

Visual Thinking Strategies

Creative thinking through art

*Facilitated by Lisa Crispin, with material from Alexandra West
of NerdNoir*



What are Visual Thinking Strategies?

- A research-based technique that improves creative thinking skills through a facilitated discussion of artworks
- Origins: cognitive psychology (how we think) and museum pedagogy (how we look at art)



Why practice VTS?

- Helps us practice skills such as observing, brainstorming, reasoning with evidence, critical thinking, storytelling, empathy
- Back up observations with evidence, build comfort with ambiguity & the unfamiliar



Why does VTS work?

- No background in art is needed
- No right or wrong - everyone can participate equally
- The discussion is a discovery process - using observational skills and reasoning



More reasons:

- Practice complex problem-solving
- Art is intentionally ambiguous, open to interpretation
- Contains feelings along with information, layers of meaning









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What just happened?

Why art?

Accessibility & diversity

Comfort with ambiguity

Openness to the unfamiliar

Facilitating VTS sessions

- Have a trained facilitator (like Alex@NerdNoir.com) for first session
- Ask the right questions
- Select appropriate images



Image selection

Accessibility & captivation

Diversity

Existence of a narrative

Ambiguity

Sequencing & themes

The questions

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

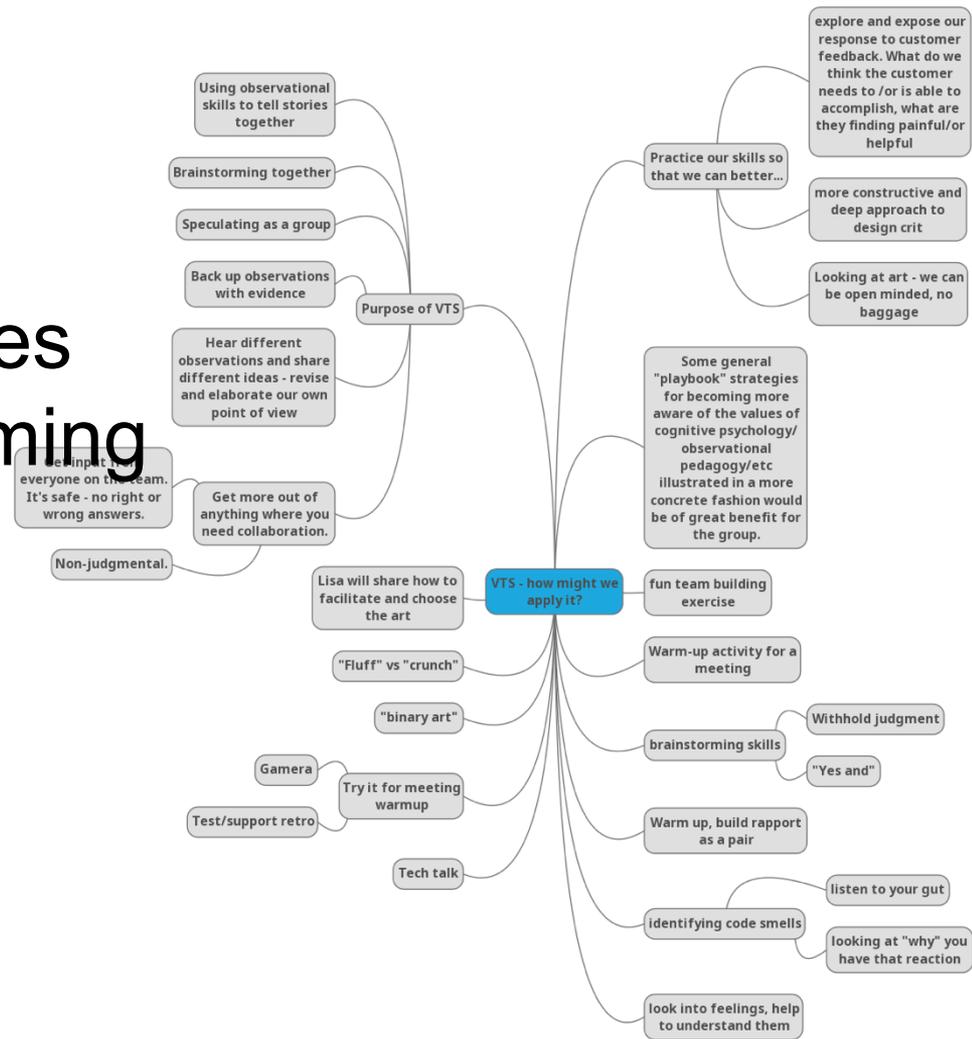


The process

- Acknowledge all responses
- Point and be physically expressive
- Paraphrase each person's responses
- Remain open and accepting
- Link thoughts
- Minimum 3 images, ~10 minutes on each
 - Shorter sessions don't work

How can you use it?

- Retrospectives
- Design studios, critiques
- Pairing, mob programming
- Exploratory testing
- Code reviews
- What else?



What ideas do you have for using VTS?



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