IV15 – Visual Thinking Workshop

A full-day event: Tuesday 21st July 2015, Time: 10:00 – 18:00

Visual Thinking for (PhD) researcher
How to think more clearly, have more engaging conversations, and create richer research

Organised by
Symposium for Knowledge Visualization and Visual Thinking

This is a hands-on workshop for researchers (PhD students, Post-Docs, etc.) from all disciplines who want to benefit from using visual thinking in their research process and for their research presentation with the aim to be more rigorous and relevant as well as enjoy the research process.

No particular prerequisites are required. An open mind and curiosity are very welcome. Please note that visual thinking does *not* require any specific drawing skills. In fact drawing too beautifully can be a preventer from the value of visual thinking. So please don't be shy and join even if you think of yourself as not being good at drawing.

The workshop is limited to 8 participants; places are given on a first come first serve basis.

Workshop contents and objectives
The overall aim of this workshop is to help participants enhance their thinking and communication skills through the use of visual thinking such as diagrams, knowledge maps or visual metaphors. Working on the dissertation, research projects, or research papers can be frustrating at times. Sometimes it may be because we feel overloaded with ideas and thoughts (cognitively), or we may feel overwhelmed and not motivated (emotionally), or we feel disconnected with our colleagues, supervisors or peers (socially). Visual thinking is promising to overcome those challenges and allows you to work more productively and enjoyable.

This workshop will provide participants with the foundation of what visual thinking is and why it is beneficial for our thinking and communication. Based on these foundations participants will learn more about the benefits and risks of visual thinking. Participants will see different visual forms through examples (tree diagrams, empathy maps and many more) and acquire sketching skills to express themselves visually. *(You don't have to be good at drawing or creative to be able to sketch!)* Participants will apply what they have learned to visualizing their own research project or paper; for example, visualizing the story of the PhD or research project or visualizing the process of conducting a literature review. Participants are strongly encouraged to bring their own material regarding their current research projects or papers so that they and we can tackle it visually.
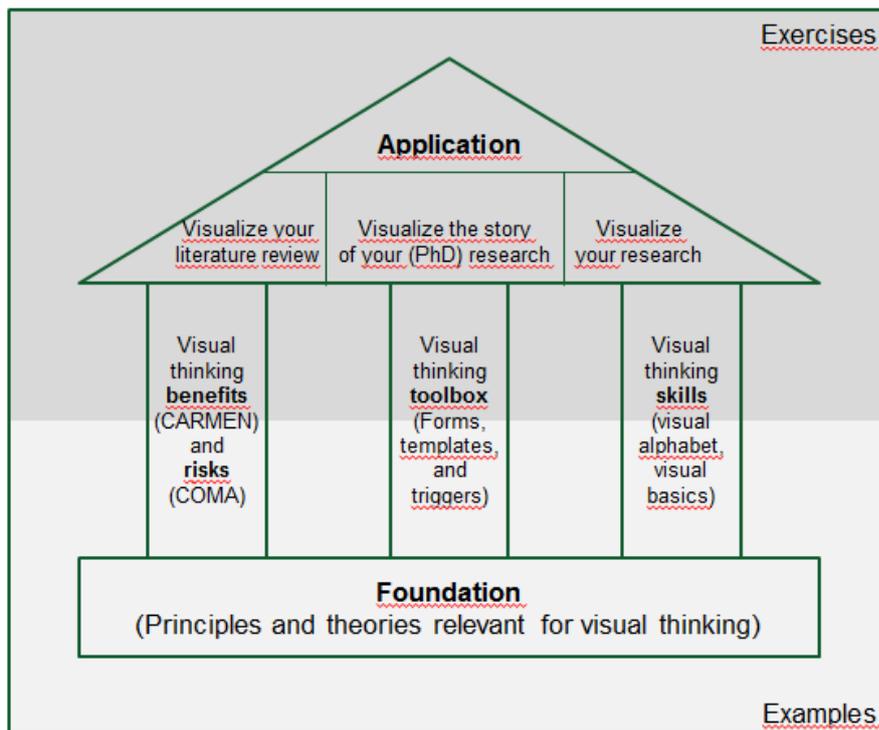
Image: Overview of the knowledge structure of the course

Workshop objectives
The objectives of the workshop are that participants
know
…what visual thinking is and why it is relevant for researchers
…the benefits and risks of visual thinking
…what to visualize (visual templates, basic shapes, symbols)
…how to visualize (abstract vs. pictorial/metaphorical)

be able
…to sketch visual templates (diagrams, metaphors, knowledge maps), basic shapes,
symbols
…to apply visual thinking for their own research projects (e.g. the story of your PhD)

approach
…value the (visual) process (concept of rapid prototyping from Design Thinking)
…value failure/mistakes as healthy part of that process
…think visually (automatically) when approaching future problems and challenges

The workshop will be hands-on with short inputs from the instructor and time to work on the exercises and own projects visually where the instructor and peers will operate as sparring partner in a friendly environment.

When is it and how much will it cost?
-   The workshop will take place on 21st July 2015 at University of Barcelona, Spain (the day before the main iV2015 conference)
-   The cost for attendees is €50; this cost includes a printed copy of the course material as well as lunch and refreshments throughout the day

About the lecturer

Sebastian Kernbach is a researcher, consultant, and lecturer in the field of knowledge visualization and visual thinking. He works as project manager and research associate at the Institute of Media and Communications Management at the University of St. Gallen.

His doctoral research focuses on the role of sketching and PowerPoint in the interaction between clients and consultants in Professional Services Firms with the example of a brand consultancy.

Prior to his research he worked as Manager for Marketing and Communication for XEROX, as Head of Branding and Communication of a Swiss startup and as consultant for Interbrand. He studied Business Administration and Communication in Düsseldorf, Breda, Lugano, and Copenhagen.

References (in case of further interest but not required readings)

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For further information about this workshop, please contact Sebastian Kernbach (sebastian.kernbach@unisg.ch).