding and trust.
- External pressure pushes the pace of work, but also pushed turf protecting up. The external pressure increased with the dead line approaching.
- As the group started to understand the work in which they were involved, they figured out that the process has to be finished before they could move to the next stage.
- There was pressure from the DCJS director to have some results by December 1st, given that there was a public date to launch Justice NY in December 31st.
- There was additional external pressure from the police department (perceived in the November 20th meeting), given that they wanted to get a new mainframe, and they realize that this project will help them to push forward their agenda. In some cases the same people participating in the group, wearing a different hat inside the police department, were the ones promoting this external pressure.
- The concrete product of the work was an operating procedure in black and white --not just talking. At some point in the process, the CTG team realized that people were losing interest, and they decided to put everything in black and white. After that, the project took up. The perception is that the Justice group did not feel ownership of the project before.
- The perception of the team is that when the Justice group saw their names in the paper, they thought that they should pay attention in the work being done, and in the document. Another important factor besides the pieces of paper building up, was the perception of the Justice team about the probability of the words in the pieces of paper of being implemented.

- The document also got the attention of Parker (director of DCJS) because of the process of creating consensus in the document going back and forth with the agencies. This process also created ownership in the proposal from the different agencies point of view.
- A team member asked about the differences between ownership and engagement. Another team member draw in the whiteboard the following pictures:



- A group member clarified that there was not an accumulation of pages when talking about the document being created. There was no document, and then suddenly there were a lot of ideas.
- Another team member pointed out that the Justice group was concerned about the use of meeting minutes used against them. They were also concerned about the use of the tape recorder. The perception is that the anonymity in the minutes, and the use of a public form of collaboration built trust, and also made the participants feel free to talk and feel ownership.

Pink Group

The pink group continued the exercise by making some comments about their image (figure 3). The following paragraphs summarize the conversation about the pink group work.

- The Justice team has no experience as a decision making group.
- It took some time for the CTG team to perceive the frustration in the Justice group, and then change the strategy.
- During the process, there were two different competing ideas about the purpose of the work. The Justice team started the conversations thinking that the main product will be a web portal, but the purpose was to propose an integration philosophy. A qualitative change in the perceived objective happened during the

process. Initially, the group was stuck in the thing (portal), without thinking in the philosophy.

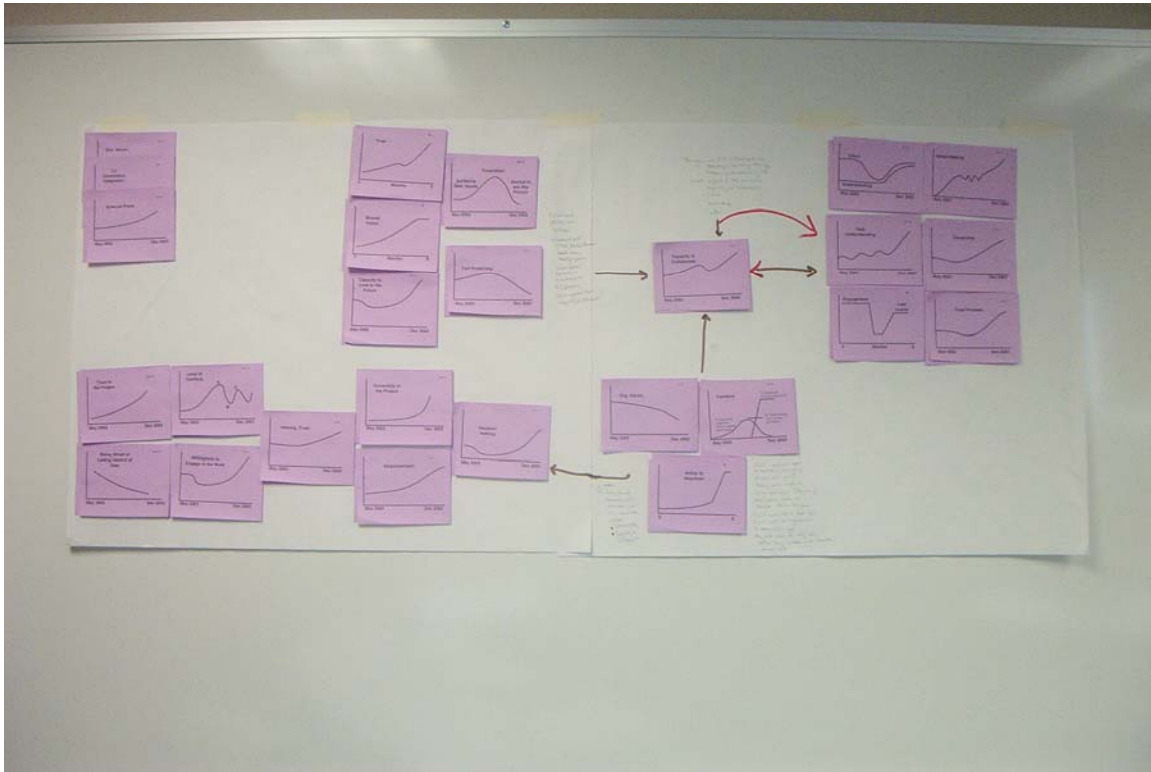


Figure 3 Image created by the purple group


- Another factor brought into the conversation was the impact of the director leadership style who followed a top-down approach. It took a long time for the Justice group to believe that they were empowered about doing something.
- In the late stages of the process, they perceived that they were completing something that would help to further develop the technical system.
- Another element that helped the process was the formalization of organizational structures and relations. There was no institutionalized decision-making process. There was time needed to develop trust, and time needed create ownership.
- When the Justice group saw the legitimate laundry list (things to be included in the document), they started making coalitions (or going back to the groups with which they make decisions). In other words, at some point the team perceived that the group will have to make decisions, and some organizations felt that they were not powerful enough to have influence in those decisions, and thus the need of create coalitions.

Blue Group

The blue group finished the exercise by making some comments about their image (figure 4). The following bullets summarize the conversation about the blue group work.



Figure 4. Image created by the blue group

- The blue team clustered the images of behaviors over time in 5 clusters: mental states, social processes, cumulative costs and benefits, external pressure, and rate of progress.
- The Justice team perception of Parker trying to run the process is part of a pressure, which was driving in part the U-shape in some graphs ().
- The project was producing progress, and that progress was also creating pressures to finish the project.
- The CTG team realized that telling the Justice team the same thing (this is not about a portal, but about a philosophy) will not work. They needed somebody else to say the same thing. The CTG team perceived that more clarity was needed. In this way, they went to Parker and brought back to the group Parker's ideas.
- The CTG role was both to bring new ideas into the process, and to provide a social process to talk about those ideas. At this particular point in time, they brought the external influence of Parker to convince the group about the purpose of the project.

DA Closed the exercise commenting that the meeting had been very productive, and that the next step was to do the whole group part of the exercise. He asked GR to make some comments.

GR commented that the group talked about some of the physics of the system, such as people doing things or paper accumulating, but that they talked also about perceptions and pressures. Certainly, there were many stories involving loops.

The group agreed to have a longer meeting next time, setting as a tentative date January 23rd.