

GROUP FACILITATION:

Introduction

ARTICLES

Talk-in-interaction in Facilitated and Training Workshops in Organizations: A Summary of Findings

Group Facilitation as Hermeneutic Practice

It's a Jungle Out There - The Biology of Facilitation

Forumspil: Transforming Minds and Hearts within Group Processes

The Ways of One and Many: Exploring the Integration of Conflict Coaching and Dialogue-Facilitation

Validation of the Team Diagnostic Survey and a Field Experiment to Examine the Effects of an Intervention to Increase Team Effectiveness

BOOK REVIEWS

Essentials of Intentional Interviewing
by Allen Ivey, Mary Ivey and Carlos Zalaquett

Leading Effective Virtual Teams
by Nancy Settle-Murphy



A RESEARCH & APPLICATIONS JOURNAL

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Introduction

Stephen Thorpe

Welcome to the twelfth issue of *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal*. This issue contains a broad and fascinating selection of articles. We are honored to include *Talk-in-Interaction in Facilitated and Training Workshops in Organizations* by our very own Dr. Sascha Rixon. This work presents a summary of findings from the conversation analysis conducted for her doctoral studies. We also have *Group Facilitation as Hermeneutic Practice* by Dr. Kenneth D. Walsh and Dr. Patrea Andersen, which will be of interest to experienced and novice facilitators alike through its presentation of a framework for the interpretation of behavior in groups from a hermeneutic lens. Julie B. Marcy brings us her ground-breaking work in *It's a Jungle Out There: The Biology of Facilitation*, which brings into the picture of group facilitation practice a number of implications from the fields of biological sciences and adaptive behaviors. *Forumspil: Transforming Minds and Hearts within Group Processes* by Dr. Warren Linds and Marie Delgado Ebbesen presents the use of a Swedish variation of Augusto Boal's (1979) techniques of *Forum* and *Image Theatre* in a popular Scandinavian method called *Forumspil*. The *Forumspil* approach is demonstrated through an enlightening comparison study of student group work in both Denmark and in Canada. Dr. Ross Brinkert brings together conflict-coaching, facilitative-coaching, and dialogue-facilitation in *The Ways of One and Many: Exploring the Integration of Conflict Coaching and Dialogue-Facilitation*. He also continues the call for the recognition of the delineation of group facilitation from other 'facilitative' practices, as established by facilitators such as Schwarz (2002) and Hunter (2007). Dr. Per Eisele presents a useful validation of a Swedish version of J. Richard Hackman's (2002) popular Team Diagnostic Survey in *Validation of the Team Diagnostic Survey and a Field Experiment to Examine the Effects of an Intervention to Increase Team Effectiveness*.

There are two books reviewed in this issue. Angela Lewis reviewed *Essentials of Intentional Interviewing: Counseling in a Multicultural World* (2nd edition, 2012) by Allen E. Ivey, Mary B. Ivey and Carlos, P. Zalaquett. Also, I reviewed *Leading Effective Virtual Teams: Overcoming Time and Distance to Achieve Exceptional Results* by Nancy M. Settle-Murphy. Both are helpful reviews and give readers a facilitator's perspective on the deeper value within these two books.

My thanks again go to the Journal's tireless Editorial Board, authors, and article reviewers—all volunteers—who have contributed to making this issue possible. Each issue of *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal* represents two major activities. The first is developing the content: working with authors and reviewers, providing feedback on manuscripts, and accepting completed papers. The second is changing that content into a presentable form and distributing it online to our members. The first is the responsibility of the Journal's Editorial Board, while the second is that of the Publishing Editor. With this issue, again we extend our heart-felt thanks to Bill Staples, who has been the Journal's Publisher since 2002. In addition, we thank Associate Editors Steven N. Pyser J.D. and Dr. Sascha Rixon, as well as Dr. Andrew Rixon, our Book Review Editor. Thanks also to Dr. Bill Reid for his continuing support of the Journal, and the many reviewers who have all helped make this edition possible.

While there are many publications, both popular and scientific, that discuss group facilitation, organizational development, and group leadership, *Group Facilitation* is targeted primarily at providing information to the professional group facilitator. It focuses on examining the 'science' side of the 'art and science of facilitation' in a format that is useful to both practicing facilitators and to academics. As facilitators continue to investigate and explore the emerging and contemporary questions facing them, the *Group Facilitation* will continue to fulfill its role in the sharing and development of facilitation knowledge.

—Stephen Thorpe, Editor-in-Chief

Talk-in-interaction in Facilitated and Training Workshops in Organizations: A Summary of Findings from Conversation Analysis

Sascha Rixon

ABSTRACT

This article presents a summary of the findings of a doctoral study (Rixon, 2011) that used the methodology of Conversation Analysis (CA) to explore talk and physical conduct in two different types of workshops in organizations, specifically a facilitated workshop and a training workshop. Very little empirical research on facilitator talk-in-interaction has been conducted, and it is this deficit which the doctoral thesis aimed to start addressing. A one and a half-day facilitated workshop and a one-day training workshop led by independent consultants and involving medium-sized groups were video recorded and audio recorded. The study was an institutional CA study that pursued two main avenues of research enquiry. First, the institutionality of the workshops was investigated by demonstrating an aspect of the workshop conduct that is distinct from ordinary conversation, namely asymmetry in the participation roles between the parties to the interaction. The workshop leader(s) typically performed initiating actions and the workshop participants typically performed responding actions. Second, two particular institutional tasks in the workshops were analyzed, specifically how the workshop leader managed the transitions into and out of activities performed by the participants in sub group participant configurations (i.e., individually, in pairs, in small groups). It is hoped that by drawing attention to the interactional practices that workshop leaders engage in when leading workshops will help practitioners to reflect upon their practice and be more intentional. As the dataset was comprised of only two workshops, future research could seek to investigate additional instances of either or both types of workshops.

KEYWORDS

group facilitation, conversation analysis, institutional talk, talk-in-interaction, facilitated workshop, training workshop

Introduction

Several years ago, after participating in many chaired meetings in my job at a university, I discovered through attending a meeting of the Victorian Facilitators' Network (VFN) that there was another way of leading meetings - that of group facilitation. After observing the seemingly open and inviting language of the facilitator of this meeting, the linguist in me wondered, "How is facilitation realized through language?"

In pursuit of answering this question, together with my husband Dr. Andrew Rixon and friend Viv McWaters, both facilitators, we invited facilitators to reflect on their language use in facilitation by means of an online reflective practice survey.

Facilitators were asked if and what they understood by the term "speaking facilitatively", and to list words and phrases that they used in their facilitation practice. Over one hundred facilitators from across the globe responded to the survey (Rixon, McWaters, & Rixon, 2006).

Many respondents, in their descriptions of what it meant to speak facilitatively, mentioned asking questions. The majority of facilitators also viewed body language to be equally as important, if not more important, than spoken language in facilitation, and most respondents believed that the two should be congruent.

After eliciting facilitators' *perceptions* of their language use in facilitation, I wondered, "How is facilitation *actually* realized through talk and body language?" Searching the literature, I was unable initially to find any empirical research specifically on language use in real-life facilitated sessions. In a publication of our research findings (Rixon, McWaters, & Rixon, 2006), we suggested that future research could analyse facilitators' language-in-use by performing audio and video recordings of live facilitated sessions. The doctoral thesis (Rixon, 2011) on which this article is based is one of the products of this future research.

Literature review

A. Institutional talk

There is a comparative lack of research on "institutional" interaction in generic office environments as compared to that in specialised workplace settings—such as a medical centre or a classroom—as in doctor-patient or teacher-student interactions. Drew and Heritage (1992) coined the term "institutional talk" to denote the inherently task-related form of talk that takes place in the workplace and other institutional settings, and to distinguish it from mundane everyday conversation. Institutional talk is institutional not because of the institutional setting in which it takes place, but rather because "...participants' institutional or professional identities are somehow made relevant to the work activities in which they are engaged" (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 4). For talk to be institutional, at least one of the participants in the interaction needs to represent a formal organization.

B. Meetings

The meeting has been a favoured formal context in which to examine spoken discourse (Holmes and Stubbe, 2003), and a particularly important one as many employees (e.g., managers) spend a significant amount of their time in meetings, and this is the context in which much work is performed (Kikoski & Kikoski, 2004). The types of meetings studied by discourse analysts (i.e., researchers that study language-in-use) have been fairly homogeneous in that they typically share the following characteristics: 1) a meeting chair leads the meeting; 2) the meeting leader is an organizational employee; 3) they involve small groups, i.e., up to 15 participants (Hunter, 2007); 4) the business of the meeting is accomplished in the whole group; and 5) the business is accomplished through the participation formats of presentations, reports, and discussion.

C. Facilitated meetings

As is the case for other professions (e.g., law and teaching), there are many training manuals and other practical "how-to" books on facilitation for practicing or aspiring facilitators written by facilitation practitioners. Given that the "business" of facilitation is *talk*, it is not surprising that the importance of facilitator language to the facilitation process is often alluded to in these resources. For example:

Facilitation may involve some of the highest levels of human interaction and communication skills. (Hogan, 2002, p. 10);

...task and relational communication [are] the main ingredients of effective group facilitation. (Chilberg, 2005, p. 151); and,

Whether for twenty, two hundred, or two thousand participants, the words we use [in facilitation] matter. (James, Eggers, & Hughes-Rease, 2005, p. 348).

Facilitator spoken language in the practitioner-written literature is usually described in terms of behavioural categories, or 'facilitative behaviours' (Hogan, 2003). A facilitator may speak or 'intervene' for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways, with the type of intervention dependant on its purpose (Hunter, 2007). Questioning is unanimously acknowledged as an essential facilitation skill and the key communicative behaviour in facilitation (Bens, 2005; Fails, 2003; Garmston, 2003; Heron, 1999; Hogan, 2003; IAF, 2003).

Active listening is probably the second most widely mentioned communicative behaviour after questioning (Bentley, 1994; Fails, 2003; Hogan, 2003; IAF, 2003). It is an umbrella term that is commonly used to refer to the behaviours of paraphrasing, mirroring or echoing, i.e., using a participant's exact words, either the last few words from the end of a participant's turn or contextually significant words from the middle of their turn (Heron, 1999), and reflecting feelings or meaning (Hogan, 2003). Active listening involves the facilitator giving their full attention to the participant who is talking. It is mentioned as a skill under both "Creating and sustaining a participatory environment" and "Guiding groups to appropriate and useful outcomes", two of the six facilitator competencies required for certification by the International Association of Facilitators (IAF, 2003). Therefore, active listening is thought to perform both a process and task function in facilitation.

However, despite the recognised importance of a facilitator's communication skills to 'doing facilitation', very little empirical research on facilitator talk-in-interaction has been conducted. To the best of the author's knowledge, there have been only two published studies to date that analyze language and social interaction in workplace business meetings facilitated by an allocated third-party group facilitator (as opposed to an allocated chairperson): Cooren, Thompson, Canestraro, and Bodor (2006); and, Savage and Hilton (2001). In these studies, in accordance with espoused group facilitator conduct, the facilitator used one or more participatory group processes to help the group accomplish its work. For example, Savage and Hilton (2001) refer to "a number of brainstorming sessions" (p. 53) being conducted by one of the two Quality of Working Life work-site committees whose unspecified number of labour management

decision-making meetings comprised their data corpus. Cooren et al. (2006) describe an “exercise” in a facilitation process which includes an activity performed individually by the group members and a following activity which involves the participation of the group members and the two co-facilitators.

While both of these studies describe examples of interaction amongst the facilitator(s) and the group members in one or more meetings, only the study by Cooren et al. (2006) represented and analysed the meeting participants’ language-in-use, and this was limited in scope as only a single exercise from one meeting in the facilitation process was examined. Cooren et al.’s (2006) data corpus was comprised of a series of audio-recorded bi-weekly or monthly meetings of a group of managers from various branches of a US state’s criminal justice system, facilitated by external facilitators who were contracted from a university-affiliated Centre. The objective of the meetings was to develop a web portal strategy.

D. Workshops

While there is a growing number of studies of talk-in-interaction in chaired workplace meetings, and a couple of interaction-based studies of facilitated workplace meetings, there is a lack of interaction-based research on workshops of any type, in any setting. To date, there have been no conversation analytic studies of workshops published.

Only one interaction-based study of facilitated workshops in organizations has been conducted by Papamichail, Alves, French, Yang, and Snowdon (2007). This study, however, analyzed simulated facilitated workshops that were set up by the researchers for the purposes of the research, rather than naturally occurring workshops. Additionally, it was not a discourse analytic study focused on the workshop participants’ language-in-use. Rather, using the grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which uses a researcher’s observations of activities in an interactional episode (which in this case were based on the video-recordings of the workshops) as the data for analysis, was employed. The objective was to compare and contrast how process tools and methods, specifically Problem Structuring Methods (PSMs), were implemented by the different facilitators to achieve the workshop objective as a means of identifying ‘best practice’ in the use of such methods.

As the data analysed in this study were observations of interaction in the workshops (both researcher and workshop participant observations), rather than recordings of facilitator-group talk-in-interaction, it was not possible to gain much insight from this study into how workshops are conducted in, and through, facilitator-group talk-in-interaction.

Method

A. Aims

My doctoral study aimed to commence filling a gap in the literature on talk-in-interaction in business settings other than the traditional chaired business meeting. It sought to contribute to the growing body of workplace interaction research by using a conversation analytic approach, i.e., examining the sequential organization of talk and other conduct in interaction, to analyse interaction in two different types of workshops in organizations (i.e., facilitated workshops, where a facilitator guides a group’s process, and training workshops, where a trainer delivers content to a group of learners in addition to guiding the group’s process) which were led by independent consultants and involved medium-sized groups, i.e., between 15 and 30 participants (Hunter, 2007).

It was the first study to analyse talk-in-interaction in the institutional settings of a naturally occurring facilitated workshop and training workshop. The thesis pursued two main avenues of research enquiry. The first was highlighting the institutionality of the workshops by comparing an aspect of the interactional conduct in the workshops that is distinct from ordinary conversation; namely asymmetry in the participation roles between the parties to the interaction. The second main avenue of research enquiry was that it explored how two particular institutional tasks in the workshops were accomplished interactionally; namely how the facilitator or trainer managed the transitions into and out of activities performed by the participants in sub-group participant configurations.

B. Methodology: Conversation Analysis (CA)

The methodological approach used in the doctoral study was Conversation Analysis (CA). Unlike many social-scientific studies of social interaction that use research methodologies that elucidate what people *say* they do (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys), CA is a methodology that investigates what people *actually* do, with analysts examining the details of recordings of talk and other conduct of participants in naturally occurring interaction. Conversation analytic studies use naturalistic data, i.e., non-experimental data that wasn’t set up for the purposes of the research and would have occurred without the researchers’ instigation (Have, 1999).

Schegloff and Sacks (1973) argued that the most important orientation of recipients of talk-in-interaction at any one point in time for its understanding is “Why that now?” (p. 299), which may be broken down further to “What is the speaker *doing* by that?” (Schegloff, 1997, p. 506). In other words, what is the action embodied by the conduct, performed in that manner, in that particular sequential environment? (Schegloff, 1997). Thus, because this is the foremost orientation of participants to the talk, elucidating an answer to this question is also the key undertaking of analysts of the talk (Schegloff et al., 2002).

CA is based on the premise that interaction is organized and orderly at all levels; no detail in the talk or conduct, no matter how small, can be excluded as unimportant and meaningless prior to analysis (Schegloff, 1987). CA studies have shown that social actions (e.g., questions, requests, offers, invitations) done through talk and other conduct in interaction are organized and orderly for the participants; if this was not the case then mutual intelligibility would be the exception rather than the rule that it is in normative interaction (Schegloff, 1987).

C. Data collection methods

The methodology of conversation analysis governs the choice and use of specific research methods to collect and analyse data. The data collection techniques of video and audio recordings of co-present conversation data (Have, 1999) were used in the doctoral study. The workshops were video recorded using a single video camera. The video camera was positioned at the back of the room, trained on the session leader, and operated by me. The workshops were also audio recorded using a digital audio recorder.

D. Description of the workshop leaders and the workshops

Participants in the study were three workshop leaders (i.e., two facilitators and one trainer) and the participants (i.e., group members and learners). The workshop leaders were all independent professional consultants who did facilitation, training, and other consulting work in organizations and beyond. They were diverse in regard to their ages, professional and educational backgrounds, and professional facilitation and consulting experience.

The first workshop leader, Bev (who co-facilitated Workshop 1), was in her early fifties and had been working as a professional group facilitator for over fifteen years. The second workshop leader, Ann (who co-facilitated Workshop 1), was in her mid-forties and had been working as a professional facilitator with her own consultancy for nearly two years. The third workshop leader, Tim (who led Workshop 2), was in his early thirties and worked as a consultant for a consulting firm, a company he had worked at for over five years.

Workshop 1 was a one-and-a-half-day facilitated workshop (i.e., an afternoon and a full work day, totalling approximately 7.5 hours of in-session recorded data) involving 32 employees from one of the three main groups of a Victorian state government organization in Australia. Bev had worked with the group on three previous occasions, and therefore was familiar with most of the members of the group. Ann, on the other hand, had never worked with the group before, and had been engaged by Bev after the client requested a co-facilitator to provide a fresh perspective. The aims of the workshop were two-fold: first, for the group members to reflect on “where they are at” individually, as a team, and as an organization; and second, for the team to commence planning for projects in the following year.

Workshop 2 was a one-day training workshop (totalling approximately 5 hours of in-session recorded data) led solely by Tim. The learners were 19 middle managers from various offices (both regional and metropolitan, intra- and inter-state) of an Australian non-profit organization. The client organization had been an ongoing client of Tim’s organization for the past several years. The purpose of the workshop was to help prepare the participants to facilitate staff feedback and action planning derived from an organizational culture survey that Tim was just finishing conducting with the organization.

E. Data analysis

Basic transcriptions were done of both workshops (i.e., of the talk produced in the whole group; sub group activities were not transcribed). Subsequent transcriptions of target activities identified for analysis were done in detail using a restricted set of the notational conventions developed by Jefferson (2004) and additional conventions as required (see Appendix A: Transcription Conventions for a list of the transcription conventions used in the examples in the sections below).

Heritage and Clayman (2010) describe three broad research aims that have been pursued within institutional CA: 1) probing the institutionality of a form of interaction by demonstrating its distinctiveness from everyday conversation (and other forms of institutional interaction), 2) analysing how a particular institutional task in a form of institutional interaction is accomplished interactionally, and 3) analysing the extra-interactional causes or consequences of particular interactional practices. The doctoral study focussed on the first and third aims. In regard to the first aim, the transcribed data was examined with respect to asymmetry; specifically the asymmetry in the participation roles between the workshop leader (i.e., facilitator or trainer) and the workshop participants (i.e., group members or learners). In regard to the second aim, the study investigated how the institutional tasks of the leader giving instructions for an activity and the debriefing of an activity, and the transitions between activities, were accomplished interactionally.

Results and Discussion

A. Asymmetry in participation

Workshops are distinct from everyday conversation in that there is asymmetry in the participation roles between the workshop leader and the workshop participants. The leader, in their capacity of guiding the workshop process, typically performed initiating actions, such as directives, i.e., “...speech acts that try to get another to do something” (Goodwin, 1980, p. 157), summonses (i.e., attention-getting devices), and questions, and the participants typically performed responding actions, such as responses and answers.

Asymmetrical participation of this type has been noted in other forms of institutional interaction, such as courtroom

interaction and news interview discourse. In times of trouble, when the participants did not collaborate with the leader's guiding of the group's process, participants sometimes performed initiating actions that were normatively done by the leader (e.g., a summons) as a means of 'helping out', as in Example 1 below.

Example 1

1 [*((group members talking))*]
 2 F2: ((00:45:11)) [*↑HOW MANY TI:MES HAVE YOU:-*]
 3 (2.4)
 4 I need *↑ding ding ding↑*. (*((imitating ringing bells))*)
 5 (0.9)
 6 G?: (*((claps hands twice))*)
 7 [*((claps hands third time))*]
 8 F2: [*clap*]
 9 G?: (*((claps hands twice))*)
 10 F2: (*((claps hands once))*)
 11 *thank you*; (*((claps hands softly three times))*)

In Example 1, drawn from the facilitated workshop, the group members appear to have finished doing the instructed discussion task in pairs and are now chatting in their pairs about the postcards that they have just received from Ann (which serve as an input into the next part of the task activity). Ann ("F2" in the transcript) starts speaking nearly straight away after sitting back in her chair, having just handed the group members postcards. While she begins speaking with what sounds to be a raised volume on the video audio, her voice is barely audible on the digital recorder audio above the group member talk in the room. None of the group members who are visible in the camera frame and who are sitting close to Ann attend to her when she begins speaking, not even the group member who is sitting next to her.

Orienting to her failure to solicit the group members' attention, Ann cuts off her utterance (line 2), and then verbalises her need to have the bells (to get the group members' attention), which she accompanies with a bell ringing gesture (line 4). A group member (who is not visible in the camera frame, and is identified as "G?" in the transcript) must be gazing at Ann as she is doing this as they start to clap (line 6), thereby trying to help the facilitator by taking on attention-getting duties. Ann follows the group member's lead and softly claps her hands several times (lines 10-11), simultaneously thanking the group member (line 11).

B. Instruction-giving

In the activity of instruction-giving, in the main part of an instruction-giving turn(s)-at-talk, the leader gave one or more instructions for one or more tasks, as in Example 2 below.

Example 2

1 T: (.) .hhhhh *↑u:m*;
 2 (0.5)/*((looking down at notes/desk))*
 3 F:*!RS'V A:W I JIS(T) LOVE TE::R-*
 4 (0.6) *>wha'dih you guys wannna ged outta< tihda:y's=*
 5 *=se:ssion.*
 6 *>d'you jis wan' on< yih ta:bles,=*
 7 *=jis take a: (.) couple a minutes,=*
 8 *=jus tih have a ch↑a:tɿ*
 9 .*hh ↑wha' wha' woul' be: usefih fih y:ih tihda:y.=*
 10 *=↓wha' dih yih wan' ged oudiv it.*
 11 *gotta facilita' the s:u:rve:yɿ*
 12 .*hhhhh >wha:'th' things yih wanna< kno:w abo:u'.*
 13 (.) *jist onyih ta:bles,*
 14 *>couplea< minites:.*

In Example 2, the trainer asks, "What do you guys want to get out of today's session?" (lines 4-5). He subsequently orients to this as a task instruction by saying, "Do you just want to, on your tables, just take a couple of minutes, just to have a chat?" (lines 6-8).

The participant configurations for the task was also typically explicitly stated (e.g., table groups, as in line 6), and the leader's instruction-giving turn(s)-at-talk often contained other task-related information (e.g., exemplification of the task instructions; a time allowance for the task, such as "a couple of minutes", as in line 7; and so on.).

The leaders typically designed their instruction-giving turns-at-talk either with or without a separate closing part following the main part of the turn(s)-at-talk, with the performance of the instructed tasks to take place at the end of the leader's instruction-giving turn(s)-at-talk. Example 2 above is an instruction-giving turn-at-talk that contains a closing part in which the participant configuration and time allowance for the activity are reiterated (lines 13-14). Example 3 below, on the other hand, is an instruction-giving turn-at-talk that doesn't have a separate closing part; it is comprised of a single directive for an activity, namely the facilitator requesting the group members to "bring all their sheets up" (line 5) (and to post them on a grid on the wall at the front of the room).

Example 3

1 [*((group members talking doing activity))*]
 2 F2: ((00:05:35)) [*((rings bells))*]
 3 ((00:05:36)) [*((rings bells twice))*]
 4 ((00:05:37)) [*((rings bells three times in quick succession))*]

- 5 [c'n you ↑BRING ALL YIH SHEE:TS UP PLEA:S:E.
6 (2.0) >if yih h'ven't already<?

In the majority of cases, the participants collaborated with this aspect of the leader's guiding of the process (and the asymmetry in the participation roles between the leader as the instruction-giver and the participants as the instruction-followers) by moving to commence performing (or discussing) the first of the instructed tasks at the designated end of the leader's turn(s)-at-talk. When task commencement was delayed by a participant directing an initiating action to the leader while the whole group was still convened, it was almost always due to a participant seeking to resolve some trouble in understanding (most frequently), hearing, or complying with the instructed task. There was only one case of a participant actively resisting complying with the instructed task, and thereby challenging the asymmetry in participation, while the whole group was convened.

C. Transitioning out of activities

When managing the transition out of an activity performed by the participants alone, the leader often projected an imminent transition by announcing the amount of time the participants had left to complete the task (e.g., line 3 in Example 4 below, which is a time announcement which is reiterated in line 4).

Example 4

- 1 [((group members talking))
2 F1: [((rings bells)) KEEP TALKING,=
3 =YOU HAVE ANOTHER TWO: MINUTES::
4 (.) 'NOTHER TWO: MINUTES::?

A less frequent alternative or additional means of the leader projecting an imminent transition was checking whether or not the participants had completed the last of the instructed tasks through either a direct check, checking whether the participants had finished the task (as in Example 5 below), or an indirect check, checking whether the participants needed further time (as in Example 6 below).

Example 5

- 1 F1: →.hh ev'ryone got one written do:wn on a sticki:e?

Example 6

- 1 [((learners talking))
2 T: [>'NOTHER COUPLEA MINUTES< BE U:SEFUL?

There was a preference for the transition to a next activity to be a jointly negotiated decision between the leader and the participants, rather than a unilateral decision of the leader. That is, there was a preference for the leader to tie their initiation of a transition to a next activity to the participants' signalling of their readiness to move on, which they either simply observed through their non-verbal monitoring of the participants' task

progression or explicitly checked through a checking task completion sequence. When moving to initiate the transition to the next activity, the leader typically needed to solicit the attention of the (often talking) participants, and did this by deploying one or more discrete attention-getting devices (e.g., bell ringing) or non-discrete attention-getting devices (e.g., increased volume).

While the participants most often collaborated with the leader's guiding of the process in regard to instruction-giving, this was not the case in regard to the leader managing the shift to a next activity (which typically involved reconvening the whole group) after the participants had engaged in task activity. In contrast to the relatively smooth transitions out of instruction-giving, most of the transitions out of participant activities were relatively "bumpy", in that the participants did not readily collaborate with the leader's transition-relevant behaviors, and the leader had to expend considerable effort in effecting the transition. Transitioning became increasingly problematic later in the workshops (particularly in the facilitated workshop), which supports Dalmau and Dick's (1992) observation that groups can only tolerate constraining processes for a limited amount of time before they resist the imposed structure.

D. Workshop structure

A task activity was typically followed by a report-back, in which the participants fed back the outputs of the task activity (which had been performed in a sub group participant configuration) to the whole group, and/or a debrief, in which the participants discussed or debriefed the task activity.

In both types of workshop, a significant amount of time was devoted to the participants performing task activities that were set up by the leaders as a means of the participants accomplishing the workshop objectives. In the facilitated workshop (i.e., Workshop 1), these task activities constituted the bulk of the workshop. In the training workshop (i.e., Workshop 2), instructional talk fed into and out of these task activities. These task activities utilised participatory processes (e.g., brainstorming) and process tools (e.g., postcards), which are purported to be the 'stock-in-trade' of a group facilitator (whose role is to facilitate interaction between the group members), and have similarly been described as being used in other interaction-based studies of group facilitation (e.g., see Papamichail et al., 2007). It is the deployment of experiential activities as a means of accomplishing the business of the interaction that is constitutive of a setting as a workshop as compared to another setting such as a meeting (in the case of Workshop 1) or a seminar (in the case of Workshop 2).

The data align with Hunter's (2007) observation that (in the interest of enabling participation) a medium-sized group will need to work mostly as sub groups. All of the workshop task activities except for the preparatory task activities (which prepared the group for the work ahead, such as getting into sub

groups) involved one or more parts performed by the participants alone in sub group configurations of participants. Many of the task activities (particularly in the facilitated workshop) were structurally complex, in that they were comprised of multiple parts, and/or one or more activities were involved in setting up the task activities (or parts thereof).

Conclusion

Motivated by an interest in learning more about talk and physical conduct in group facilitation, a hitherto relatively unexplored area of research, the author's doctoral thesis on which this article is based was the first study to explore the institutionality of two different types of workshops in organizations, namely a facilitated workshop where an independent facilitator guides a group's process and a training workshop where a trainer delivers content to a group in addition to guiding the group's process. The institutionality of workshops in organizations has been examined using two of the three broad research aims that Heritage and Clayman (2010) described as having been pursued within institutional CA. Firstly, this study probed the institutionality of the workshops by demonstrating their distinctiveness from everyday conversation using one of the six areas described by Heritage (1997), namely asymmetry (and specifically asymmetry in the participation roles between the workshop leaders and the workshop participants). Secondly, this study described how two specific institutional tasks in the workshops were accomplished in and through the interaction of the workshop leaders and the workshop participants, specifically focusing on how the leader managed the transition into and out of activities that the participants performed in sub group participant configurations as a means of accomplishing the workshop objectives.

A. Limitations, future research, and implications

A limitation of the study was that only one instance of each type of workshop was collected, with a total of three participating workshop leaders. There exists considerable diversity in facilitation and training styles and workshop purposes. As such, the research findings may not be representative of interaction in facilitated and training workshops in general. Future research could focus on addressing this limitation of study through the collection of additional data in multiple settings. Future studies could seek to investigate additional instances of either or both types of workshops, either in organizations or in a different settings (e.g., a community setting), to see if the findings of the current study can be substantiated in other situations.

The practice of giving instructions and the practices associated with managing the transitions between activities (i.e., announcing the amount of time remaining for an activity, checking task completion, getting the group's attention) are not described as key communicative behaviours in group facilitation literature and there is little or no mention of these behaviours in

the practitioner-written literature. They are not listed as skills under competencies required for certification by the IAF (IAF, 2003). It could be argued that giving instructions and the practices associated with managing transitions are essential facilitation skills that should be given coverage in the practitioner-written literature to raise facilitators' awareness of these practices and be mentioned as skills under competencies required for certification by the IAF.

It is hoped that by drawing attention to the interactional practices that workshop leaders engage in when leading and facilitating workshops, it will help practitioners to reflect on their practice and be more intentional in their practice. This study reinforces Dalmau and Dick's (1992) call for workshop leaders to pay particular attention to managing the transitions in facilitated workshops. It suggests workshop leaders consider having several attention-getting devices in their 'toolkit' to improve the effectiveness of transitions out of participant activities. This could be particularly important when working with large groups and leading multi-day workshops.

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APPENDIX

Transcription Conventions

In the transcripts, the parties to the interaction are identified according to their allocated institutional roles. In Workshop 1, the facilitators are identified as F, with F1 referring to Bev and F2 referring to Ann, and the group members are identified as G, with G1 to G23 representing female group members and G24 to G32 representing male group members. In Workshop 2, the trainer, Tim, is identified as T, and the learners are identified as L, with L1 to L15 referring to female learners and L16 to L19 referring to male learners. The transcription conventions are as follows:

[Overlap onset
]	Overlap ending
=	No break or overlap between speakers; between intonation units (IUs) (i.e., "chunks" of speech); or between same speaker's turn over two lines
(0.0)	Elapsed time measured in tenths of a second
(.)	An interval less than 0.2 seconds
—	Stress
:	Lengthening of the prior sound
:_	An "up-to-down" contour
:_	A "down-to-up" contour
↑	Especially high pitch
↓	Especially low pitch

- . Falling terminal contour (i.e., a marked fall in pitch at the end of an IU)
- ,
- ? Strongly rising terminal contour (i.e., a marked high rise in pitch at the end of an IU)
- ;
- ¿ Terminal contour between continuing and strongly rising
- WORD Increased volume
- ° ° Decreased volume
- <word A hurried start
- A cut-off or glottal stop
- >< Faster than surrounding talk
- .hh Audible in-breath
- () Uncertain word(s) (best guess)
- ? Uncertain speaker
- (()) Transcriber's descriptions
- Feature of interest
- ((00:00:00)) Time stamp on the video-recording

Group Facilitation as Hermeneutic Practice

Kenneth D Walsh and Patrea Andersen

ABSTRACT

This paper will be of interest to experienced and novice facilitators. It explores group facilitation and hermeneutic processes and presents a framework for the interpretation of behaviour in groups. The framework, which the authors have called the *Group Interpretive Framework* (GIF) is based on the concepts of the philosophers Martin Heidegger (1962) and Hans Georg Gadamer (1975). It aims to assist facilitators to develop skills in interpreting meaning in the group context. Such interpretation is necessary in order to understand group behaviours and intervene when necessary to improve the effectiveness of the group in meeting its goals. This paper takes as its premise that while there are frameworks that provide direction to facilitators in what to interpret (such as behaviour in groups including body language, tone of voice, facial expressions and levels of interaction), there are few which assist with “how” to interpret these behaviours. While the examples of the use of GIF in this paper are from healthcare settings, the framework is potentially applicable to any setting where group facilitation takes place.

KEY WORDS

group facilitation, facilitation, hermeneutics, group dynamics, interpretation.

Introduction

An understanding of, and skills in, group facilitation is crucial to innovation and change in healthcare settings (Harvey, et al., 2002; Simmons, 2004). However, the practice of facilitation is not without its problems. It takes skill and experience to know when to intervene, when to lead and when to follow, when to be active and inactive, when to speak and when to remain quiet, and how to interpret the content, meaning and behaviours of the group (Thomas, 2008). Whilst there are frameworks which can assist facilitators with what to do, there are few which can assist with the how itself.

When examining the group facilitation process, the to and fro of collaborative interaction in facilitation, it reminded the authors of the hermeneutic processes used in interpreting text in Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research. The authors wondered if this interpretive process would assist in understanding and practice with groups when facilitating practice development. They asked: can group facilitation be seen as a form of hermeneutic practice?

What is proposed in this paper to assist the interpretation process is a conceptual framework of hermeneutic interpretation based on the concepts of the philosophers Martin Heidegger (1962) and Hans Georg Gadamer (1975). The authors believe that this can be used with other frameworks and models of group facilitation practice (such as Schwarz’s Group Effectiveness Model, 2002, outlined in this paper) to assist facilitators with the difficult practice of interpreting group behaviours, inferring

meaning, and intervening when necessary in order to improve the effectiveness of the group in meeting its goals.

What is Hermeneutics?

Hermeneutics is the art of interpretation. The word derives from the name of the ancient Greek God, Hermes. He was responsible for changing the unknowable into a form that humans could comprehend or understand (Thompson, 1990). Hermeneutics is the study of the theory and practice of interpretation. Traditional hermeneutics, which includes Biblical hermeneutics, refers to the study of the interpretation of written texts, especially texts in the areas of literature, religion and law. Contemporary or modern hermeneutics encompasses not only issues involving the written text, but everything in the interpretative process. This includes verbal and nonverbal forms of communication, as well as prior aspects that affect communication, such as presuppositions, pre-understandings, the meaning and philosophy of language, and semiotics (Ferguson, 1988).

The most common usage of the term Hermeneutics in healthcare is in association with a form of qualitative research known as Hermeneutic Phenomenology (see Gadamer, 1975). This type of research aims to assist researchers and practitioners to come to a better understanding of human experience as it is lived and those things that are taken for granted. The philosophical viewpoint of phenomenological hermeneutic research is that there is no such thing as an un-interpreted fact; everything entails interpretation. According to Heidegger (1962), the facts cannot be separated from the meanings of the facts. For example, the fact that a person has a breast removed due to cancer cannot be separated

from the interpretation of the fact for her which might include existential anxiety and disruption of body image.

A central tenet of hermeneutics is that of the Hermeneutic Circle (Heidegger, 1962). This is based on the idea that interpretation takes place through an understanding of the parts in relation to the whole of that which is being interpreted. For example, a text is understood in relation to its parts.

An example of the hermeneutic circle is how language is learned and understood:

A whole sentence...is a unity. We understand the meaning of an individual word by seeing it in reference to the whole of the sentence; and the sentence's meaning as a whole is dependent on the meaning of the individual words. By extension, an individual concept derives its meaning or horizon within which it stands; yet the horizon is made up of the very elements to which it gives meaning. By dialectical interaction between the whole and the part, each gives the other meaning; understanding is circular, then. Because within the 'circle' the meaning comes to stand, we call this the 'hermeneutic circle' (Palmer, 1969 cited in Thompson, 1990; pp. 224-289).

Furthermore, the background, history and context are also as important to interpretation as the object which is to be understood. Dreyfus (in Bleicher, 1980) gives an example illustrative of this when he describes how an "objective" psychologist saw the concept of talkativeness. Talkativeness, he found, was a meaningless concept because people classed as talkative did not utter any more words than so called 'normal' individuals. Of course, he missed the point that they do so during other people's conversations, during lectures and with their mouths full. The to and fro process of the hermeneutic circle coupled with an understanding of context is central to hermeneutic interpretation.

Facilitation and Interpretation

The element of group facilitation practice that appears to be most closely related to hermeneutics, and for which the hermeneutic process described above may assist, is the interpretation of the behaviours of the group or the individuals within the group in the context of the group's history, goals and purpose. Deciding if, when, and how to intervene in order to assist the group to be more effective is central to facilitation practice and entails the interpretation of complex and sometimes subtle cues. Assisting the group to be more effective in meeting the aims of the group through such intervention is a key role of the facilitator (Schwarz, 2002), and is a complex skill often challenging to those new to facilitation.

Facilitators who are relatively new to group facilitation often confuse group effectiveness with the facilitator's desire for the group to do what the facilitator wants or to behave in ways the facilitator expects. Schwarz (2002) called this the 'Unilateral

Control Model' (p. 80). When the facilitator realises that this model does not in fact make the group more effective, they may move to an opposing model; the 'Give Up Control Model' (p. 79) which will be just as ineffective. In order to assist facilitators to find a middle path, Schwarz (2002) advocated the Group Effectiveness Model based on a number of core values: valid information, free and informed choice, internal commitment, and compassion.

Schwarz also outlined a model for diagnosing and intervening in groups (the Diagnosis Intervention Cycle). This includes six diagnostic steps:

1. Observe behaviour;
2. Infer meaning;
3. Decide whether, how and why to intervene;
4. Describe the behaviour and test for different views;
5. Share the inference and test for different views; and
6. Help the group decide whether and how to change behaviour and test for different views (Schwarz, 2002, p. 162).

Figure 1 illustrates the process underpinning Schwarz's Diagnosis Intervention Cycle (Schwarz, 2002).

In the authors' experience, this is a very useful model, especially when linked with Schwarz's advice on making the minimum possible inference. What he means here is, do not make the mistake of thinking 'one and one equals three'. To *over-egg* or make too much of an interpretation is to lose the group, and rapport and trust will suffer.

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Whilst Schwarz's Model (2002) is, in the authors' shared opinion, an excellent one and it is used in the postgraduate facilitation subject taught¹, it requires careful interpretation of group behaviours (Step 2: infer meaning) in order for the facilitator to intervene effectively. The authors believe a hermeneutic process may be useful in assisting with the *how* of the model above and in helping the facilitator make accurate and minimum inferences (examples are given with the explanation of the GIF below).

¹ The subject referred to here is *Facilitation and Education Skills for Practice Development* (course code GHMB960). The subject is part of the Graduate Certificate in Health, Practice Development and Facilitation offered by the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Indigenous Health at the University of Wollongong, Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia.

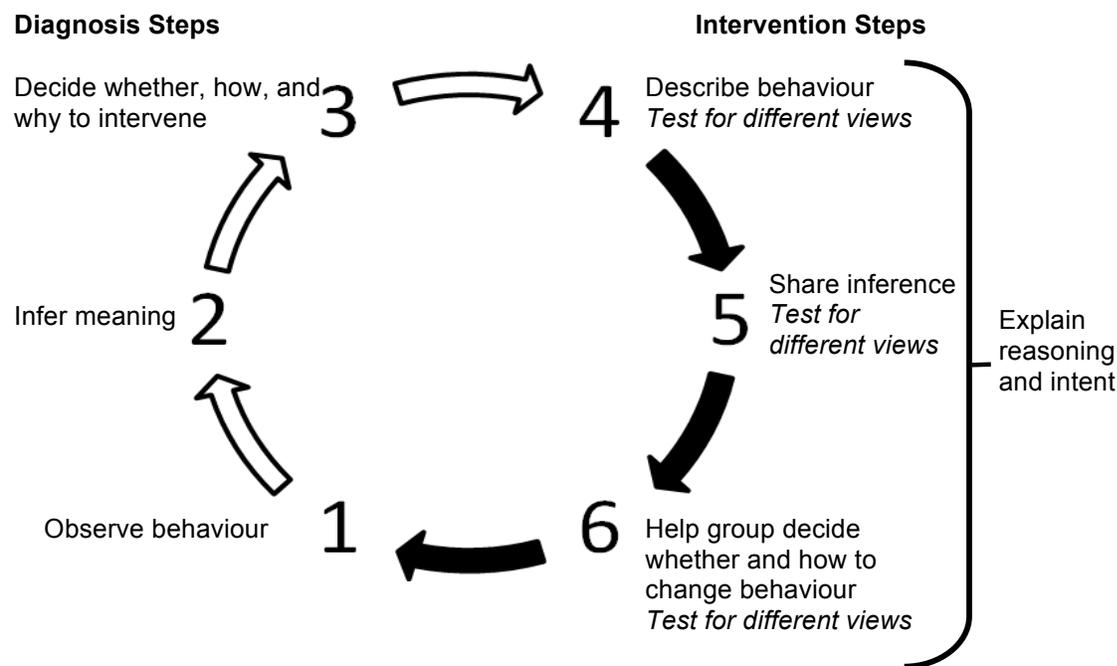


Figure 1. Diagnosis Intervention Cycle
(Schwarz, 2002, p.162).

Based on the authors' experiences of the usefulness of the hermeneutic process in assisting with a facilitator's inferences in facilitating groups in a large metropolitan health service, the Nursing Development and Research Unit (of the School of Nursing Midwifery and Indigenous Health at the University of Wollongong and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District) have developed and currently use the new GIF framework of hermeneutic interpretation for group facilitators.

Group Interpretation Framework (GIF): Group Facilitation Practice and Gadamer's Concepts Reframed

Gadamer (1975) described four hermeneutic concepts (Prejudice, Hermeneutic Circle, the Fusion of Horizons, and Play) and was at pains to point out that he was not outlining a method of Hermeneutic Interpretation. It should be noted that the way the concepts are used in this paper might not accord with what Gadamer intended. To make this clear, the concepts have been renamed to emphasise the fact that they are used in different ways to Gadamer and that this represents the authors' interpretation of these concepts. The words chosen in reframing Gadamer's concepts were chosen because the authors believed that they align with group processes and with the language that facilitators would use when working with groups.

The Group Interpretation Framework (GIF) consists of the following concepts:

- Preconceiving;
- Integrating;
- Visioning; and
- Playing.

These concepts are interrelated and together provide a framework for interpreting group behaviour. Each of the concepts will be explored in turn and, notwithstanding that each is interrelated with the others, descriptive examples from the authors' facilitation practice will be given to illustrate their use.

Preconceiving

Preconceiving is based on Gadamer's concept of prejudice and Heidegger's concept of fore-structures of understanding. Heidegger (1962) believed that people navigate through the world by means of our fore-meanings or fore-structures of understanding. These are based on our common history, language and traditions and are the essential background to any interpretation. Gadamer built upon these notions through the concept of prejudice. Prejudice (literally a pre-judgement) is, as Gadamer (1975) explained, the collective impression of an event, object or person made up of biases, pre-knowledge, beliefs, ideas and attitudes.

People's pre-judgments begin with some level of previous knowledge or historical experience (Walsh, 1996). When approaching any situation, we as humans approach it from some sort of perspective; we take a certain attitude to it (Warnke, 1987). This is not to imply that prejudice is necessarily bad or negative in and of itself. In order for us to navigate within any situation, all of us have to have some preconceived notions about the world. Otherwise, each encounter would be novel with no certainties or inklings of what may or may not happen in a given situation. We would indeed be aliens in our own world. It is, however, our unexamined (unconscious) preconceptions that may cause difficulties and a breakdown in understanding. Prejudice is a means by which we experience and understand the world. This combination of the concepts of fore-structures of understanding and prejudice is what the authors have called *Preconceiving*.

In group facilitation practice, the facilitator brings their preconceptions (based on their past experiences, beliefs and attitudes of being a facilitator and a human being) to bear in the group encounter. However, *preconceiving*, unlike common notions of prejudice, is a conscious act. By consciously examining and owning these preconceptions, and remaining open to possible alternative meanings, the facilitator further expands their horizon of understanding (Walsh, 1996).

The following example illustrates how preconceiving can be worked through prior to engaging with a group.

A facilitator has been invited by staff of a ward to work with them on developing a program of practice change. In examining the invitation, the facilitator examines her/his preconceptions. The facilitator has heard of this ward. In the past it had a reputation for providing poor care. Many incidents have become folklore in the organisation. The facilitator has been given unsolicited advice from managers that the ward staff members are wishing to engage in practice change as a political device to push certain industrial agendas.

Prior to engaging with the ward staff, the facilitator, in examining their preconceptions, considered the following questions:

- What preconceptions do I have about this ward and what effect might this have on the facilitation practice?
- Are there certain issues and agreements it would be important to discuss in the light of my preconceptions?
- In what ways might my preconceptions lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy?
- How might I work with these issues, if they do arise, in ways that will assist the group to meet its purpose?
- How might my preconceptions inadvertently influence my ability to make minimum inferences when intervening in the group?

In this way, the facilitator is able to consciously examine their preconceptions and be mindful of the potential of these to influence the way in which they will engage with the group. The way the facilitator conducts themselves towards the group is influenced by their pre-judgments and has an effect upon the group. By being mindful, the facilitator is better able to be aware of possible prejudices they may hold which, if not examined, could influence their behaviour towards the group.

The facilitator may choose to explore their preconceptions with the group and situate this information alongside their own examined preconceptions. In this case, the facilitator is not holding in abeyance their fore-meanings and prejudices, but rather situating them alongside those of the others in the encounter, thereby increasing the facilitator's and the group's understanding (Walsh, 1996).

Integrating

The concept of *Integrating* is based upon the notion of the hermeneutic circle as discussed above. Warnke (1987) saw the circle as a place to revise and enlist new meanings from an object. For this reason, "Hermeneutic efforts are directed at finding an interpretation that can both make sense out of individual parts of [an object] and integrate them into a consistent whole" (p. 83). Gadamer (1975) made the point that in the hermeneutic circle, there is always the possibility of continual interpretation. Interpretation takes place through a constant moving backwards and forwards within this metaphorical circle. The quote cited earlier by Palmer (1969) gave an example of the hermeneutic circle in operation when he described interpreting the meaning of a previously unfamiliar word within a sentence.

In a similar way, the facilitator integrates the material generated during the encounters with the group with the knowledge, presence and experiences they bring to this encounter as facilitators and as people. In this context, all that invokes our senses is brought into play as that material is defined, re-defined, re-interpreted and integrated in the context of the whole. The circle of understanding and interpretation is constantly being re-worked and re-shaped.

Facilitators are constantly trying to make sense of individual and group behaviours and deciding if and when to intervene in order to help the group meet its purpose. Why does one group member appear angry, bored, anxious or detached? Facilitators interpret and make sense of these observations based on their preconceptions and the dynamic interplay of the individual and the behaviour and the whole of the group and its context. These processes influence facilitator behaviour in the group.

Take the following scenario for example: During a group introduction session, one group member seems to be displaying hostile body language. Looking at this behaviour in relation to the rest of the group, the facilitator observes that others appear to

notice this also. When the person speaks, it is with barely controlled rage as they describe a litany of the past wrongs of management. There seems to be agreement from the group with this point of view, as some nod, and some verbally agree. The facilitator appreciates that this may derail the group and need addressing.

With the knowledge of past issues concerning this ward and having reflected on their preconceptions, the facilitator might ask:

- What should I do?
- Where does my anxiety come from?
- Is my interpretation of what is going on accurate?
- How might I intervene?
- What is my role here?

In keeping with the concept of the hermeneutic circle, it is the interplay of the “parts” of the situation (observed behaviours, the facilitator’s preconceptions and answers to the reflective questions) along with the “whole” of the situation that the authors have called “integrating”. Thus “integrating” assists the facilitator to make decisions to intervene (or not); it is the knowledge of the processes of interpretation based on the concepts of preconceiving and integrating that translate into action. The action in this case may be to infer meaning that the group may have some issues to share that, unless they are brought into the open, could work as a hidden agenda and derail the group’s purpose. Of course, depending on the group’s purpose and context, it may be that it would be better to acknowledge the feelings whilst redirecting the group to focus on its purpose. The point is that it is the interplay between preconceiving and integrating that assists the facilitator to make sense of the information gathered from the group and decide on action (or to do nothing) in order to assist the group to achieve its purpose.

Visioning

The Gadamerian concept on which *Visioning* is based is known as the Fusion of Horizons. Gadamer (1975) defined the concept of horizon as “the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point” (p. 230). When viewed within the notion of prejudice, “...horizon means not being limited to what is nearby, but being able to see beyond it” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 302).

The analysis of the facilitator-group encounter is through what Gadamer (1975) called the “fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) between past and present and...the particular present” (pp. 306-307). Therefore there exists, in the complex nature of the facilitator-group encounter, opportunity to engage in a relationship that is situated within the horizon of the recent and distant past; an horizon that is “always in motion” (p. 303).

Nicholson (1991) explained that “Our own mode of thought is an horizon we cannot eliminate; to understand something from the past is to experience the fusion of its horizon with our own” (p. 153). Understanding takes place “...when the horizon of the other intersects or fuses with our own horizon and changes and extends our range of vision” (Walsh, 1996, p. 235). In the encounter with the group, the facilitator situates their examined prejudices alongside those of the “other” and taking into consideration the past, present and possible future, a new horizon is formed and their understanding or range of vision increased. When this occurs, the group sees new things and new futures that are different from what they brought to the group as individuals.

It is suggested by the authors that through the conscious use of the concepts outlined here, through the examination and exploration of preconceptions, through an interpretation of the group behaviors via *Integrating*, a new and fuller understanding of the group and the task it is performing will emerge. Skilled facilitators are constantly integrating and fusing the horizons and extending the group’s range of vision. This is the essence of innovation and creativity that the group process can unleash.

However, before this innovation and creativity can occur, it is necessary to question how the facilitator enters into and *comports* or conducts themselves within the hermeneutic circle of understanding in which *Integrating* and *Visioning* takes place.

Playing

Gadamer (1975) discussed *comportment* (how to act or behave) in relation to “play”. In *playing* there is the notion of moving “to and fro”; playing with a ball, or playing together (Gadamer, 1975). The analogy of moving to and fro within a game is useful in understanding how to comport oneself within the hermeneutic circle; to move from part to whole and back again in order to expand the horizon of understanding. This concept is also useful in understanding how to get into the circle; that is, with spontaneity, a desire to join in the game, and a belief in the rewards of the game. Weinsheimer (1991) summed up this very active notion of play in this way:

Playing consists in a performance of what is no object, by what is no subject. And if interpreting is like playing, as Gadamer argues, then it always involves something like performing a drama, for the player who takes the play seriously interprets it from within, by belonging to and playing a part in it (Weinsheimer, 1991, p. 14).

Being a “player” in this sense is a concept that fits well with the idea of a group alliance formed between the facilitator and the group. The facilitator as a “player” belongs to and plays a part in the group and interprets it from within. Facilitators engaged in the group encounter from this perspective would focus more upon interpretation and understanding the experience of the

group through the “to and fro” of situating their prejudices against the meanings emerging from the group to broaden the horizon of understanding and fuse into a new horizon. The group alliance is the outcome of such a mutual exploration which endeavours to uncover meaning and purpose and one’s role within the group.

What emerges is an integration of meanings that comes from within the hermeneutic circle of the group alliance because the facilitator has situated themselves within the circle and therefore within the alliance. *Playing* facilitates the integration of the mutual exploration of the experience or ideas of the group in a way that is geared towards understanding rather than the categorisation of the group’s experience as this or that class of experience. The facilitator enters into the encounter with the group as a player in a game: a team game in which the group and the facilitator work together in the to and fro of the game to understand more fully the task at hand and the way forward. Together they forge a plan that increases the possibility of the group meeting their needs and serving their purpose.

Conclusion

This paper has explored how a hermeneutic process, based on the modification of concepts of Hans Georg Gadamer and Martin Heidegger, may be useful in assisting with the “how” of interpretation in the group facilitation process and develop greater facilitator confidence in interpreting group dynamics. This is complementary to other models of group facilitation such as the Group Effectiveness Model described by Schwarz (2002) which provides a good guide to the “what” of group facilitation. However, it is emphasized that interpretations should be tested against the group and the facilitator’s understandings of their encounter in the group. Developing this shared meaning is essential if ideas are to be constructed about what is and what could or should be and how to get there. The strength of the hermeneutic approach is that interpretations based on shared meanings are by nature of greater utility as they are less likely to be based on false premises or unexamined preconceptions.

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It's a Jungle Out There - The Biology of Facilitation

Julie B. Marcy

ABSTRACT

This paper presents potential applications of biological sciences and adaptive behaviors to group dynamics in a facilitated environment. Although traditional psychology or sociology may be thought of when dealing with groups, this paper goes beyond those fields to explore physiology, biorhythms, human ethology, herd instinct, group think, territoriality, cohesion, team work, learned helplessness, human nonverbal communication, decision fatigue, and media multitasking. Underlying biological principles dealing with phylogenetic and physiological behavioral adaptations are described, along with their potential influence on meeting participants in facilitated gatherings. Suggested strategies for recognizing and dealing with associated behaviors such as territoriality, learned helplessness, and decision fatigue are offered to give facilitation professionals some effective tools for improving meeting outcomes.

KEY WORDS

behavior, biology, biorhythms, bioteams, chronemics, conformity studies, decision fatigue, ethology, evolution, facilitation, group dynamics, groupthink, herd instinct, human nonverbal communication, learned helplessness, media multitasking, non-verbal communication, phylogenetic adaptations, team work, territoriality

Background

Have you ever facilitated a session and observed some participants acting like a “bunch of animals”? Considering that humans are mammals, that is a reasonable observation. In fact, there are many underlying scientific principles, such as territoriality and decision fatigue, that may influence participant behavior in a facilitated gathering. While some professionals may think in terms of traditional psychology or sociology when facilitating, one should also be cognizant of some basic biological principles, evolutionary psychology and ethology as well.

Evolutionary psychology can be defined as the study of human cognition and behavior with respect to their evolutionary origins. The field was ushered in by Donald Symons' book *The Evolution of Human Sexuality* (1979). (See also Barkow, Cosmides & Tooby's 1992 book *The Adapted Mind*.)

Ethology is defined as: “1) a branch of knowledge dealing with human character, its formation and evolution, and 2) the scientific and objective study of animal behavior, especially under natural conditions” (Merriam Webster, 2012).

Ethology, Evolutionary Psychology and other sciences can provide some interesting insights into human group dynamics. The author has applied these sciences in her work as a Certified Wildlife Biologist and IAF Certified Professional Facilitator and hopes that sharing them will provide insights into participant behavior from these fields for fellow facilitators to consider in their own practice.

Biorhythms

Facilitators may sometimes notice participants making a quick exit from a session 60-90 minutes after beginning, or becoming sleepy in the morning or after eating. This may result in some facilitator introspection such as, “Did I say something offensive?” or, “Am I boring them?” or “They were so focused and productive before lunch – where's that team energy and drive gone?” Estroff Marano (2004) noted that “Many of the functions of your body and brain are set to operate in cycles of roughly 90 minutes each. And, going with the flow of biorhythms helps you maintain motivation and attention for whatever the task at hand.” She added information from an interview with Dr. Roseanne Armitage “that every 90 minutes, we need to take a mental break because otherwise, our

concentration, memory and learning ability start fading.” This type of short cycle is referred to as an ultradian rhythm and it may range from 20 to 120 minutes in length (Rossi et. al., 1992). It is related to circadian rhythms that Pobojewski (2007) referred to as “changes in physical activity, metabolism, hormone production, cell activity, organ function and body temperature – that rise and fall at fixed intervals over roughly a 24-hour period.” (p. 14). She quoted from an interview with Dr. Jimo Borjigin as saying, “Jet lag’s symptoms are caused by the fact that the body’s rhythmic cycles all readjust at different rates...the sleep/wake rhythm may adapt within three to four days, but the body temperature cycle may take six days...Until all these rhythms are resynchronized to the new time zone, your body won’t feel right.” (p. 16). Differences in individual biorhythms may result in some participants being more focused and attentive in the morning while others are more alert in the afternoon.

On a more basic biological level, normal diurnal bladder voiding frequency ranges from 4-6 times per day, or about every two hours (Graugaard-Jensen et al., 2008). The author refers to this as a “bio break” in meetings. While considering these physiological factors, one should also be cognizant of apparent mood-food relationships. Catherine Christie (2012) notes in *Mood-Food Relationships* that some foods can “alter one’s mood by influencing the level of certain brain chemicals called neurotransmitters”, particularly “dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin” (p. 1). (See Table 1: *Diet-Mood Connection*)

Table 1. Diet-Mood Connection¹

Nutrient	Food Sources	Neuro-transmitter/mechanism	Proposed Effect
Protein	Meat, Milk, Eggs, Cheese, Fish, Beans	Dopamine, Norepinephrine	Increased alertness, concentration
Carbohydrate	Grains, Fruits, Sugars	Serotonin	Increased calmness, relaxation
Calories	All Foods	Reduced blood flow to the brain	Excess calories in a meal is associated with decreased alertness and concentration after the meal

1. ¹ Adapted from www.faqs.org/nutrition

Now, how might these physiological factoids influence facilitation? Let’s assume a scenario of an 8-hour facilitated workshop with participants with different biorhythms, some participants who have traveled long distances across time zones the preceding day (or are global travelers), and a client-sponsored catered Italian lunch with pasta, bread, salad and dessert. One might want to plan for a mental break (think topic or facilitation process change) every 60-90 minutes and a 20-minute physical break every 90-120 minutes. If break refreshments are served, one may want to consider offering protein like nuts plus fruit and some candy, like chocolate. After what will likely be a calorie intense lunch, one may also want to incorporate feedback processes that include physical activities like having participants post ideas on the wall, and moving between break-out session rooms. Additional energizers such as lively music, videos, stress toys, and sharing common interests may also be of value. On a lighter note, homage might be made to a popular saying from Evan Esar (1968) that “lecturers should remember that the capacity of the mind to absorb is limited to what the seat can endure” (p. 468).

Human Ethology

Let us expand on this foundation of biology with potential behavioral applications. Thoughts are offered in recognition of differing opinions on the *Theory of Evolution* (Darwin, 1859) and *Creationism* (National Academy of Sciences, 1999), along with the related topics of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology. In his book *Ethology - The Biology of Behavior*, Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1975) discussed extensive animal and human behavior studies and noted that “phylogenetic adaptations influence our everyday life at different levels...we experience serious disturbances in our social behavior and in order to cope with them, we have to learn about the determinants of such behavior” (p. 534). In other words, there are phylogenetic or evolutionary patterns and adaptations that are believed to influence human behavior. As the study of ethology expanded to include more human correlations, Eibl-Eibesfeldt went on to become the first president of the International Society for Human Ethology (ISHE, 2012). Miller (2001) observed that intelligence, language, social attachment, aggression, and altruism are part of human nature because they “serve or once served a purpose in the struggle of the species to survive” (pp. 357-358). Given this school of thought, let us examine some specific applications of human ethology that may be relevant to facilitation such as herd instinct, territoriality, cohesion, learned helplessness, and nonverbal communication.

Herd Instinct, Conformity Studies and Groupthink

Several components are listed in this section title due to the evolution of terminology. What began as herd instinct studies in animals evolved to conformity studies in people and to terms such as “groupthink” (Janis, 1972; 1982). Animals fleeing a predator as a group is an example of “herd behavior”, a phrase initially applied to people by a British doctor named Wilfred

Trotter (1916) in his book *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. Trotter noted that “the social instinct drives the individual to seek union with some community of his fellows” (p. 253).

Janis (1972) conducted studies in which he described groupthink as “a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action” (p. 9). His studies led to analyses of key events such as Pearl Harbor, the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Vietnam War in which he felt groupthink had contributed to flawed decisions. Conditions he believed contributed to groupthink were: “high group cohesiveness, structural faults (insulation of the group, lack of impartial leadership, lack of norms requiring methodological procedures, homogeneity of members' social backgrounds and ideology), and situational context (highly stressful external threats, recent failures, excessive difficulties on the decision-making task, and moral dilemmas)” (pp. 258-259). In facilitated settings, groupthink may manifest itself with a group rushing to make a decision before all viewpoints have been heard, to meet a real or perceived time deadline, or following the input of an influential attendee such as a senior manager. It may also occur when participants want to focus on the current way of operating (the status quo) versus thinking of potential new methodologies and ideas. A risk of groupthink is the group defaulting to a 50-50 compromise solution where each of the two main groups receives half of what they wanted to accomplish.

One of the earliest conformity studies was performed by Jenness (1932) in which he filled a glass bottle with beans and asked participants to guess the number of beans. Participants guessed the number individually, and were then asked to make a second estimate following a group discussion. Almost all of the participants altered their individual estimates to be closer to the group estimates. In another conformity study, Asch (1951) found that almost 75 percent of the participants conformed to the rest of the group at least once (despite the fact that some of the participants were intentionally providing incorrect answers), and that the greatest conformity occurred when three or more confederates were involved. When asked why participants conformed when they suspected or knew the answers being suggested by others were incorrect, their answer was to avoid ridicule. Yet Asch also found in the same study that independent thinking could play a major role in human interactions.

Lemieux (2003) expanded on this with a discussion on business management fads. “Countless management gurus and cohorts of business executives enthusiastically embraced each of those trends, proclaiming it necessary for economic survival, and later dropped the trend in favor of the next emerging idea” (p. 16). He also noted that “one implication... is that the first individuals to decide have disproportionate weight on public opinion and social behavior” (p. 21). Lemieux theorized that examples of

herd behavior include: bank runs, adoption of new scientific theories by the public, the rise (and partial) fall of affirmative action, the anti-tax movement, and the spread of ethnic and religious separatism around the world.

It may be possible to avoid or minimize groupthink and more traditional 50-50 solutions (where two entities each receive half of what they desire) by using the group decision-making technique Covey (2011) encouraged in his book *The 3rd Alternative*. He defined his technique as going beyond typical compromise to a higher and better alternative that the parties may not have explored previously. He also recommended listening most carefully to the individual(s) who have an opinion most contrary to one's own, and noted that 3rd alternative thinking companies “...diverge from the norm...they often reverse the conventional wisdom in captivating ways” (p. 141).

Potential facilitation applications of these concepts could include:

- Asking participants to jot down some independent thoughts and partial solutions to bring to a session prior to collaboration.
- Weighing whether to use a blank piece of paper versus a strawman when developing a collaborative plan.
- Asking leaders in a group to refrain from speaking/voting or asking that they speak or vote last in collaboration discussions and prioritization exercises.
- Encouraging clients to assemble all key stakeholders and enabling the opportunity for equal participation so that divergent opinions can be shared.
- Discussing and managing by fact versus by opinion and perceptions.
- Making participants aware of ideas such as the 3rd Alternative for conflict resolution and collaboration in introductory facilitator remarks.

Territoriality

Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1975) observed that “in everyday life, we can observe examples of territorial behavior...individuals maintain specific distances between themselves and others...and fences and signs designate our rightful ownership” (p. 504).

Human territoriality and domination via hunting prey species was popularized by Robert Ardrey (1970). His book *The Hunting Hypothesis* includes a theory that “man is a man and not a chimpanzee, because for millions of evolving years we killed for a living” (p. 10). Hart and Sussman (2005) referred to paleontological evidence that indicates prehistoric man had many roles – hunter, a prey item for other predators, and scavenger. Sussman noted in a talk “that one of the main defenses against predators by animals is living in groups...in

fact, all diurnal primates² live in permanent social groups” (Ludlow, 2006, p. 3).

Brown et. al. (2005) noted that “life in organizations is fundamentally territorial. We make claims on and defend our control of a variety of organizational objects, spaces, roles and relationships” (p. 577). Examples include “...nameplates on doors and family photos on desks, and behaviors such as resistance to the introduction of office cubicles and reluctance to let others join a key project” (p. 577). They describe positive connotations of this behavior such as: “increasing the rootedness and sense of belonging an individual has with the organization” (p. 586) and the notion that “over time, territorial behaviors will reduce process conflict as organizational members establish and maintain their own territories” (p. 587). Potentially negative connotations described include: “leading employees to become self-focused, taking away from their ability to connect with and focus on the goals of the organization...to seek less interaction with others and to behave in ways that work against the knowledge sharing, cooperation and flexible movement of resources that facilitate organizational productivity and innovation” (p. 588). In addition, “highly territorial individuals may be seen as less cooperative or approachable” (p. 588).

Potential facilitation implications derived from Brown et al. (2005) include:

- Understanding that territoriality is an inherent, inevitable and prevalent component of organizations and that it may appear in facilitated sessions as conflict between different offices in an organization, a fight over finite resources, an unwillingness to share information or ideas, or unwillingness to waiver from an accepted practice or viewpoint.
- Recognizing the possible need and potential for personalization among stakeholder groups in a session, and among small breakout groups when applying standardized facilitation processes. For example, breakout teams might want to adopt a team name or theme or slightly customize a report out format. A facilitator working with a diverse group to collaborate on a joint topic will have to decide when to opt for standardization and when to allow some degree of personalization.
- Territoriality may also be significant when facilitating sessions on more general workplace conflicts. Sometimes, clearly defining roles and responsibilities can help resolve long-standing misunderstandings or perceptions in the workplace.

2. ² Primates that are active in the daytime

Cohesion and Team Work

Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1975) described various reasons for group bonding or cohesion such as: bonding through fear (schooling fish), sexual bonding (primates), and bonding through care of young (bees and ants). Boyd (2006) postulated that “human cooperation may have evolved as a consequence of genetic relatedness, culture, or language within a group” (p. 1555). Andras and Lazarus (2005) described two types of cooperation. The first is symbiotic *mutualism* wherein “all individuals involved in the interaction benefit, but no one benefits at the expense of others” (p. 57). Examples given are wolves living together in a pack and people living in a group for protection. In the second type, “the individual benefits by taking a non-cooperative option at the expense of others” (p. 57). In the wolf pack, this might be apparent in an individual wolf contributing less while still taking a share of the spoils. Human examples include: “cheating, trust, reciprocity, fairness, sanction, retribution, punishment, guilt, forgiveness and reconciliation” (p. 57). In a study of brown capuchin monkeys where monkeys exchanged tokens with humans to receive a treat, Brosnan et al. (2003) found that “monkeys refused to participate if they witnessed a conspecific [another peer monkey] obtain a more attractive reward for equal effort; an effect amplified if the partner received such a reward without any effort at all” (p. 297). In a related interview, Brosnan noted that “it looks like this behavior is evolved...it is not simply a cultural construct. There’s some good evolutionary reason why we don’t like being treated unfairly” (Markey, 2003, p. 1). Dr. Frans de Waal (2005) expanded on this with theories of reciprocity. These include: “symmetry-based (we’re buddies), attitudinal (if you’re nice, I’ll be nice), and calculated reciprocity (what have you done for me lately?)” (p. 75).

In a book entitled *Bioteams* (2008), Ken Thompson discussed the concept of bioteams to describe how organizational teams can become more effective by studying how nature’s most successful teams have evolved at the microscopic, insect, animal and ecosystem levels. Successful natural teams noted include ant colonies, bee swarms, flocks of geese, dolphin pods, food webs and large scale ecosystems.

Facilitators work with existing organizational teams, or with temporary teams brought together to focus on a specific task or goal in a facilitated session, and should recognize that:

- Cooperation behavior may differ among participants (mutualism vs. non-cooperative and perceptions of reciprocity).
- Actual or perceived unfairness in what the facilitated group is proposing may result in deeply rooted, strong emotions.
- Mimicking aspects of successful teams in nature may lead groups to new insights in team effectiveness and interactions. Just as swarms of bees work together to form a successful hive, co-workers must work together to survive in business.

- By helping participants identify their underlying motives, identify the root cause of a particular perception, or reveal a proposed course of action as a system with inter-related components or individuals, a facilitator can assist groups in addressing these dynamics.

Learned Helplessness

Learned helplessness can be defined as a condition in which a person or animal has come to believe he or she is helpless in a situation, even when this is untrue. One of the earliest researchers for this topic was Martin Seligman. He found that when animals were given shocks that they were not able to prevent in any way, they tended to react similarly in situations where they could have taken control despite the shocks not being present. He did further research on the subject and found that this type of learned helplessness could apply to humans as well and that it can start as early as infancy (Seligman et al., 1967). Human examples might include remaining in abusive personal relationships or being subjected to bullying behavior in the workplace.

Relatedly, some experiments showed that people who see negative events as permanent (“it will never change”), personal (“it’s my fault”), and pervasive (“I can’t do anything correctly”) are most likely to suffer from learned helplessness and depression (Peterson et al., 1995; Wikipedia, 2012). Bernard Weiner (1986) theorized that people attribute a cause or explanation to an unpleasant event. In a discussion of this on Wikipedia (2012), the following is noted: “A *global attribution* occurs when the individual believes that the cause of negative events is consistent across different contexts. A *specific attribution* occurs when the individual believes that the cause of a negative event is unique to a particular situation. A *stable attribution* occurs when the individual believes the cause to be consistent across time. *Unstable attribution* occurs when the individual thinks that the cause is specific to one point in time” (p. 2).

McDonald (2012) noted that “employees who experience harassment at work or abuse of management power may see no way of changing the situation... Their experience teaches them to react passively to similar situations as a means of coping. This is known as learned helplessness. When an employee feels powerless in the face of unreasonable organizational behavior, he may become stressed or depressed” (p. 1). Carlson et al. (1994) added “in an effort to encourage employees to work to their potential, organizations have installed a variety of human resource plans designed to make employees responsible for their behavior. However, many of these plans fail. One possible reason for their failure is that the employees are not capable of understanding the link between their effort and performance. Individuals who fall into this category are considered learned helpless” (p. 235).

There are many relevant insights for facilitators in this situation. They may observe that employees feel powerless in their organizations or they may be challenged in understanding how their work contributes to the overall company success. This can enable a facilitator to add specific processes designed to reveal related root causes and means of improving them. The facilitator can also encourage the group to focus on what is within their sphere of influence or control. Phrases that may be heard in workshops to improve business processes or determine strategic objectives where learned helplessness is a factor could include: “nothing ever changes around here” and “why are they requesting our input when they have already made the decision?” Using these as indicators can help surface uncomfortable situations in ways that the group can handle and the facilitator can manage. Abusive situations which involve animals or humans need to be treated with sensitivity and care. Understanding the balance of power and willingness of the system to change is where a facilitator might have influence or control in surfacing the sensitive issues. Early root cause analysis (RCA) developed by Sakichi Toyoda as part of Toyota Motors’ production system (Emiliani, 2006) employed the strategy of asking five *why questions* to drill down to the actual cause of an issue. Here is an example of five Whys based on a Benjamin Franklin quote (Franklin, 2012):

Problem: A mounted soldier is killed in battle.

1. Why? – Soldier was slain by the enemy.
2. Why? – Overtaken while riding his horse.
3. Why? – Horse became lame after losing a horseshoe.
4. Why? – Horseshoe lost when nail loosened.
5. Why? – Farrier nailing technique was inadequate. Alternate – Rough, muddy ground conditions caused nail to loosen.

Nonverbal Communication

In 1872, Charles Darwin published *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals* in which he described what he believed to be the origins of verbal and nonverbal communication in animals and man, such as “shrugging the shoulders as a sign of impotence...raising the arms with open hands and extended fingers as a sign of wonder...and drawing down of the corners of the mouth...to prevent a screaming fit” (Darwin, 1872, p. 788). Nonverbal communication research has continued with human behavior and various components of it are examined in this section.

Barbour et al. (1976) characterized a message as being: 7 percent verbal (words), 38 percent vocal (volume, pitch, rhythm), and 55 percent body movements (mostly facial). Segal et al. (2011) offered a helpful methodology for evaluating nonverbal signals that facilitators could apply (Table 2: *Evaluating Nonverbal Signals*). For example, a facilitator should first be cognizant of their own facial expressions and demeanor when dealing with different participants to avoid sending unintended signals such

as perceptions of favoritism. During discussions, the facilitator can watch for physical signs of tension between individuals or groups who may be representing different interests, and for physical signs of acceptance when those same parties appear to be finding common ground or acceptance. Nonverbal signals may be equally helpful when seeking signs of honesty or true commitment to information that is presented, such as facial expressions that are inconsistent with their statements.

Table 2. Evaluating Nonverbal Signals³

Evaluating Nonverbal Signals	
Eye Contact	Is eye contact being made? If so, is it overly intense or just right?
Facial Expression	What is your/their face showing? Is it masklike and unexpressive, or emotionally present and filled with interest?
Tone of Voice	Does your/their voice project warmth, confidence, and interest, or is it strained and blocked?
Posture & Gesture	Are bodies relaxed or stiff and immobile? Are shoulders tense and raised, or slightly sloped?
Touch	Is there any physical contact? Is it appropriate to the situation? Does it make you feel uncomfortable?
Intensity	Do they seem flat, cool, and disinterested, or over-the-top and melodramatic?
Timing and Pace	Is there an easy flow of information back and forth? Do nonverbal responses come too quickly or too slowly?
Sounds	Do you hear sounds that indicate caring or concern?

Chronemics is the study of the use of time in nonverbal communication. Two dominant patterns were identified by Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988): monochronic time and polychronic time. Monochronic cultures tend to schedule, arrange and manage time in a precise fashion. Examples of monochronic cultures include Canada, Germany, Scandinavia, Switzerland and the United States. Polychronic cultures take a more dynamic approach, may multitask, and be less focused on precision and incorporate tradition. Polychronic cultures can be

3. ³ Adapted from Segal et al. (2011)

found in countries including Africa, Egypt, India, Mexico, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia, along with Native Americans of North and South America.

Potential implications for facilitation include:

- A monochromic individual arriving on time and growing impatient with a delayed start and a polychromic individual being less concerned with being late since the relationship with family or friends who may have detained them may be of greater importance to them.
- Facilitators may want to adjust the session times or design a facilitated process such as time for participants to make individual notations at the beginning of a session to lessen the impact of these behaviors.

Haptics (communication via touch) and Proxemics (personal space) are related concepts that may also play a role in facilitated sessions. Remland and Jones (1995) studied this and found that in England (8%), France (5%) and the Netherlands (4%), touching was rare compared to their Italian (14%) and Greek (12.5%) sample. They also found that the English maintained the greatest personal space distance during conversations (15.40 in) as compared to French (14.73 in), Italian (14.18 in), Greek (13.86 in), and Irish (10.34 in) participants.

Potential facilitation implications include:

- Possible misunderstandings between high and low touch participants in terms of their comfort level with touching during greetings and discussions. This could also occur if icebreaker or team building activities are used during a facilitated session that require touching. This could partially be remedied by avoidance of activities that require physical touching.
- Possible misunderstandings between participants with different personal space requirements during greetings, discussions and with the physical layout of tables and chairs in the room – the proximity of attendees to each other. This could be addressed by allowing as much space as logistically practical between attendees for seating arrangements and allowing for ample space to walk around and between tables and chairs. The author generally tries to provide 24 in of walking space around chairs that are fully extended from a table to avoid the perception of crowding. If other participants have to move their chairs in or otherwise relocate every time someone walks by (to get a beverage and use the restroom), that is usually a sign that the space may be too small for the number of attendees.

Now that we have an understanding of some basic biological factors that have resulted in adaptive behaviors in both animals and humans, we may delve further into some physiological based behaviors that are uniquely human. These include decision

fatigue and media multi-tasking which the author has observed influencing facilitated sessions.

Decision Fatigue

Decision fatigue is an emerging concept which is believed to be related to ego depletion (Baumeister et al, 1998). They described ego depletion as willpower being an exhaustible resource. Decision fatigue deals with deteriorating decision quality when faced with many choices or from a prolonged decision-making session (Tierney, 2011; Vohs et al., 2008). A logical assumption is that early humans would have had relatively few daily decisions to make with limited food source selection, living accommodations, and contact with other groups. In comparison, today the options people face are immense. Starbucks, for example, boasts that it offers customers 87,000 drink options (Mannino, 2012). You could also argue here that with fewer options to consider, that the information available to early human groups to make those decisions was much more complete. Today, in comparison, with things changing so rapidly, the right information may not always be available or complete.

Tierney (2011) described parole board hearing results in Israel in which “prisoners who appeared early in the morning received parole about 70 percent of the time, while those that appeared late in the day were paroled less than 10 percent of the time” (p. 1). He attributed this to “the mental work of ruling on case after case, whatever the individual merits, (wearing) them [judges] down” (p. 2). Tierney (2011) added that “no matter how rational and high-minded you try to be, you can’t make decision after decision without paying a biological price...you’re not consciously aware of being tired – but you’re low on mental energy” (p. 2). Vohs et al. (2008) conducted a study in which college students were randomly assigned to either make choices or rate products. They found that “making choices led to reduced self-control (i.e., less physical stamina, reduced persistence in the face of failure, more procrastination, and less quality and quantity of arithmetic calculations. A field study also found that reduced self-control was predicted by shoppers’ self-reported degree of previous active decision making” (p. 3).

A key area of concern is the potential impact of decision fatigue on the poor. Tierney (2011) referenced a study by Spears (2010) in India where inhabitants of poor villages were offered the chance to buy bars of soap at a greatly discounted price. He found that in the poorest villages, the act of making the decision (whether a purchase was made or not) left them with less willpower as measured in a post-test of how long they could squeeze a handgrip. In more affluent villages, “people’s willpower wasn’t affected significantly... they didn’t have to spend as much effort weighing the merits of the soap versus, say, food or medicine” (p. 7). Spears (2010) analyzed several poverty-related behavioral studies and noted that “although a richer person’s budget may enable her to face a difficult choice

between, perhaps, two vacations, she also has the option of not making this choice at all...if even routine food decisions are costly and difficult for the very poor, then their depleting effect is more inescapable” (p. 23).

Potential impacts to facilitation may be inferred from additional observations by Tierney (2011):

When the brain’s regulatory powers weaken, frustrations seem more irritating than usual. Impulses to eat, drink, spend and say stupid things feel more powerful...ego-depleted humans become more likely to get into needless fights over turf. In making decisions, they take illogical shortcuts and tend to favor short-term gains and delayed costs...they become inclined to take the safer, easier option even when that option hurts someone else.” (p. 12).

Facilitators can prevent or improve some of these potential impacts by:

- Designing reasonable agendas, i.e., what can feasibly be accomplished given the setting, group, task and time available?
- Having frequent breaks and opportunities for refreshment.
- Encouraging participants to dig deeper when it seems that they may be selecting the path of least resistance or the most expeditious solution.
- Watching for signs of fatigue and frustration in participants.
- Networking activities around an issue is also a way to change the energy in the room.
- Hunter (2009) talked about facilitating against “cheap closure” (p. 111) in relation to negative and stuck energy in the group.

Media Multitasking

As our world becomes more digitized and our facilitated groups include more participants that were raised in a wired world, the desire to multi-task and spend more time online seems to be increasing. This may appear in facilitated sessions as participants being reluctant or unwilling to silence smartphones, laptops, and tablets during discussions. Impacts from multitasking are emerging as scientists conduct more studies on this phenomenon. In a study by Ophir et al. (2009) that compared heavy media multitaskers to those who infrequently multitask, they found “...that heavy media multitaskers are more susceptible to interference from irrelevant environmental stimuli and from irrelevant representations in memory” (p. 15583) and “...heavy media multitaskers performed worse on a test of task-switching ability” (p. 15583). In other words, heavy media multitaskers were easily distracted, had trouble sorting tasks in their minds, and had lower performance on memory tasks. In a study conducted by Yuan et al. (2011) in which they compared

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans of the brains of college students who spent approximately 10 hours online daily to brain scans from students who spent less than 2 hours per day online, they found that “gray matter atrophy and white matter...changes of some brain regions were significantly correlated with the duration of internet addiction” (p. 7). Students who spent more time online had less gray matter in the cognition portion of the brain.

In a related story, a medical correspondent for CNN (Cohen, 2011) quoted Dr. David Levy of the Information School at the University of Washington as referring to “popcorn brain – a brain so accustomed to the constant stimulation of electronic multitasking that we’re unfit for life offline where things pop at a much slower pace” (p. 1). Cohen also interviewed Clifford Nass of Stanford regarding studies where he found online multitaskers forgot how to read human faces. Nass believes that “human interaction is a learned skill, and they don’t get to practice it enough” (p. 2). Following a study by Pea et al. (2012) conducted on teenage girls, Nass noted in an interview that “Humans are built to notice these cues – the quavering in your voice, perspiration, body posture, raise of an eyebrow, a faint smile or frown...If I’m not with you face to face, I don’t get these things. Or, if I’m face to face with you and I’m also texting, I’m not going to notice them” (Belsey, 2012, p. 2).

One attempt to deal with multitasking in a wired generation is to use ‘tech breaks’ (Rosen, 2011). Dr. Rosen recommended using tech breaks “...as a way of compromising and learning to live with our need to connect and our need to check in with our virtual and real social worlds” (p. 3). He discussed applications for education and business in which the individual running the meeting gets the group to agree not to use tech devices for a specified period of time in return for receiving breaks in which using technology is encouraged. Rosen also referenced functional MRI studies that revealed “certain areas (of the brain) are activated and then deactivated constantly with much processing happening in the prefrontal cortex which controls attention, interest, motivation and decision-making. It is the latter that is crucial. The prefrontal cortex is the executive controller who juggles the various tasks we perform and helps focus our attention effectively directing the oxygen dance from one brain area to another” during multitasking (Rosen, 2011, p. 2).

Facilitation techniques that might be used in awareness of this information include:

- Getting the group to agree to a ground rule of silencing phones or turning off tablets and laptops during the session.
- Encouraging tech breaks.
- Facilitator capturing detailed notes or ensuring that someone else does, so participants can focus on the discussions since note-taking is a frequent answer as to

why a laptop or tablet is present. If a participant laptop or tablet remains, be sure the sounds are silenced on it.

- If applicable, stressing that the meeting organizers (frequently the managers of the participants) have determined that this meeting/workshop is the highest and best use of their time and have given them “permission” to fully devote their time to the group work or project.
- Using media tools such as projecting facilitated notes on a screen, using individual electronic voting devices to project real-time results, and viewing videos as part of the facilitation process.
- Providing other hands-on process mechanisms such as charts and markers for drawing or mapping or posting and combining ideas on a wall.
- If some report outs or briefings need to be shared with members of the organization that do not attend the facilitated session and the attendees are agreeable, consider using a small video camera to record these key sessions (not the entire meeting) versus distributing a traditional text file or slide program.
- Sharing some multi-tasking research findings to reveal decreased efficiency and accuracy.

Summary

Humans are complex animals whose behavior is believed to be influenced by phylogenetic, physiological and psychological adaptations. Examples explored in this paper included how biorhythms can influence physical and mental performance, herd instinct may generate group think during discussions, territoriality may cause conflict in the workplace, cohesion and cooperation may assume different forms in teams, and how learned helplessness can create disconnects between employees and their organizations. The importance of nonverbal communication and chronemic, haptic and proxemic differences across cultures were introduced. The physical and mental impacts of phenomena such as decision fatigue and media multitasking were explored for their increasing influence on facilitated groups. The author believes that professional facilitation is both an art and a science that blends inputs from many sciences. Personal application of these scientific principles to facilitated sessions provides greater insight into participant behavior.

As popular psychotherapist Nathaniel Branden (2012) said, “The first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance. The third step is action.” Facilitators need to be aware that when they are faced with challenges such as participants departing meetings outside of scheduled breaks, eating too much or too little food and its effect on alertness, exhibiting helplessness or groupthink, or being addicted to media multitasking, that many of these issues have deeply rooted physiological or psychological underpinnings. Strategies to manage behavior and improve individual and group performance

biological or behavioral root cause. An awareness that the world of group work continues to evolve – that participants are becoming more wired, doing more multitasking, and are being bombarded with an ever increasing number of complex decisions to make rapidly – will assist facilitators in developing strategies and interventions to incorporate or cope more effectively with these evolving dynamics.

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Forumspil: Transforming Minds and Hearts within Group Processes

Marie Delgado Ebbesen and Warren Linds

ABSTRACT

This article will introduce teachers of facilitators and group work to an application and further development of the Forumspil workshop method which, inspired by Augusto Boal's methods of Image and Forum Theatre, was created in Sweden. Two professors, one in Denmark, and one in Canada have used the Forumspil workshop method in classes in human relations programs to deal with group learning and facilitation. This article describes how they have applied it in working with students in order to develop awareness both of group process and the role of the facilitator in fostering group work. The authors describe how each has added to the original forms in these two different courses where the students involved are being educated for socially oriented professions. It is the authors' hope that readers can learn from their praxis and adapt it to their own context.

KEY WORDS

leadership development, group process learning, image and representation, values clarification, reflection.

Introduction

At a conference of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed in 2007, Marie Ebbesen presented "Working in a Group: Exemplary Workshop Introducing Forumspil, a Scandinavian Variation". Dr. Warren Linds attended, and following the workshop, the authors both found that it would be useful to do some comparative work cross-continentially with different student groups in similar training programs - Dr. Warren Linds's in Canada and Marie Ebbesen's in Denmark. This article is a product of that collaborative reflection. A background to the approach is provided along with anecdotes of individual experiences with the method. A reflection on what has occurred is offered so that others may learn from the experiences and adapt the process to their own particular facilitation context.

Background

Forumspil is a Swedish variation of Augusto Boal's (1979) techniques of Forum and Image Theatre that is widely used in Scandinavia. As created by Boal, Theatre of the Oppressed (T.O.) is a form of popular community-based education which uses theatre as a tool for transformation. Originally developed out of Boal's work with farmers and workers, it has been adapted and is now used all over the world for social and political activism, conflict resolution, storytelling, community building and legislation (Babbage, 2004; Emert & Friedland, 2011; Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994, 2006; Thompson et al.,

2009; Vettraino & Duffy, 2010). Connected to the vision of Paulo Freire (1970) and his landmark book on education, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, T. O. invites critical thinking about people's lived experiences. It is about analyzing rather than accepting; questioning rather than giving answers. It involves 'acting' rather than just talking. In T.O., the audience members are not just spectators but 'spect-actors' who propose alternative strategies to deal with particular situations.

Forum Theatre, as described and developed by Boal, is the staging of a play which shows a problem or an oppression, and then re-running the same play, but now with the possibility for the spectators (who are thereby transformed into spect-actors) of going on stage and taking over the role of the oppressed person and trying out alternative ways to handle the situation. The Forum is a rehearsal for reality, enabling the spect-actor to act and giving him, or her, an arsenal of ideas for future encounters in life outside of the performance.

Influences from Katrin Byréus in Sweden

Swedish drama teacher Katrin Byréus had been working with socio-drama prior to learning about Boal's techniques. In socio-drama, a group improvises under the guidance of a facilitative-director to show problematic situations, and afterwards uses the improvisation as the gateway to reflection and socio-economic and systemic analysis; in Scandinavia, the method was

developed by Swedish doctor Björn Magnér (1976). After attending a course led by Boal, Byréus combined Image and Forum Theatre with values clarification, a method she came into contact with through John M. Steinberg's book, *Aktiva Värderingar* (1978). Her experiences were published in *Du har huvudrollen i ditt liv* (1990) in Sweden, and two years later, the book appeared in Danish. The book has had a profound influence on how people in the Scandinavian countries work with forum techniques.

Rather than dealing with larger societal oppressions, Byréus was dealing with the everyday, and to some extent situational, oppressions happening in schools and other environments within teaching. These were environments where calling a specific member of the small community 'the oppressor' would have a decidedly negative effect. Thus, in order to use Boal's methods for pedagogical purposes, Byréus made some changes.

One of the main differences in the method is that the aspect of a play being performed in public is de-emphasized. This is why she chose the term Forumspil ('spil' is a versatile word that translates roughly as game/playing/acting, here in a forum), rather than Forum Theatre, to describe her process. This indicates a focus on learning through the process of playing/acting within the forum, and a choice to not have any intention of preparing a forum theatre play to be shown outside the group. The focus is practical and pragmatic, rather than artistic. While aesthetics are of course welcome, they are not part of the goal of the method.

Another major change is the combining of Forum with values clarification: giving participants time for both physically showing what they think (expressing their values) by moving their bodies to a specific place in the room, for verbalizing in smaller groups why they think this or that, and to explain their thoughts and feelings to the rest of the larger group without interruptions. Thus, there is a high focus on the participants' reflection process.

Forumspil is to a large extent a method for creating awareness and a positive approach within a group, and is, in the Scandinavian context, often used as a preventive measure, trying to teach children to be democratic and empathetic, and instigating change through the primary socialization of children in Scandinavian societies.

Image Theater

Everything begins with the image and the image is made up of human bodies. Through perception of the body, everyday experiences become performance. (Auslander, 1994, p. 124).

Based on the idea that "a picture is worth a thousand words" (Jackson in Boal, 1992, p. xx), Image Theater enables participants to create collectively, with their bodies, static group images that represent their stories. Alternative ways to change relationships of power are discussed through an interactive process between facilitators and participants, thus enabling knowing to emerge. The process of the experience leads to reflection, which in turns leads to proposed solutions, which are ultimately tested in new images and thus leads to new experience and a new round of possible actions. This enables participants to try out actions in the workshop room so that they may see what might result from their actions.

Changing our view of the world "necessitates a language that speaks to the lived experiences and felt needs of students, but also a critical language that can problematize social relations which we often take for granted" (MacLaren, 1995, p.74). As forms of re-experiencing and transforming our lives, imagery opens up a space for potential exploration among bodyminds where body shapes in images enable thoughts to emerge as individuals step into the realm of the possible co-created worlds. Reflection within drama allows knowledge to unfold and emerge and to become more explicitly known. As Simon (1994) pointed out, "[o]ur images of ourselves and our world provide us with a concrete sense of what might be possible and desirable" (p. 381).

Values clarification

Values clarification as a method originated in the U.S.A., and was introduced to Byréus through John M. Steinberg's book *Aktiva Värderingar* (1978), where he adapted it to a Scandinavian setting. It has also been further adapted by Byréus since. The approach to teaching in the Scandinavian countries has been largely influenced by the thoughts of Paulo Freire (1970) and other exponents of liberatory pedagogies from the 1960's onwards. Therefore, the idea of using multiple choice surveys and listing things according to importance, used in traditional values clarification in the U.S.A., is a rather foreign concept, whereas discussing and reflecting in groups, or writing in your own words on a subject, is the more common approach in Scandinavia.

Values clarification, as further developed by Byréus, is nearly always combined with movement, involving changing places in a circle if you agree with a spoken statement, walking to the corner which most closely represents your thoughts, or finding your place physically on a spectrum. Once you are there, you will typically reflect in smaller groups, after which the findings of the group are presented to the larger group, who may have the possibility of changing their opinion based on the new input.

As further developed by Marie Ebbesen in the Danish context, values clarification in the Forumspil context involves a specific focus by the facilitator on active inquiry, as the goal is to make each participant aware of his or her own values. Thus, when the

small groups present to the larger group, the facilitator makes sure that each person in the group (rather than a leader or representative of the group) gets to voice an opinion or clarify something, and the facilitator shares what she thinks she hears back to them to let them correct any misconceptions, or clarify further should they think this is necessary. This makes both the general perception of the small group and individual variations become clear to the larger group.

Thus, participants are trained not only in defining for themselves what their values and opinions are, but also in communicating these values and opinions to others without relying on a leader within the group or silently accepting a stronger peer's opinions.

Forumspil Explored with Classes in Denmark

The original workshop, upon which Dr. Warren Linds later based his work, emerged from Marie Ebbesen's wish to explore whether using Forumspil to process the theme group work could create a better understanding among students at University 1 of:

- their own opinions about what is important when working in groups;
- their peers' notions of what is important in connection to working in groups; and
- how to solve problems in groups.

The workshop was tried out on several groups of students, and they participated in a survey in order to discover what they thought of the process and what they themselves deemed that they learned by participating. Ebbesen used a Freirian approach where:

...educators have to work with the experiences that students, adults, and other learners bring to schools and other educational sites...the pedagogical experience here becomes an invitation to make visible the languages, dreams, values, and encounters that constitute the lives of those whose histories are often actively silenced. (Giroux in Freire, 1985, p. xxi)

Also, as will be apparent below, Ebbesen made some changes to the Forumspil format in order to create a workshop which was specifically suited to the participants and their theme.

The majority of the students (who are from 18-55 years old) were the first generation in their families to receive post-secondary education, and come from one of the poorest rural areas in Denmark. *Fatalism* is predominant among the students, and many fall into a category of individuals showing fatalistic optimism, as described by Rosatto (2005) as being:

...a construct defined as an immobilizing acceptance of an alienating reality and dismal future, in one sense a kind of 'anti-optimism'. It is a belief that events are

fixed in time, resulting in feelings of impotence and inability to change the course of events. (p. 57).

Rosatto further wrote that a person showing fatalistic optimism "recognizes the problem of unequal power yet is without hope of changing it" (p.47). The fatalism in this case was a result of the local history of the particular part of Denmark, and in practice means that many students will both have chosen their line of study in order to prevent other children or youth or women from having the same negative experiences they themselves have had, while at the same time believing, and verbalizing in the classroom, that overall things cannot be changed.

These students are enrolled in a Bachelor degree in Social Education and aim to work in nurseries, kindergartens, and after school programs, as well as becoming the pedagogical caregivers of people with cognitive impairments, drug-abusers, and other groups with special needs. Therefore, how the students treat each other and relate to each other becomes of vital importance. These students will become models of adult behaviour for many children, so the development of humans who will, and can, work together towards positive goals begins with them.

Work in groups is used extensively in the University's program. In many of the classes, group work is essential to the process of learning. The students have three internship periods built into their 3½ years of study, and it makes sense to process the experiences they have from the internships in groups containing students who have been (or are) in the same type of internship - that is to say, taking care of the same age- or ability-group.

Also, these students are trained specifically for a job involving caring, and will be working closely with colleagues all their working life, so they need to be prepared for that.

The generative theme (one "that elicits interest from the participants because it is drawn from their lives, or, more particularly, from the limit situations that define them" [Peckham, 2003, p. 231]) in the workshops is 'working in a group'. Students brought this theme into the process, thus giving their facilitator the idea to create the workshop. The students defined an area of vital importance to them, drawn from their lives, which they felt put them in limiting situations. Their education draws extensively on group work, and it is within group work that most of the oppressions they experience amongst themselves occur.

While the students had talked a lot about groups and group dynamics in other classes, this apparently had not achieved the intended purpose of making them able to work well together in groups, nor to feel confident about handling problems that arose. They might have understood some things in principle but were to a large extent not able to actively use any of the methods or

knowledge they had attained in more theory-oriented classes. Abstractly knowing is not the same as doing. Thus the idea was to develop a workshop that could create the space for a physical approach, giving the students a chance to use their entire bodies, and move, talk, experience and learn, i.e. creating the space for an aesthetic learning process.

Processing the generative theme through Forumspil, while teaching the students something about working in a group, can also teach them on a more general level that they have choices and can generate change.

Workshop Format

The workshop format included warm-up games, image theatre, values clarification and forum, and those students who participated took part in all of these consecutively.

Warm-up games

The students begin with a number of short warm-up games. The warm-ups were designed by Ebbesen herself in order to specifically focus on enabling participants to feel secure, get a sense of space, and become physically warmed up, and in addition, to establish a comfortable relationship between participants.

Boal's (1992) games are deliberately avoided because so many of his exercises focus clearly on some aspect of oppression. Even though they will have spoken of problems singly or in small groups, it is Ebbesen's experience with students that, because they have a strong identity as 'nice people or caregivers', and because of peer pressure, they tend in the larger group to not want to openly admit to having any problems at all concerning working with each other. In addition, they tend to shy away from the term oppression. They need to feel very safe in order to openly admit to, accept, and then be willing to examine their problems.

However, Machine of Rhythms (1992, p. 94-96) is used; this is where the students build a human machine in groups of 6-8 people by adding one person at a time (each adding their own movement and sound). Afterwards, there is a debriefing on what they discovered, such as whether there was an unspoken consensus in the group concerning the form the machine took - there usually turns out to be so. In this way, the theme of groups is introduced, albeit in an abstract form.

Image Theatre

Theme: Transforming a group that does not function into a group that does function. In groups of 10 participants, each group shapes an image of a group that is dysfunctional. The groups are asked to remember their exact positions and bodily expressions. Then the groups look at one of these 10-person images at a time. The rest of the participants (everyone except the 10 people in the image) read the image following the

question of "What do you see?" Helped by further questions, focusing their attention but not guiding towards specific answers, they tell everything they see in the image of feelings, expressions, alliances, exclusion and group dynamics, and where in the image they see it, that is to say: in which people, and where in the body language, positioning, and facial expressions is the experience identified. The facilitator then puts their hand on the shoulder of each person in the image. As this is done, each person voices the thoughts of the role-person they are playing in the image. The other participants outside the image then physically reshape the image to what they think will show a functioning group. It is emphasized that they have to start with the people in their roles that they saw in the first image.

Once the group has completed the image, the facilitator again touches each person in the image in turn and the participants hear their thoughts. The group is asked if they are satisfied with their work, 'Does everybody in the image seem comfortable?' If the answer is 'No,' they get a chance to reshape and, if necessary again, listen to their thoughts until they agree that they have a satisfactory image with all characters feeling comfortable and willing to work together. This procedure takes place with each of the 10-person images. For the process facilitator, it is of utmost importance that all participants feel that their work is validated; therefore, using only a few images as representatives of the whole is not an option.

Enabling all the participants, with the exception of the 10 in the image, to work together on changing the image, is Ebbesen's particular contribution to the image process. In their image work, Byréus and Boal have only one person from amongst the spectators at a time changing the image. Often the group of participants having to work together is conducive, particularly because as they work together on changing the image, many astute comments are made. They discuss, for example, what the roles/persons in the image said when they gave voice to their thoughts, how they appeared to feel, and what would be better ways to accommodate a particular role's personality and need for space, another role's need for closeness, and so on. The combined empathy and experience of the whole group is used to find solutions.

Almost every time this exercise is conducted, the first idea of the group of participants is to get the roles or persons in the dysfunctional group (the image) into some kind of circle facing each other, often holding hands or shoulders. Nearly every time it turns out that hardly any of the people or roles themselves in the image feel comfortable like that. Very often someone in a role will say, 'I feel like I am in some kind of cult!' or 'This is much too close!' while others say things like: 'Now we can work' or 'I am happy'. Only then do the participants begin to be aware of individual differences and try to make a functioning group with real people with personalities rather than by creating a symbolic image of collaboration and unity.

Values Clarification in a Circle

The participants sit in a circle and move to a new chair every time a statement is read aloud with which they agree with. There is always one more chair than people, so there is always a chair free for participants to move to. This emphasizes a right to express an opinion even when no one else shares it.

The statements used in this exercise come from comments made by the students while working in groups prior to participating in the workshop. These statements included various (abundant) frustrations and some positive experiences. A list of these comments in a certain order is made in an attempt to create a balance so there is no obvious direction. In order to keep the Freirean approach, the statements are used with the original wording of the students. This differs from Byréus (1990; 1992) who described the facilitator making up the statements used in values clarification exercises of this type. She stressed the need to not make the facilitator's views obvious, but she also underlined the importance of keeping this in mind when paraphrasing the sentences of participants. As the sentences used come from students this point is less relevant, however, it is worth keeping in mind if one should decide to use the original Byréus method. Moreover, the facilitator should use a neutral tone for reading out the statements, thus giving space for students to discover their own values. The aim is to create a space for reflection where students can come to their own conclusions.

The overall starting point in this exercise is the statement: "I agree that...", and then at each mention of a statement, those who agree move to another chair in the circle. The process statements Ebbesen has gathered and use include:

- It is lovely to work together with others;
- It is wonderful to work alone;
- It is most fun to work together with people who know a bit more than oneself;
- It is hard to be in a group with a very dominating person;
- It is hard to be in a group with a very quiet person;
- It is important to be able to contact each other at home; and
- One only works well together if there is the right chemistry.

Structuring the statements is another addition of Ebbesen. Contradictory or seemingly opposed statements are coupled, placing them after each other on the list, in order to create the possibility for the participants to realise that sometimes they agree with both of the statements. It is a way of making evident the complexity of values and opinions. This is important because it is part of what makes group processes complex.

Finally, Ebbesen has changed the process in that all the statements are read out before opening the discussion. This is because of the specific groups she works with, i.e. adults, as they have a tendency to want to seem consistent, and are rather aware

of their image. In order to allow participants to realize their own inconsistencies, all of the statements are read relatively fast so most participants will not have the time to choose to answer in a way they think fits with what they answered before. They have to move straight away, following their gut reaction to each sentence, and therefore presumably answer more truthfully. Discussing each value after each sentence, as Byréus describes in her book, while particularly good in work with children, is less appropriate here.

The list contains 22 statements, and students always ask for more, but it can be useful to stop before they lose interest or become overwhelmed. By answering the questions according to their truthful reactions, most students have a chance to (and usually do when the group discusses what they noticed) become aware both of their values and opinions but also of the ambiguity that is often involved. They realize that their own opinions are to some extent situational, and that this might be the background of some of the misunderstandings within groups. There is also the realization that the things they take for granted are not necessarily the same as what their fellow students take for granted.

Four corner exercise

Here the students go to the corner which represents what they find most difficult about working in a group. The starting point here is the statement: "The most difficult part of co-operating in a group is..."

- if someone feels isolated or left out;
- to make everybody do a good piece of work;
- to be in a group where the chemistry is not right; or
- something else.

The statements are again taken directly from students, and the three chosen statements are those that the facilitator has heard the most often in conversations with students. The open corner, 'something else', is important because for some students, none of the three common statements cover what they find most difficult about co-operating in a group. After having gone to the corner in which the students feel they belong, they talk over with their peers:

- why they are in that specific group;
- what they understand as the difficulties adhering to the chosen statement; and
- how they feel when they experience the problem/difficulty.

The facilitator quietly walks around, listening here and there so as to get an idea of where the conversations are going. When the first excitement has subsided, and after the groups seem to have discussed the three points mentioned above, (but before they have talked the subject to death), each group gets to present their theme to the rest of the class.

When all four groups have presented, the students are told that they have the option of moving to another group if something they have heard makes them feel that they belong in that group rather than in the one they initially chose. If any group consists of a single person, I take care to underline that the person chose the corner in question for a good reason, and then ask if, for the sake of the next piece of work, the person will please join the group that is his or her second choice.

Forum

The existing groups from the exercise above are asked to produce a small play which demonstrates the problem they have discussed. They need to show everyone a situation where the group process goes wrong. They choose either an incident that has happened to a person in the group or they create an exemplary incident based on the experiences of the people in the group. As Augusto Boal would say, the question is not if what you are showing is 'reality' (it happened exactly like this) but rather if what is being shown is true (this is what we experienced; this is the essence of the experience).

As facilitator, Ebbesen stresses that they are not expected to create great art, but to show everyone what they have experienced so that together, the participants can work on finding possible ways of tackling the problems. This tends to work well because they then focus on showing rather than acting.

Once they have created the plays, they perform their play for the other students. The facilitator asks the students who are watching what they see and who they feel sorry for/who they think would want a different outcome of the situation and why. This person/role becomes the one which can be changed by someone replacing this character. After this initial reflection, the same play is re-run, but now with the possibility for the spectators (who are thereby transformed into spect-actors) to go on stage and take over the role of the person everyone has agreed they can change (the protagonist). They then try out alternative ways to handle the situation. After each intervention, the students reflect on what changed in the scene with this particular intervention and why. Trying out several interventions is important to ensure that the students do not leave the room with the idea that there is only one right way to solve each individual problem.

When the group as a whole feels satisfied that the theme of one play has been processed to a reasonable degree, the next of the plays take place, and are processed in a similar fashion. The Forum is the rehearsal for the world outside the workshop, enabling the spect-actor to act and thereby giving themselves an arsenal of ideas for future encounters in real life. It is a relatively safe laboratory where the focus is not just 'What could I have done?' but rather 'What might be a good idea next time I find myself in a similar situation?' Done as Forumspil, where there is

no intention of performing for people outside the group, and no focus on theatre as such, the method becomes very accessible to people who do not like to be on stage.

Outcomes

The students with whom Ebbesen generally works tend to dread drama, having been raised strictly to conform (no nonsense allowed), but the combination of group Values Clarification work with Forum in workshop form i.e. Forumspil, and a process rather than product focus, has led to positive responses. All students in the initial experiment answered, in surveys, that they found the workshop to be good and would find it a good experience for other students. No one mentioned the drama approach as negative. On the contrary, they liked it. Finally, there were various reflections on what they had learned. The one Ebbesen was particularly struck by was: "I found out that I can say something".

Following the initial experiment, 'Working in a Group' has been used with students who are in the Bachelors of Social Education programme, and it has also been part of the education of the social work students that are studying at the University College Sjælland in Denmark.

Applying Forumspil in a Small Group Leadership Class in Canada

'Leadership in Small Groups' is a course in the Department of Applied Human Sciences at Concordia University in Canada. This class is taught in the second year of a full-time Bachelors program. There are also students attending who are taking a post-secondary certificate in a relevant discipline and others who are taking a minor along with a major in another subject such as Sociology, Business Administration, Dance, or Psychology. In this particular year's class, there were 34 students in this course from a wide range of ages (21-55). Since the course is taught at night, many of the students come directly from their day-time occupations. Although there are a few full time students with part-time jobs, a large percentage of the class are working full-time and studying part-time.

Students learn effective ways to observe and interpret the significance of group behaviour for the purpose of intervening effectively. The course assists students to identify their leadership styles and to foster flexibility in diverse group situations by:

- identifying group and leadership concepts, practices and qualities that either foster or undermine the health of groups and organizations;
- using theories of group development and leadership to inform practices;
- identifying their own skills in facilitation and process observation through opportunities to lead and observe groups in class;

- connecting process observation, group diagnosis and intervention from a leadership perspective;
- structuring meetings, seminars, and conferences to enable the full potential of group members to emerge;
- developing skills in communicating and relating to others across differences; and
- critically reflecting on experiences and plan for action.

The foundational approach to the course is based on John Heron's (1999) work on facilitative leadership. One key point he outlined is that ideally the responsibility for learning should rest with the learner, with the facilitator guiding. In order for this to happen, learning has “four interdependent forms, which in many different ways complement and support each other” (p. 3). These forms are, in order: experiential, imaginal, conceptual and practical learning.

Therefore, the course aims to use these four stages to help student-facilitators both understand and develop their own personal style of facilitation, providing the essential foundations for developing, through an experiential approach (Kolb, 1984), effective facilitative skills that suit both a facilitator's personality and then enable them to closely match their skills with the situations they encounter. An underlying assumption about this program is that accomplishing tasks within groups is enhanced when those giving leadership understand how groups develop and how their dynamics shift. The students go on to employment where group training, leadership and human relations skills are applied.

The pre-requisite course for this class is a course involves working in a group to understand a particular theory of group dynamics and then use that theory to analyze work together. Therefore, many of the students have experienced both positive and challenging group experiences, and they explore these experiences in this next class. Though students have reflected on their own participation in groups, they have not had the opportunity to question their own skills or roles as facilitators or leaders. Their experiences in the course, and their lack of experience at reviewing their leadership roles, provided a good transition to the Forumspil workshop which was integrated into the second week of their six months-long class in facilitative leadership.

The Forumspil Workshop

The workshop began with warm up activities, for example, walk together, one stops, all others stop, two starts, all others start. Then, in pairs, back to back, engage in greetings with a handshake, then in fours doing the same thing. Some people linked arms and then found it easier, so they made the link that it was easier if the group members were linked.

Because the course is on leadership, the lecturer had asked the students in the first week of class to complete the phrase *I lead...*

with a paragraph. They did not put their names on the papers. The paragraphs were then collected, shuffled and distributed randomly at the end of the class. Students then read aloud their classmates' sentences. The sentence 'I lead' was sufficiently ambiguous that it resulted in some surprising, and personal, statements. For example, one student wrote, “I lead because I know where I want to go and try not to let anyone get in my way”. Another wrote, “I believe a good leader doesn't point himself out, but has a quiet, noticeable presence and that's how I try to lead”. A third shared, “My sister is fifteen years old and since I can remember, she has looked at me as if I was her role model. Therefore, I try to give her a good example so that she can become a great adult”. Then the teaching team took the statements home and grouped them into four categories of statements about leadership and brought them back to the class and posted them in different areas of the classroom. One of the groups of statements included sentences were identified (but did not name) as encompassing controlling or directive leadership; one for charismatic leadership; one for situational leadership; and one for collaborative leadership. Each student then looked at all four lists and chose the one which best fit their preferred 'leading' style

What happened in the class

A large number of people went to the charismatic leadership style, and smaller numbers went to the collaborative and situational styles. No one chose the directive style. (One supposition the teaching team made from this is that in the classroom and departmental culture, which is founded on the helping profession, to be directive or controlling is seen as a negative. This was also the teaching team's experience in previous classes. Students invariably had a negative view of 'directive' as being authoritarian and were often caught in the binary between authoritarian (“all determination of policy by the leader” [Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1970, p. 202]) and laissez-faire (“complete freedom for group or individual decision, without any leader participation” [Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1970, p. 202]) styles of leadership. One goal of the class was to help the students see another view where the two styles are equally useful at different times in the life of a group.

After choosing their groups, students then discussed what the style from the group of statements meant by giving it a title, prepared an image of a dysfunctional group, and tried to make the group function better. Following this, they discussed the role of group facilitation in making the group functional and the type of facilitator that would be needed in this case. The following is a summary of the observations of the workshop based on notes recorded during the activities by a teaching assistant.

Leadership Styles and Dealing with Dysfunctional Groups

The four groups were quickly taken through the basics of sculpting participants into images - arranging expressions on

faces, stretching limbs, pointing fingers, tilting heads, huddling people together or separating out individuals until each body, each group, becomes a visual depiction of a dysfunctional group.

Situational Leadership ('I lead when I feel the need to for certain situations')

The group summarizes these qualities by calling this leadership “according to what the situation calls for”. They add, “When no one else steps forward, when I am asked to lead, when I feel like I have some experience and expertise”.

An all female group sits comfortably, discussing before sculpting. The resulting tableau portrays most of the group as sitting in a semi-circle: some look away; one talks on her cell phone; a member is sprawled, legs outstretched, a hat pulled over her face; while another stands with an angry expression on her face.

The facilitator of the class tapped the shoulder of each individual in the image in turn and asked the character to speak from inside their characters. “I don’t want to be here”, says one. Another stated, “I’m so over the top”. Yet another: “I’m pissed at you”.

The facilitator asked the other students who are watching this image, “What is going on?”

“No one is paying attention; people are doing their own thing,” responds the class. Observing the woman standing, the class points out that “one member is reacting”, and sees a potential leader in this because “there is nothing positive, but the expression of anger is at least something”. The facilitator asks, “Why is she mad?” Someone reasons that it is because everyone is withdrawn, that there is a sense of rejection, particularly from the woman with the hat. The facilitator asked those looking at the image to try and change it so that it became a more functional group. “What needs to happen first?” he asked. The class wanted her to ‘lose the hat’, describing it as a ‘blocker’. When her face was exposed, the class commented that she looked like she was crying and placed someone’s hands on her shoulders in a gesture of ‘empathy and concern’. They hung up the cell phone and moved another member into the middle of the group “so she gets everyone’s attention; in order to create community”.

Interestingly, the leadership of the group appears to represent a response to the group’s need for cohesion by attracting everyone’s attention, creating community. This is situational leadership, where “effective leadership is contingent upon matching styles with situations” (Rothwell, 2001, p. 141).

The facilitator asked, ‘What type of facilitation skills were needed to change this?’ The students responded with “Active listening; being present for the group; supportive environment.”

Directive leadership ('I lead because I feel I have the power to control')

No students choose to stand beside this leadership quality. It is suspected that this is because this was only the second class of the term and there is insufficient trust developed for students to take the risk in choosing this leadership quality so early in the term. In previous years, this style was chosen, but the workshop was conducted in the third or fourth class, so there was a better atmosphere of safety for students to choose this highly directive leadership style as fitting a particular set of students’ feelings about themselves.

Charismatic leadership ('I lead to inspire people to make the most of their experiences')

A large group of students stood beside the sheet outlining the above qualities. They define what appeared to resemble *charismatic leadership*. They did not choose the name *charismatic*; they called themselves ‘leaders’ and suggested that their personal power attracted people to follow them, which somewhat reflects the description of the directive leadership. One man was outspoken on this but someone else (a man) tried to add the idea of communication as being crucial. There was a definite sense of masculine power with the few women appearing to jockey for acceptance. The teaching team perceived one woman, for example, as presenting herself as ‘being one of the guys’. The group’s reasons were, “We are natural leaders; I take charge and initiate; I charm others into seeing things my way; I make it fun so people want to follow.”

The large group then separated themselves into two smaller groups.

First group

The group had arranged themselves with a triangle of three angry men in confrontational poses while other group members had turned away. There are looks of frustration and disgust on their faces. The class named this “aggressive energy, anger, negative attitude”, and some commented on the conflict “because people are trying to leave”.

Interestingly, some had seen the reason for the conflict as the turning away of the other members (perhaps influenced from the prior image) while others saw the cause of the deserting members as the fighting stance of the three men at the centre of the image they had created.

Different members of the image group spoke: “I am really frustrated,” “I am so fed up,” “I am ignoring what’s going on about me”.

The facilitator asked, ‘How can this change?’ The class then changed the three men, lowering their arms, erasing the scowls. Several characters in the image group spoke: “This is scary”; “Guys, cut it out”; “I hope this gets calmer.” Further changes were made, the image group was asked to sit, and a central

figure or man was in the central position with arms outstretched in an open gesture. “He’s being a mediator!” someone in the class called out; another voice added, “Let’s talk, come together.” A woman previously considered disinterested was moved to the front of the action; this was unexpected and surprised the class.

When students were asked how to facilitate this change, different voices responded: “mediating; staying connected; not being afraid to act; flexibility.”

Second group

The second group was arranged loosely in a circle, everyone seemed upset; someone was sticking their tongue out, with a man in the center shaking his fist. A crouched woman had covered her ears while another cried into her hands. “No one is paying attention; everyone is separated”, the watching students called out. They moved the group members to face each other, saying, “They should be looking at each other”. The class then sculpted smiling faces and decided that the woman sticking out her tongue was relating to the man with his raised fist.

Someone remarks that all the women had their faces turned away. The facilitator then split the class into gendered groups to discuss what to do. After a short period of discussion, the women moved the image group around to surround the angry man in the center, turning the women’s faces inward; they left another man out to represent a victim. The men changed the group into three hugging couples, joking about how women reacted to the anger and solved the problem. This was met with a groan from several members of the group.

It is interesting to note that both groups that had identified charismatic leadership as a theme had overt conflict images portrayed, whilst the situational and collaborative themed leadership groups had portrayed issues with participation and disinterest.

Collaborative Leadership (‘I lead most often by example and collaboration with my colleagues’)

The group standing beside this list identified the leadership style as ‘leading by example’. Reasons for choosing this were “it is very important to consider people’s feelings; to include everyone; to lead from the heart”.

The students in this group portrayed a group sitting facing in all directions; the image is crowded with individuals in pairs locked in distinct story lines, one member is crouched in front of another, others appeared to be arguing, a woman weeping. This was described as: “Different power relationships; too many people trying to lead at the same time; multiple hierarchies; all of them are isolated”. The voices from the image group recount, “I feel inferior”. Another character said, “I don’t want to talk to anyone.” Yet another shared, “I don’t agree; get involved”.

The class decided that some of the group should stand facing in, “inviting them to be part of the group”. They took a woman’s hands off of her hips, and turned to another, saying, “This member needs to see the group”. The changed image had everyone circled around the woman who was weeping. The facilitator asked, “What is the main thing that has to happen here to get to a functioning group?” “Someone needed to initiate,” the class answered. (In other words, in order to lead by example, someone needs to initiate.)

The class returned to their original image groups. The facilitator asked them to look carefully at each group’s image and to choose the group member that they most resonated with. Thus four themes, four stories, and four groups had been formed.

Values Clarification

The group then engaged in the *values clarification* exercise with the whole class seated in a circle. The instructions were: “When you agree with a value you are to cross over to the other side of the circle”. The facilitator then read out different group values while students crossed over in varying amounts. For example, the facilitator said, ‘It’s lovely to work with others’. Many of the students, but not all, crossed. The facilitator then said, ‘It’s hard to be in a group with a dominating person’ and this statement made everyone move across.

In a large circle the group then reflected on what had happened. Some comments included: “I noted who didn’t move for some things, and I thought, oh really, you don’t want everyone to have their say!”; “Groups are complicated.”; “People are complicated.”; “All work no play people don’t see eye to eye on that.”; “Everyone wants to work with someone who knows more, except that there are situations for instance where you are playing a management role when it’s hard to be with those who know more than you.”; and “If you are strictly task oriented you might lose some people.”

The facilitator then asked the class to go back into small sub-groups that formed earlier and talk about their values in those groups.

Facilitative leadership and how to deal with dysfunctional groups

The *Leadership in Small Groups* course is one focused on the leadership of groups, so it was important to conclude the workshop by adding in an element of Forumspil. We added the development of new images to an activity on dysfunctional groups so that the facilitator(s) would have a resource to help make these groups functional.

The following four images of facilitator were made and the students titled them as:

CONVENOR. The students interpret this image as: relaxed atmosphere – outdoor class under a tree – facilitator standing up – learning – team work – central person with key role – inviting – engagement – providing ideas and thoughts

DOCUMENTER. The students interpret this image as: class room setting – teaching - taking notes - paying attention – observing – the facilitator is the one with the paper – everyone is looking at her – motivating – instructing – directing – delegating - giving feedback –communication – guiding the group – working together

CONVENOR. The students interpret this image as: fishbowl – unity – connection – the link – women in center are facilitating are demonstrating – Ouija board séance – leading by example – checking on everybody else – modeling a task, a process, a way to relate to each other.

OBSERVER: The students interpret this image: enthusiastic – facilitator is in middle – he is standing back and listening – observing – talking it out – facilitator is listening –shouldn't play a practical role; we should be able to function without him – support the group when needed.

The facilitator asked that the four facilitators identified from the functioning groups stand in the center and asked the rest of the class to decide who they identify most with. Groups of students formed behind their class members. Thus, each student identified themselves with their particular facilitator style and began to think about how they could facilitate, using this stance or role, in a dysfunctional group.

Comments from students

An evaluation form with open-ended questions was handed out to students. They were asked to complete it anonymously in the week between classes (in order to provide sufficient reflection time on the experience).

Methodology

Interactive learning

Students found the interactive elements “very important to my learning”, “body sculpting of positive/negative group experiences”, and enabled them “to visualize a conflicting group in a fun way”.

Experiential learning

There were several comments about learning by example and through experience. For example,

“I learn by doing, seeing, experiencing and feel most students felt the same way”.

Physical learning about groups

Visual activities required students to be engaged physically. As one student commented, “I retained my learning and feeling more easily as I had a mental picture to refer to. Remolding negative experience snapshots showed that changing one aspect can change the experience...putting one person in the middle had a ripple effect in the entire group”. Another added, “I was able to visualize a dysfunctional group and a functional group and see [emphasis in the original] the difference between both”. “By using bodies as a medium I was able to visually create a reflection of our experiences in group, by actively posing I was able to demonstrate a feeling visually and ensure the class connected to the emotion I was portraying”. “I liked the molding of a dysfunctional group, [learning] all about body language, [which is a] very important aspect of group interaction; non verbal cues have huge impact”.

Themes about content and group work

Students were asked about how the content of the workshop, in terms of working in groups, came out through the visual methodology.

Learning about facilitation's role in a group's functioning

Students commented that facilitators have a major role in groups. One commented, “I need to determine values of fellow members in order to decide my level of leadership – some group members consistently choose the same roles in groups, followers reluctant to express thoughts for fear of conflict”. This is linked to how another student viewed the responsibility of all group members: “I learned that repairing a dysfunctional group is a collective process. I could see from the tableau exercise that solving the ‘obvious’ needs to be discussed by everyone and not just those in conflict”.

Enabling reflection

The method enabled students to engage actively in reflection. One commented, “I learned that I am passive, following the flow; if no flow I feel obligated to fill in, (situational) comfortable to connect with others that are the same. I no longer see it as lazy and simply as a way to function in a group”. “I learned through reflection and got to know that I am a pro-active leader, eager to share as well as attentive and willing to listen”.

The interactive method of image helped some students to see what needed to be done in dysfunctional groups. “It was comforting to share similar experiences, [and I] realized that sometimes it takes only a small or simple act to address problems or difficult moments”.

The teaching team also asked the students for some suggestions on how the workshop process might be improved. Several asked to have more time to process each stage of the workshop, giving time to reflect on it and give feedback, and maybe discuss in small groups what they were going through.

Discussion

As can be seen above, using the Forumspil workshop on group work with different student bodies and within different class contexts created some interesting outcomes, which led to a discussion between the authors:

Ebbesen: “What is particularly noticeable in our accounts of the workshop is the difference in focus, where my workshop focuses on the individual taking responsibility, making their values clear to others, and yours is on leadership.”

Linds: “Yes. As I mentioned earlier, I use Heron’s 1999 model of learning in four inter-related stages. I see Forumspil as being both experiential (learning through experience) and imaginal (learning through the intuitive and image) forms. Through the experience of the workshop and the use of *Image*, students encounter the world of groups and identify patterns of form and process. The *Values Clarification* activity brings in concepts of working in groups and the discussion of types of facilitator brings in a practical or applied component. (So does your Four Corners exercise but I didn’t have time to do that aspect in my particular class).”

Ebbesen: “What my students indicate is that they learn more on the personal level. They do, as a group, identify patterns, particularly when playing out the stories showing the kinds of dysfunctions in groups they find hardest to cope with, but it seems that what was the biggest revelation is that there is an impact, both when they do something and when they do not do something. Similarly, they realise that bad leaders only attain power because ultimately their choice to do nothing themselves allows the bad leaders to continue to lead.”

“In the values clarification circle students begin to realize that other students cannot guess what they think, or what their values are, particularly when some of their values turn out to be circumstantial - as in ‘sometimes I don’t want small talk and other times I think it is wonderful’. Somehow it introduces more nuance into their perception, and opens the door to the concept of possible change.”

“Interestingly enough, very few of my students would define themselves as leaders because in their terminology that refers to being authoritarian, so despite the fact that in their professional lives they are constantly in a leadership role in relation to the people in their care, very few will willingly acknowledge that they are leaders.”

Linds: “My students also confront their own personal attitudes, but often this happens more deeply in the pre-requisite course which is, after all, entirely focused on group work. In my course they shift into how they might work better as facilitative leaders with and in groups.”

“The students also initially define being a leader as being directive and quite authoritarian. As you saw in the workshop, they were reticent about identifying themselves with the directive type of leadership; a large majority and most of the men chose the more charismatic set of leadership qualities. Similar to your classes, our students generally tend to be ‘helpers’ and identify themselves as strong in empathy and feelings.”

“Heron (1999) feels this reticence to identify as a leader comes from students being used to authoritarian forms of authority and, ‘learners who emerge from it are conditioned to learn in ways that are relatively short on autonomy and holism. In a special way, they need leading into freedom and integration, when they enter another more liberated educational culture where these values are affirmed’ (p. 24). So I consciously use the term ‘facilitative leadership’ instead of the word leadership alone. There are three modes of this kind of leadership: hierarchical, where the facilitator directs the learning process; cooperative, where power is shared with the group; and autonomous, where you ‘create the conditions within which people can exercise full self-determination in their learning’ (p. 17). Each one of these is appropriate in certain contexts. As a facilitator, one should be able to move ‘from mode to mode and dimension to dimension in the light of the changing situation in the group’ (Heron, 1999, p. 17). Forumspil, with its emphasis on helping groups move from dysfunctional to functional groups, helped students see how the type of facilitation mode used would help in this process.”

Ebbesen: At least where my students are concerned, I believe they realize that leadership need not be static; that perhaps there need not be a single leader but that leadership can in fact be shared if all take responsibility. In this, it is my belief that Forumspil on group work develops empowerment.

It might also make the students realize that when they do their job well, they will quite often feel redundant to step in to lead because those in their care are taking responsibility for the process. I am not quite sure exactly how this works out, as the students tend to be dependent on external positive feedback. They might actually feel reluctant to lose the visible leadership role because they then lose their feedback and feelings of importance, which might in fact work contrary to the ideal that they have of working towards empowerment. So what happens to the caregiver identity if those they care for get to the point where they seem able to take care of themselves?

If we are to take this process further, it might be interesting to develop a Forumspil workshop that looks at the role as caregiver and which creates a space for examining the identity of the caregiver and possible conflicts involving leadership, empowerment and power balance.

Linds: Yes. I see this in my students too. They want to control the process. When I propose to them the possibility of the facilitator fostering the autonomy of the group, they take it to mean to completely leave the group to its own devices, without any guidance. This was brought to the fore for me once when a student guided me in a blind exercise, where I was blindfolded. The facilitator leading the entire group gave the direction to have the guide facilitate my movement over or around an obstacle by just stating what was in front of me and whether it was to the left or right. The student guiding me could not do this. She kept telling me where to go, which is the more directive mode. I asked the student afterwards why she did that, and she replied, "I was worried about you knocking into something".

The nature of the autonomous mode of facilitative leadership is giving space for the group to engage in self-directed practice. The best image I can think of this autonomous mode of facilitation was one of the facilitator standing outside the group, but with their body positioned so they could be there to support the group if anyone were to fall.

Ebbesen: I completely concur. It keeps spiraling back to the conflict between self-image and reflection. The question is how one can facilitate the examination of power structures among students whose self-image is centred on taking care of people, rather than being facilitators who help people gain their independence, and how their choice of this identity influences their space for reflection and consequently their way of interacting with those in their charge.

Linds: Our students concentrate inordinately on how a group functions, but are often unaware of how their own facilitation and participation styles affect the group. Through the Forumspil process, we were able to identify the different facilitative leadership styles and how they may be used in dealing with dysfunctional groups. The *Images* they created were of obvious problems in groups, but I find that it is the subtle issues in groups that are the most difficult to deal with. How might this process enable reflection on some of these difficult problems to resolve? I think one route we might explore is using reflective writing in bringing these issues to the surface.

Following our Forumspil workshop, I asked students to not only fill out evaluation forms, but also to write reflections about their learning by discussing the role of the facilitator when dealing with difficult moments in groups:

- Detail what you experienced in the class. Choose two activities and talk about the insights or questions that were raised.
- How are these insights important in terms of what you want to learn about facilitating in groups?

Due to ethical concerns I could not ask students for consent to use their writing while I was teaching the class, I cannot quote

from these reflections, but from reviewing them, I see the students provided some profound insights into what they learned through the workshop about their own roles in groups. Several commented on how the values clarification exercise enabled them to look at their own values in working in groups and realize that, even though students came from different backgrounds, the majority of the class had similar values. On the other hand, it raised questions about how to work with the different values of the minority who didn't cross the values circle at the same time. Students also commented on how body language conveyed both startling depictions of groups in crisis as well as subtle hints of non-participation. The *Images* of dysfunctional groups enabled students to also wonder how these situations arose. Lastly, students commented on how the different situations that were portrayed required different interventions and the variety of physical stances (which represent a variety of facilitation techniques) a facilitator has to have available in order to bring about positive change. This enabled students to connect these stories as close to the 'real world' of working in groups as possible.

Ebbesen: Reflective writing is obviously an option, and I did get some interesting written comments from the students who participated in the survey about their learning. At the same time, I think one needs to be aware that the body may actually sometimes learn much more in the process than the mind is able to formulate afterwards. To my mind, this is the essence of why it is worth further developing the use of Forumspil within the education system. It creates a space for students to, through their bodies, understand parts of their own and others' ways of interacting. Parts to which they do not have access before the bodies are let into the room.

Conclusion

Knowledge acquired aesthetically is already, in itself, the beginning of a transformation (Boal, 1995, p. 109).

The authors are teachers in programs which have an emphasis on group work, both as a way of learning and building collective knowledge, and as a process that students will need to be familiar with as group processes are often part of careers in the social service system. However, it has been noticed that students often vent their frustrations, fears, anger or sadness with working in groups. Several members of a group may be uncomfortable about the way their group works, but none of them may want to be the person bringing the problems out in the open within the group. These students generally like to be nice (that is, after all, why they chose to study to become caregivers), and shy away from conflict. At the same time, they show a clear need to process their experiences.

By the time the authors teach their respective students (Marie Ebbesen in their 3rd semester, Dr. Warren Linds in their second

year), they already have developed negative views of working in groups and, based on hearsay, even who they should or should not work with. Many firmly believe that this is just how life is, and that nothing can be done about it, so they choose to work on their own while working in groups, or go along with a process they do not have their heart in and which does not seem meaningful. Needless to say, this attitude is not conducive to learning.

The authors have found using Forumspil early on in their courses has helped address these attitudes and experiences. In a social situation like the Forumspil workshop, the students' experiences in groups were explored. As has been seen, this happened by activating the whole body through verbal and non-verbal expression. The workshop opened up a space for exploration between self and other as stories were told, both one-on-one and in the group. Transforming these stories through the Image Theatre process led to participants being able to write themselves into the stories of others. A dialogue was created. A new kind of knowing emerged from this process. The facilitators and participants began to see everything in new ways.

The process enabled reflection, which calls forth deep tacit knowledge held deep within. Reflection on past (both challenging and hopeful) experiences in groups became a process where students and facilitators both learned what they know and acted upon these new realizations.

Note: Any reader who is interested in further information on exact exercises and the Values Clarification material or information on how one gathers and arranges material for Values Clarification with a Freirean approach, can contact Marie Ebbesen at marigold @ mail.dk.

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The Ways of One and Many: Exploring the Integration of Conflict Coaching and Dialogue-Facilitation

Ross Brinkert

ABSTRACT

The article begins by noting a 20-year emphasis on integrating complementary communication intervention processes. The *Comprehensive Conflict Coaching* model presented is overviewed along with a range of dialogue and facilitation processes. Opportunities are presented to integrate conflict coaching, facilitative-coaching, and dialogue-facilitation while respecting important distinctions. The article ends with a call to further clarify various theory, research, and application issues by continuing to recognize the delineation of facilitation from other facilitative practices, as established by facilitators such as Schwarz (2002) and Hunter (2007).

KEYWORDS

communication, conflict coaching, dialogue, facilitation, training and development

Introduction

Over the last 20 years, the integration of complementary communication interventions has been well-established in the organizational dispute systems literature (Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1988; Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Slaikeu & Hasson, 1998; Lipsky, Seeber, & Fincher, 2003). The concern with integrating interventions has, at times, specifically focused on dialogue and facilitation efforts. Wade (2004) acknowledged that including an additional third party and separating and making the roles and responsibilities transparent can enhance the overall results of complex dialogue. In reporting on the considerable conflict resolution skills and techniques that are required in managing a large-scale construction project involving public and private partnerships, Anderson and Polkinghorne (2008) reinforced the call of Mayer (2004) and Jones and Brinkert (2008) for making greater use of modified roles as well as new and hybrid processes. This article explores some possibilities for strengthening dialogue and facilitation work by pairing it with the use of conflict coaching, specifically the Comprehensive Conflict Coaching Model (Brinkert, 2006; Jones and Brinkert, 2008). The article provides some

background on conflict coaching, and acknowledges the diversity of approaches to dialogue and facilitation, before pointing out some of the opportunities as well as highlighting some of the issues requiring caution and further examination. In particular, the distinction between facilitation and other facilitative processes, as articulated by Schwarz (2002) and Hunter (2007), is emphasized as a way to best serve participants. The author draws on training and work as a communication scholar as well as experience as a conflict resolution coach and facilitator.

A Note on Terminology. “Dialogue-facilitation” is used to refer to group dialogue and group facilitation approaches in general. “Facilitator” is used to refer a person leading a dialogue-facilitation process. “Client” is used in the *Background on Conflict Coaching* section to refer to the person receiving coaching. “Participant” is used elsewhere in the article to refer to someone other than a facilitator who is a member of a dialogue-facilitation group process and/or conflict coaching process.

Background on Conflict Coaching

What is Conflict Coaching?

Conflict coaching in its basic form involves a coach working one-on-one with a client to develop the client's conflict understanding, interaction strategies, and/or interaction skills (Brinkert, 2006). Conflict coaching has roots in the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Executive Coaching (EC) fields (Brinkert, 2006). Historically, ADR has been most closely associated with the increased use of mediation and arbitration. A one-on-one process was first proposed in the ADR field for instances when one or more parties were unwilling to use mediation (Tidwell, 1997). EC has strong connections to human resource development as well as other disciplines. EC fosters a broad range of organizational leadership competencies in a one-on-one coach-client format. In the executive coaching field, coaching on the topic of conflict has emerged as it has been increasingly recognized that working through conflict is an important leadership competency (Kilburg, 2000; Runde & Flanagan, 2006). Conflict coaching can be used to support an individual currently involved in conflict, assist in the integration of a new organizational or team member, develop an emerging leader, or more generally support an individual in proactively interacting with others. Conflict coaching can also conceivably be used on a team basis.

The Comprehensive Conflict Coaching Model

The Comprehensive Conflict Coaching Model (CCCM) (Brinkert, 2006; Jones & Brinkert, 2008) is arguably the most elaborated approach to conflict coaching. It integrates conflict communication research and theory from multiple disciplines and can be applied to a wide range of conflict situations and sectors, including government (Brinkert, 2009), health care (Brinkert, 2010b, 2011), and higher education (Giacomini, 2009; Brinkert, 2010a). The model is built on systems and social constructionist (Gergen, 1999) foundations. It emphasizes the communication aspect of conflict (Folger & Jones, 1994), especially the way in which narratives are used to structure meaning and action (Kellett & Dalton, 2001). The CCCM is meant to be adaptable in terms of coach, client, and context. It is designed to combine coach "facilitation" and expertise. Facilitation within the role of conflict coaching refers to the use of listening, open-ended questions, and other practices that support the client in coming up with their own ideas regarding ways to understand and possibly take action in a conflict situation. Expertise refers to occasions when the conflict coach offers conflict communication research and theory-related perspectives that the client may want to consider. Importantly, a facilitative orientation is intended to dominate, and this may be reflected in a conversational quality to the coach and client interaction. The coach should never advocate one particular perspective or course of action for the client, as the client must maintain fundamental control and responsibility. This boundary is a basic tenet of the CCCM and, from a practical standpoint,

may help protect the coach from potential liability issues. The CCCM is intended to complement existing organizational dispute systems. Despite its potentially wide applicability, it is certainly not the right process for every conflict situation.

The CCCM includes a pre-coaching preparatory conversation, four sequential stages, and a parallel process (Jones & Brinkert, 2008). The *Preparatory Conversation* is a time to clarify the coaching process, determine the client-process fit, determine the coach-client fit, and decide whether or not to start the coaching relationship. *Stage 1: Discovering the Story* involves the client articulating their initial story. *Stage 2: Exploring Three Perspectives* invites the client to examine the initial story from identity, emotion, and power perspectives in order to get a richer understanding for self and for others. These three perspectives were selected because of their significance in the conflict literature. *Stage 3: Crafting the Best Story* is an opportunity to develop a positive vision of what the situation can become. This stage incorporates a strengths-based Appreciative Inquiry approach (see Cooperrider, 1986; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider et al., 2000) as well as insights from the Visioning literature (Barge, 2001). *Stage 4: Enacting the Best Story* offers ways for the client to live the best story in interaction with others. Major pathways for doing so include improving understanding and the ability to use communication skills, conflict styles, negotiation, and other dispute resolution processes. The *Parallel Process* consists of needs assessment, goal setting, reflection and feedback, and learning transfer. It is intended to be revisited throughout the coaching relationship so that the process is as beneficial as possible for the client.

Recognizing the Diversity of Dialogue-Facilitation Work

Before generally exploring ways in which conflict coaching could be used to support dialogue-facilitation work, it is important to first acknowledge some of the diverse approaches to dialogue and facilitation.

Diverse Approaches to Dialogue

Dialogue has been most influenced by the work of Bohm (1996) and Buber (1996). Bohmian dialogue (1996) is an epistemological approach, as it emphasizes group members thinking together. It has been highlighted in the work of Senge (1993) and Isaacs (1999) and is recognized as the most well-known approach to dialogue (Pearce & Pearce, 2000). Buberian dialogue (1996) is an ontological approach, as it refers to the way one human being may be with another human being – separate but, nonetheless, in a deeply authentic relationship. Communication scholars have tended to critique Bohmian dialogue (Barge & Little, 2002; Deetz & Simpson, 2004), advocate and/or practice Buberian dialogue (Cissna & Anderson, 1998; Lowry & Littlejohn, 2006), and occasionally point out the similarities between the two (Stewart, Zediker, & Black, 2004; Black, 2005).

As noted by Pearce (in Heath et al., 2006), the examples of the Sustained Dialogue (SD) (public policy/diplomacy), Public Conversations Project (PCP) (family therapy), and Public Dialogue Consortium (PDC) (communications theory) illustrate some considerable differences among the origins of dialogue approaches as well as their intervention efforts. SD and PCP address public issues in private while PDC holds open meetings. PCP and PDC use highly trained facilitators while SD uses moderators, the latter emphasizing participant involvement. Pearce (in Heath et al., 2006) also noted considerable commonalities among these and other approaches, including stakeholder inclusion, deep engagement by participants, emphasis on listening as well as speaking, carefully constructed situations, and commitment to process rather than predetermined outcomes.

The issue of whether dialogue can ever be instrumental is contested among dialogue theorists and practitioners (Pearce & Pearce, 2000). Hyde & Bineham (2000) wrote that a commitment to openness and indeterminacy are needed to engage in dialogue. Similarly, Heath (in Heath et al., 2006) asserted that a starting point in dialogue is a commitment to the process and a suspension of an outcome focus. Littlejohn (2004) pointed out that dialogue is intended to produce second-order change or transformation of the relationship or system of communication involving the parties. A review of the literature on intergroup dialogue revealed that goals of dialogue work include relationship building, civic participation, and social change (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). Notably, Wade (2004) identified three categories of intentional, values-based dialogue: 1) educational; 2) informative; and 3) convergent. For Wade (2004), the third type was the most challenging because it aspired to achieve consensus or resolution.

Diverse Approaches to Facilitation

Facilitation has been defined very broadly in the small group and team communication sub-field to include any effort to improve team performance in an organizational setting, and often involves considerable information-gathering. This can extend over a period of days or even years (Hartwig & Frey, 2007). It has also been defined from a communication standpoint to more narrowly refer to the group process of having a trainer intervene to diagnose and treat group problems (Keltner, 1989). Somewhat consistently with this second definition, facilitation has been described as “the process of managing multiparty, multi-issue negotiations both inside and outside an organization, often with the goal of heading off conflict or solving specific problems” (Susskind, 2006, p. 4). However, Susskind (2006) points out the limits of facilitation in regards to conflict. Accordingly, facilitation is seen as appropriate for use at the early stages of a problem-solving conversation, whereas mediation is seen as more appropriate when negotiation has encountered a breakdown, a standoff or is completely blocked.

Even while only considering facilitation as involving a group process trainer, there are numerous facilitation models and a considerable number of aspects of the function (Keltner, 1989). In general, the facilitator engages in various activities: creating learning environments; modeling behavior; offering new values in process; facilitating information flow; participating as an expert; protecting against participant stress and attack; and confronting regarding process (Blumberg & Golembiewski, 1976, in Keltner, 1989).

Two leading contemporary books on facilitation are *The Skilled Facilitator* by Schwarz (2002) and *The Art of Facilitation* by Hunter (2007). Schwarz (2002) defines facilitation as the involvement of a substantively neutral person who is not a member of the group and who works for the whole group. Schwarz (2002) distinguishes between basic facilitation (i.e., simply assisting with the group process to solve a substantive problem) and developmental facilitation (i.e., assisting with the group process to solve a substantive problem and also supporting group development so the group can better manage its own process in the future). Hunter (2007) makes distinctions among self-facilitation (i.e., effective self-monitoring and self-choice-making), facilitation of another (i.e., coaching one other person), and facilitation of a group (i.e., guiding a group’s process but not getting involved with its content).

Both Schwarz (2002) and Hunter (2007) emphasize the distinct difference between acting as a facilitator and acting in a ‘facilitative’ capacity. For Schwarz (2002), even those who are not acting in a substantively neutral third-party role can benefit from acting in a facilitative manner. Schwarz specifically mentions how the roles of consultant, coach, trainer, and leader can benefit from the incorporation of core values and principles from a facilitation approach. For Hunter (2007), almost anyone who supports the growth of another is acting in a facilitative manner. From this point of view, a mediator and facilitator are both process guides with a mediator working between parties in conflict and a facilitator involved in other, non-conflict processes as well. Teachers and trainers manage groups while making progress interventions in terms of learning. Hunter is particularly concerned that the terms ‘trainer’ and ‘facilitator’ are sometimes used interchangeably thereby causing confusion. For Hunter, the roles of facilitator and coach are very close, as a coach supports an individual or a team in setting and achieving goals. Hunter also notes that managers can be facilitative and leaders often are facilitative; however, managers and leaders often exercise power over others. Arguably, the main point to be learned here is that the term ‘facilitation’ should be reserved for use in its purest form to protect the integrity of facilitation processes for both facilitators and participants.

Integrating Conflict Coaching and Dialogue-Facilitation

Opportunities to Use Conflict Coaching in Relation to Dialogue-Facilitation

Conflict coaching could be used with participants prior to, during, and after the group meeting aspect of dialogue-facilitation work. It could also be used as a form of professional development for facilitators. This section explores each of these opportunities in more detail.

Pre-Conflict Period. (Note: This is different from the Preparatory Conversation mentioned above.) Effective use of conflict coaching in the absence of prior heightened conflict may have important preventative effects. (Of course, pro-active dialogue-facilitation may also have preventative effects.) Proactive conflict coaching can be used with new organizational members, emerging leaders, and leaders or members getting involved with challenging projects. It can be used to educate regarding the availability and use of dialogue-facilitation. It can be used to develop strategies and skills that will assist the client in dealing with conflict in a more effective way in the absence and/or presence of possible future dialogue-facilitation.

Pre-Dialogue-Facilitation Decision Period. Conflict coaching may support dialogue-facilitation in a number of respects once destructive or potentially destructive conflict becomes apparent in a group but before the decision to engage dialogue-facilitation has been made. Conflict coaching could be used as an intake mechanism by the facilitator when communicating with all would-be participants or simply the key contact who is considering introducing dialogue-facilitation in a particular situation. In intentional values-based dialogue, there is a considerable “scoping” process or deciding whether this particular form of dialogue is appropriate for using with a particular policy conflict (Wade, 2004). Perhaps conflict coaching could be used with an individual or groups of participants involved in the scoping process. Having one or a small number of key contacts holding the power to decide whether dialogue-facilitation happens or not raises some ethical concerns, but nonetheless is a common reality in closed-door organizational settings. The key contact may be a leader or manager of a group. This person may also, when applicable, be the person able to make the financial offer and commitment to the facilitator. Conflict coaching can be used to assist this person in better understanding their situation, clarifying their hopes, getting informed about the dialogue-facilitation process, and deciding whether dialogue-facilitation and other personal actions and third-party processes make sense. Susskind (2006) noted that a manager, leader or key contact may resist facilitation for three main reasons: fear of appearing incompetent; fear of looking weak; and fear of losing control of the group. There may be an opportunity to coach the client prior to the decision about whether or not to introduce dialogue-facilitation. Conflict

coaching could also be used to support other parties, beyond the key contact, as they make the decision about whether to engage in dialogue-facilitation. Some kinds of dialogue-facilitation routinely involve one-on-one facilitator and would-be participant pre-meetings in order to give the would-be participant a chance to share his or her experience, learn about the dialogue-facilitation process, and decide whether to make an initial commitment.

Dialogue-Facilitation Preparation Period. Conflict coaching may be useful in preparing parties who are committed to going forward with dialogue-facilitation and have not yet begun the group interaction stage of dialogue-facilitation. Some approaches to dialogue, such as the PCP’s (Chasin and others, 1996) and victim-offender (Szmania, 2006), make extensive use of pre-group meeting exchanges. Presuming the facilitator and participant have already discussed the participant’s baseline understanding of the situation, hopes for the future, and basic consideration and selection of the dialogue-facilitation process, the opportunity may now exist to prepare for facilitated group interaction. Susskind (2006) pointed out the value of a facilitator meeting individually with participants prior to a group meeting in order to carefully structure an agenda ahead of time. Pearce (in Heath et al., 2006) noted the need to manage diverse motives for dialogue. Perhaps important motives-related work can take place in this period. Other preparation efforts that may be appropriate and effective include providing input regarding the crafting of key questions, developing knowledge and skills to listen and speak to others in the group interaction component, and determine extra-facilitative actions that may be desirable or necessary.

Dialogue-Facilitation Period. Conflict coaching could be interspersed with a multi-session dialogue-facilitation process. Whatever the specific approach to dialogue-facilitation, it relies on skills that may be complex for all group members or unevenly distributed among group members. Conflict coaching may be a way to develop a participant’s dialogue-facilitation-related skills. Conflict coaching for the participant engaged in dialogue-facilitation might directly or indirectly support advancement of topics, processes, and relationships at the center of dialogue-facilitation efforts. While some approaches to dialogue-facilitation may stress confrontation within the group (Lasley, 2006), the skills for effective confrontation may be fostered one-on-one outside the group setting. The possibility also exists that the confrontation itself may be more effective outside of the group setting. Also, conflict coaching may be used to more broadly support a participant’s conflict management efforts while involved in a dialogue-facilitation process.

Post-Dialogue-Facilitation Period. Conflict coaching could occur after the group interaction aspect of the dialogue-facilitation is completed. Group dialogue exists in an open

system (DeTurk, 2006) and, therefore, conflict coaching may help support the sometimes challenging change process beyond the face-to-face group sessions. This might include organizational assistance with the implementation of tasks or support and continued development of process and relational changes. It could include encouragement for participants to monitor whether additional dialogue-facilitation might be useful. Coaching could even be used to develop former dialogue-facilitation participants as they seek to act as facilitators with others (Susskind, 2006).

Using Conflict Coaching to Develop Facilitators. The practice of dialogue has been described as “messy and complicated and requires investment on the part of participants to engage in dynamic and responsive practices” (Smith-Sanders & Harter, 2007). The same can be said for facilitators of dialogue-facilitation processes, albeit with more explicit emphasis on necessary skill and commitment. The training and development of facilitators is the central issue in the dialogue-facilitation field, since facilitators make key decisions regarding human and non-human agencies (Cooren et al., 2006), facilitators in general have considerable power (Keltner, 1989), and dialogue can be presented uncritically and mask agendas and issues of power (Heath et al., 2006). Thomas (2006) argued for the importance of improving facilitator education. He called for more professional development strategies such as those identified by Yalom and Leszcz (2005), including coaching. Conflict coaching could be used for supporting a facilitator in training by using the CCCM to have this person explore their own relationship to a dialogue-facilitation group, create a vision of what he or she hopes to accomplish, explore strategies and skills for carrying out these accomplishments, and then revisit this process after actual dialogue-facilitation interaction.

Conflict Coaching and Dialogue-Facilitation Issues to Further Clarify in Research, Theory, and Practice

Patterns of Practice. The ways in which coaching and dialogue-facilitation are already being combined need to be more fully examined. Also, best practices need to be identified.

Professional Competence and Specialization. Conflict coaching and dialogue-facilitation involve some overlapping and some distinct knowledge and skill sets. While some professionals may possess the ability to work in both capacities, others may need or simply choose to limit themselves to one type of practice. A limitation could exist in a particular instance or across a professional’s body of work.

Role Conflict. Although a given professional may have the ability to act as both conflict coach and facilitator, it may not be appropriate nor effective to do so in certain situations.

Confidentiality. Whether or not the same individual acts as both conflict coach and facilitator, a professional engagement that combines both conflict coaching and dialogue-facilitation raises confidentiality issues.

Transparency. The issue of transparency can be seen to exist apart from the issue of confidentiality. For example, it may be the case that a participant receives confidential conflict coaching while also being involved in a dialogue-facilitation process. The matter of whether the use of conflict coaching needs to be generally shared with the other dialogue-facilitation participants is important to consider. The issue of transparency may be generally managed by inviting all dialogue-facilitation participants to engage the coaching process or at least take part in crafting the ground rules of dialogue-facilitation and any complementary processes such as conflict coaching. Pyser and Figallo (2004) documented the use of a Full Value Contract (FVC) or intentional social agreement in supporting participation and community in online dialogue, and noted that Pyser had also successfully facilitated the FVC in other projects. A FVC involves participants setting up their own ground rules. A well-composed FVC encourages participants to listen, be present, safe, truthful, and open to various possible outcomes. It may be possible to apply a FVC process to the integration of dialogue-facilitation and conflict coaching.

Process preference and effectiveness. It is valued in both the dialogue-facilitation and overall conflict resolution fields that participants arrive at insights on their own and in interaction with others, rather than have insights disseminate from experts and/or arise away from the interaction that is the focus of attention. While these preferences were respected in the design of conflict coaching, it was also recognized that parties are sometimes not willing or able to interact with other involved parties when working through the conflict. Also, it has been pointed out in this article that one-on-one support can precede direct involvement with other involved parties. Indeed, this regularly occurs with some forms of dialogue-facilitation. More can certainly be done to determine whether it is more or less effective to gain conflict understanding and ability one-on-one versus doing so in interaction with other involved parties.

Dialogue-facilitation Type. The desirability of integrating conflict coaching and dialogue-facilitation may vary according to the assumptions underlying different group processes. For instance, Pearce (in Heath et al., 2006) argued that effective dialogue can even occur among those who are apparently unprepared. Perhaps working things through in a one-on-one process might detract from rather than enhance working things through in a group process.

Addressing the Relationships among Dialogue-Facilitation and Other Dispute Resolution Processes. The complex connections between conflict coaching and dialogue-facilitation highlight the

need to examine the connections among dialogue-facilitation and other allied processes. Challenges and opportunities no doubt exist. The differences among complementary fields and processes need to be acknowledged and taken into account. For instance, mediation, deliberation, and intergroup dialogue may have similar goals but contrast in terms of history, philosophy and methods (Dessel & Rogge, 2008).

Freedom of Choice. It is worth emphasizing that there needs to be acceptance that conflict coaching and/or dialogue-facilitation may not be selected by a given would-be participant.

Conclusion

This article aimed to make an initial attempt to point out some possibilities of integrating conflict coaching and dialogue-facilitation. The sheer number of opportunities suggests that this intersection be given additional consideration in the future. However, the most compelling reason to further probe the relationship between conflict coaching and dialogue-facilitation is that *de facto* forms of conflict coaching are sometimes already playing an important role in interventions identified as dialogue-facilitation. In this respect, the appropriateness and effectiveness of conflict coaching and dialogue-facilitation connections certainly need further exposure and analysis. The decision to engage one or both of these processes should be made deliberately by both practitioners and participants. These decisions, in turn, should be supported by theory and research. Finally, the integration of conflict coaching and dialogue-facilitation must not be forced. In some cases, the processes may complement one another. In other instances, they might very well undermine the work of facilitators and participants. Given that differences among complementary fields and processes need to be acknowledged and taken into account (Dessel & Rogge, 2008), new theoretical and applied endeavors should be undertaken with a high degree of care and attention. Nonetheless, the clarity that Schwarz (2002) and Hunter (2007) have already provided regarding the distinction between facilitation and other facilitative practices points the way for various types of current human development practitioners, and suggests that additional conceptual clarity would serve all parties well from theoretical, applied, and ethical standpoints.

AUTHOR

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Validation of the Team Diagnostic Survey and a Field Experiment to Examine the Effects of an Intervention to Increase Team Effectiveness

Per Eisele

ABSTRACT

The aims of the study presented in this article were to validate the Swedish version of the Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS), and to examine effects of a feedback intervention to increase team effectiveness. The TDS is based on Hackman's (2002) theory of group effectiveness which described three main criteria of performance and 14 factors that should affect team effectiveness. Participants in the survey were employees (N=533) across several different workplaces. Analyses were done at the group level, and data from 97 teams was included in the final data material. The sample (n=237) for the randomized field experiment consisted of 31 real life work teams from the larger survey sample (n=533/97). Results from validation data indicate that the TDS has satisfactory high Cronbach's Alpha values on most factors. *Cronbach's Alpha* is a statistical measure of internal consistency; that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. Results from the field experiment indicated that there was an overall increase in self-reported team effectiveness from first to second measurement. On several factors of team effectiveness a number were significantly higher for those receiving the TDS-based feedback. The outcomes suggest that group work practice might benefit from using research-oriented surveys such as the Team Diagnostic Survey as an effective feedback tool.

KEYWORDS

team diagnosis, team effectiveness, performance, development, intervention.

Introduction

The aims of the study were to validate a *Swedish language* version of Hackman's (2002) Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS) and to examine the effects of it as an intervention to improve team effectiveness. It was hoped that group facilitation practice would benefit from a self-reporting measure that takes into account the most important factors that leaders or facilitators should work with to enhance team effectiveness. To get an overall picture of team effectiveness improves communication between facilitators, participants and stakeholders.

The validation data followed the structure of the original proposed by Wageman, Hackman and Lehman (2005). In a field experiment, TDS was used as a feedback tool and it was the first attempt to date to use the TDS instrument on a before-after design.

People responsible for workgroups often want a straight answer to the question 'How are we doing?' But without an accessible

empirical instrument available to get valid data that fits the question, the answer is not often within reach of groups. There is today an increased awareness of the complexity of team effectiveness. But, at least in Sweden, management consultants are too often hired instead of skilled group facilitators to improve team effectiveness. Often managers are disappointed with consultants selling them fixed solutions based on oversimplifications of group dynamics. Even if these consultants are aware of the multidimensionality of team effectiveness, they often use non-validated instruments. In the best case, these instruments have a rather high face validity but low construct or discriminant validity. On the other hand, the scientific studies of team effectiveness have long involved research that examines a few variables at a time. In short, consultant-developed instruments lack the reliability and validity that may be required for the scientific study of team effectiveness. Conversely scholar-developed instruments can be far too complex and generally don't make communication between researcher and client any easier. To meet this need, feedback instruments should

be able to provide answers to questions like: 'What can leaders do to help groups be more productive and satisfying? Why do similar groups vary so much in effectiveness? How does the type of task affect the group work? What organizational context is best for the development of teams?' That is, the challenge is to create instruments that are valid, reliable, and can give answers to the questions given by group work shareholders.

The Team Diagnostic survey (TDS) was developed by J. Richard Hackman and Ruth Wageman to meet these requirements. That is, to provide psychometrically sound research questions, and to address salient factors that are known to affect performance. Factors that can be manipulated by group leaders and facilitators and that are relevant for different team types (Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005).

TDS is based on a type of model of team performance that is referred to as functionalistic. The functional approach describes team performance and the factors that are assumed to affect performance in an input-process-output structure (McGrath, 1964; Hackman & Morris, 1975; Wittenbaum et al., 2004) and assume that: 1) Groups are goal-oriented, 2) Group performance varies in quality and quantity and can be evaluated, and 3) Both internal and external factors influence group performance via the interaction process. The original input-process-outcome framework (McGrath, 1964) was criticized for a lack of mediating (or moderating) factors that affect the relations between team inputs and team outcomes. Ilgen, Hollenbeck, Johnson and Jundt (2005) theorized an input-mediator-output-input (IMOI) model. Recently, Algesheimer, Dholakia and Gurău (2011) tested a model of virtual team functioning based on the IMOI framework.

The performance of an organizational work team is assumed to be effective if its members are highly motivated and thus put forth considerable effort in accomplishing the group's task; if its members have the necessary skills and knowledge to work on the task, and if the steps and procedures that the group employs in completing its task actually facilitate the group's efforts. (Hackman, 2002) This summarizes the basic structure of Hackman's (1992; 2002) theory of group effectiveness that identified three main conclusive factors of work team effectiveness: (1) the amount of effort group members give in accomplishing the group's task, (2) the amount of knowledge and skills group members bring to the task, and (3) the suitability of the task performance strategies employed by the group in accomplishing its task.

In addition, three organizational conditions that increase the likelihood that a group's work will be characterized by these three factors are: (1) a group structure that promotes competent work on the task, (2) an organizational context that supports and reinforces excellence, and (3) expert coaching and process assistance is available. Group structure refers to task clarity,

group composition, and core norms. Organizational context includes the organization's reward, educational, and informational systems. External assistance is a factor that pinpoints that organizations should provide the teams with adequate resources to learn these skills (Hackman, 2002).

Although many alternative type of models have been proposed (see, for example, Campion, Medsker & Higgs, 1993; Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Schwarz, 2002; Salas, Stagl, Shawn & Goodwin, 2007; Hunter, 2009), the theory of group effectiveness (Hackman, 2002) allows direct measurement of team effectiveness and the factors that are most likely to affect effectiveness. It is not suited for all type of teams; for example, it does not work for people gathered for a discussion of a subject matter who have no common goal or interdependence. Therefore, it is important to define a work group as well as group effectiveness in the context of an investigation using the TDS.

The conceptual framework

An organizational work group is defined as an intact social system with collective responsibility which operates within a larger social system such as an organizational context (Hackman, 1990). Team effectiveness is defined as quantity and quality of group output (both performance and well-being) and the capacity of groups to work interdependently (Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005).

Types of teams

Regarding the degree of independence, four types of teams can be distinguished from each other: 1) manager-led; 2,) self-designing; 3) self-managing; and 4) self-governing (Hackman, 2002). While manager-led teams have authority for only executing a task, self-managing teams also have responsibility for monitoring and managing their own performance. Self-designing teams function at a higher level and are able to modify the design of their team and/or their organizational context. The highest level of self-operating is self-governing teams which, beside all the types of teams described above, also decide what is to be done. A typical example is a corporate board of directors.

Additionally, teams often have different tasks or purposes. For example, the main task for customer service teams is to provide product-related service to customers and deal with concerns mainly to do with product quality. The human service teams' concern is with people. Production teams perform duties routinely and continuously. Management teams are responsible for setting organizational directions and almost always have one manager in charge. Task forces are groups that have been created for the purpose of solving a particular problem or performing a specific task. Members of these types of teams often come from different jobs or different organizational units and have an unusual mix of autonomy and independence. Task

forces typically conduct non-routine work and have a specific deadline. The main task for professional support groups is to provide expertise assistance, and for performing groups to provide a concrete result, for example, a new idea.

Cohen and Bailey (1997) made a similar differentiation: (1) project teams; (2) parallel teams; (3) work teams; and (4) management teams. These kinds of classifications are important because a team effectiveness instrument should reliably distinguish among teams. That is, it should be able to detect meaningful differences among different types of teams.

Group effectiveness

The ‘criterion problem’ of performance measurement has been addressed by Campbell (1990) who argued that performance should be measured in behavioral terms. The challenge for the future is to create job performance measures that are broad enough to be applicable across different job types, but also tap specific dimensions of performance. For example, for individual work, the General Performance Measurement (GPM) instrument was created (Tubre, Winfred & Bennett, 2007; Eisele & Winfred, 2013).

To the best of the author’s knowledge, any similar attempt does not yet exist regarding team performance. Therefore, group performance is still measured either indirectly via factors that are assumed to affect performance, or directly through objective measures of results like productivity. The latter is a problem because output variables, like productivity, are affected by all kinds of things, such as broader scale changes in finance. TDS does not measure performance directly, but via a three dimensional concept of group effectiveness: 1) the quantity and quality within certain timelines, 2) the degree to which the group manages to enhance the capacity of members to work together interdependently in the future, and 3) the growth and personal well-being of team members.

The TDS paradigm postulates that what is important is the creation of conditions that support effective team performance. As clarified by Hackman (1990), rather than attempting to manage group behavior in real time, leaders and practitioners might better spend their time and effort creating contexts that increase the likelihood that a team will develop behavior styles that facilitate performance and choose the most efficient performance strategies. The question then is which conditions or factors are most important for the promotion of team effectiveness.

The Team Diagnostic Survey

Hackman’s (2002) Team Effectiveness theory (see Figure 1) described three core factors: real team; enabling structure; and compelling direction. Hackman believes that these are the most important factors for team effectiveness. Additional to these internal factors are two external factors: supportive

organizational context; and expert coaching availability are emphasized in the model. In this section, these five enabling conditions, together with five performance criteria, will be described: 1) social processes; 2) well-being of members; 3) level of effort; 4) performance strategy; and 5) skills of team members.

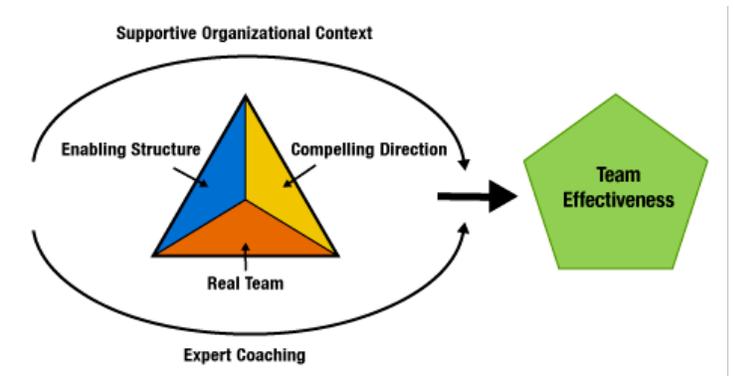


Figure 1. Team Effectiveness Model (Hackman, 2002)

Real team

The real team conditions have three features: they are bounded, interdependent and stable. Members and non-members are distinguished so that the team is bounded. Members have some common purpose and collective responsibility, making them interdependent. Members in real teams have stability of membership, making it possible to learn how to work well together.

Compelling direction

This condition is about how the team’s purposes are specified. An effective team direction is clear, challenging and consequential. Challenging direction energizes members, clear directions orient them toward their main goal, and a consequential direction engages members’ abilities.

In the TDS framework, goal setting or compelling direction is measured in terms of clarity, challenge, and consequentiality of team purposes. This is supported by other studies, such as a study by Hertel, Konradt and Orlikowski (2004) on management practices related to goals, task and output interdependence that correlated strongly with the effectiveness of virtual teams. Aubé and Rousseau (2005) found a positive relationship between team goal commitment and different criteria of team effectiveness, and additionally, a moderating role of role-task interdependence and a mediating role of supportive behavior.

Enabling structure

It is well established that a task structure that is clear and consistent with a group's purpose has positive effects on performance. However, the TDS also acknowledges meaningful, shared responsibility and opportunity to learn how well the team is doing as important structural factors for team performance.

One of the common mistakes organizations make when they initiate team work is that the groups are not set up right. As described by Wageman, Hackman and Lehman (2005), sometimes the team's structure is labored and strained which can create obstacles in getting things done, and at other times, groups are neglected and ignored. The latter often because people assume that group work is so superior to individual work that groups always perform better than individuals, even without any deliberate work with structure. Additionally, sometimes the direct observable structure is faulty.

The theory underpinning structure in the TDS are three structural features: task design, team composition, and norms of conduct.

Task design

Task design refers to how tasks are aligned with the team's purpose and to its motivating potential (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The team task should be a whole and meaningful piece of work, members should have autonomy regarding their own work procedures, and members should have knowledge of the results when the task is completed. Task design and team performance has been further investigated by Cohen, Ledford and Spreitzer (1996). In their study, group task design, group characteristics, and employee involvement were shown to affect group effectiveness.

Team composition

Team composition should include members with adequate task and interpersonal skills, and otherwise be as small as possible. Additionally, the team should have a diversity of task and interpersonal skills. That is, teams should have members that are neither too similar to one another, nor so different that they are unable to communicate effectively. If team members are too similar, there is a risk of duplicating resources. Edwards, Day, Winfred and Bell (2006) examined how team ability composition is related to team mental models and demonstrated how these two constructs affect team performance. Peters and Karren (2009) further investigated the relationship between trust, diversity and team performance; trust was found to mediate the relationship between diversity and team performance.

Group norms

Group norms are shared expectations about behavior, and teams set formal (sometimes prescriptive) norms at the beginning of team interaction (Feldman, 1984). Group norms can foster good performance but can also be counterproductive to team efficiency (Taggar & Ellis, 2007). Norms can be beneficial to team functioning because they: (a) facilitate team survival, keep the team together, and protect it from other teams (since

behaviors that threaten the team are addressed); (b) provide regularity and predictability to the behavior expected from team members, and thus help team members to anticipate the actions of other team members; (c) help the team avoid embarrassing interpersonal problems and thus ensure that members' self-images are protected; and (d) express the central values of the team and clarify what is distinctive about the team's identity (Feldman, 1984). However, because norms are often informal and emerge slowly in teams, they may not support the larger strategic goals of the team (Wageman, 1997). Team norms that foster good performance processes actively promote continuous scanning of the performance situation and proactive planning of group performance strategies, and they clearly specify those behaviors that are out of bounds for the team. Clear specification of core norms of conduct frees members from spending excessive time discussing the kinds of behavior that are acceptable in the group and facilitates the development of task performance strategies that are appropriate to the team's task and situation (Wageman, Hackman & Lehman, 2005).

Taggar and Ellis (2007) developed and assessed a model that depicts the impact of team leaders and staff on negotiated and agreed upon team norms for collaborative problem solving in newly-formed teams. Norms about how to solve problems in teams significantly influenced individual team members' problem solving behaviors. Earlier studies examining the impact of norms on group outcomes also showed that beneficial norms affect team performance (Feldman, 1984). There have been a few recent studies providing insight into norm formation, including the influence of demographic heterogeneity on the emergence of cooperative norms (Chatman & Flynn, 2001) and the development of strategic norms (Levine, Higgins & Choi, 2000).

Supportive organizational context

Even if a team is well-composed and has accepted, clear and challenging goals, it can still perform poorly due to a lack of support from the organization. Beside material resources, the organization should give reward or recognition to teams that perform well or (perhaps even more importantly) teams that put in extra task effort. Further, organizations should be designed to give enough information to assist their teams to choose the most appropriate strategies, as well as make available educational assistance; including technical support.

An organizational context that supports and reinforces team effectiveness has the following features: 1) reward system, recognition, reinforcement of the group or individuals, and collaboration or differentiation; 2) an educational system, training, or technical assistance for the group initiative; and 3) information systems and appropriate data to select an appropriate structure for different tasks and situations. A work organization's supportive context is to a large degree focused primarily on the information provided to employees and the

lateral and vertical communication between different functions. Hackman’s (2002) team effectiveness theory also acknowledges other important factors such as the providing of education and resources.

Expert coaching availability

Coaching will only help teams if the coach manages or highlights the team’s exposure to process losses (Steiner, 1972; Stroebe & Diehl, 1994). Therefore, the mere existence of a coach is not enough, but what is needed is coaching that meets certain requirements: a) minimizes coordination and/or motivation problems; b) builds commitment to the group and to the group task; c) avoids faulty trust on habitual routines; d) develops innovative ways to work; e) avoids inappropriate weighting of individual contributions such as ideas and opinions; and f) shares information and expertise within the team.

The TDS attempts to measure four different kinds of coaching: task-focused, operant, interpersonal, and unhelpful directives. These apply to both team leader coaching and peer coaching. Task-focused coaching is about building commitment. Operant coaching is about giving appropriate feedback. Interpersonal coaching is equivalent to helping behavior and can be about such things as addressing conflicts. Examples of unhelpful directives are overburdening with instructions or excessive fault-detection. The team coaching theory (Hackman & Wageman, 2005) posits that team effectiveness is a joint function of three performance processes: (1) choice of performance strategies as influenced by core norms and the organizational information system; (2) the amount of effort that is influenced by the task design and by the organization reward system; and (3) the amount of knowledge and skill members contribute to the team; that is influenced by team composition. Coaching can be motivational, consultative and educational, and both availability and helpfulness should be measured. Liu, Pirola-Merlo, Yang and Huang (2009) showed that team coaching had positive effects on team performance processes regarding effort, skill and knowledge, which in turn had a direct impact on team effectiveness. Leader coaching behavior has also been found to affect performance (Wageman, 2001) but coaching behavior of peers seems to be a neglected research field.

Coaching functions are those interventions that inhibit process losses and foster process gains. Motivational coaching addresses effort; consultative coaching addresses performance strategy. Educational coaching addresses distribution of knowledge and skill among group members (Hackman & Wageman, 2005).

Output variables

The process criteria of effectiveness (Hackman & Morris, 1975) within the TDS focuses on the following three performance processes: 1) level of effort; 2) performance strategies; and 3) the knowledge and skill of members. Further research on intra-group conflict (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; DeDreu & Beersma,

2005) not only distinguished between different kinds of conflicts, but also convincingly argued for the need to use both performance and satisfaction as outcome measures in team effectiveness research.

In the TDS framework, effort strategy, knowledge and skill, as well as individual well-being of group members, are measured. In the team effectiveness literature there is surprisingly few attempts to measure performance in behavioral terms. Instead, productivity is the most common measurement. For example, Kuipers and Stoker (2009) used long-term product quality in their study on the development of self-managing work teams. Medsker et al. (1993) presented three effectiveness criteria (productivity, satisfaction and manger judgment) and 19 group characteristics representing five themes (job design, interdependence, composition, context and process) that were assumed to predict group effectiveness. Furthermore Edwards, Day, Winfred and Bell (2006) also discuss performance criteria for teams in behavioral terms. This is arguably one of the most important areas of the research agenda for further study on group effectiveness.

Criteria of team effectiveness

To perform well, groups must: 1) make an effort, 2) make use of knowledge, abilities and skills of group members, and 3) choose appropriate task performance strategies. Effort is about building commitment. Using members’ knowledge, ability and skills is about sharing expertise. Choosing performance strategies is about planning, e.g., developing creative new ways (see Table 1: Team Effectiveness Process Criteria).

Table 1. Team Effectiveness Process Criteria

Process criteria	Group structure	Org. context	Coaching/consultation
Ample effort	Motivational aspects of group tasks	Reward system	Remedying coordination problems, building group commitment
Knowledge, abilities, skills	Composition	Educational system	Remedying problems regarding member inputs, facilitating cross-training
Performance strategies	Norms, scanning and planning	Information system	Remedying implementation problems, facilitating creativity and development

Earlier Intervention Studies Using Real Life Work Teams

Scientific evaluations of tool-based interventions on overall team effectiveness in real life work groups are sparse. However, studies investigating effects of team-building or team training on group performance are more common (Klein et al., 2009; Salas, Diaz Granados, Klein, Burke & Stagle, 2008). It is important to distinguish between at least three different types of interventions: team training, team-building, and use of tools. Team training is skill-focused interventions, often with a practice component and done in a particular context. Team training is a planned effort administered in a team environment to improve team performance (Goldstein & Ford, 2002), and use of tools refers to “a set of tools and methods that, in combination with required competencies and training objectives, form an instructional strategy” (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 1997, p. 254). Team training has mostly been assessed with teams with clear performance objectives, like military teams.

Team-building is defined as interventions that focus on improving social interaction or clarifying roles, and is often conducted out of context (Klein et al., 2009). Tool-based interventions are deliberate attempts to improve team effectiveness with the use of some intervention tool. For example, as in the present study, the use of the TDS to gain feedback for intervention and improvement. The use of an intervention tool typically lacks a practice component and is rather flexible. Besides this taxonomy, interventions are typically either structural (job redesign and performance management programs) or aimed at team-development to directly affect the effectiveness of teams (Klein et al., 2009). In a meta-analysis to attempt to answer the question on whether team-building works or not, Klein et al. (2009) classified four team-building components (goal setting, interpersonal relations, problem solving, and role clarification) and found that team-building, especially goal setting, had positive moderate effect on several team outcomes. Another influential meta-analysis (Salas et al., 2008) examined the relative effectiveness of team training on team cognitive, affective, process and performance outcomes. In this report, it was concluded that team training that involved a combination of team work and task work was useful to improve all four outcomes. That is, training teams to communicate and coordinate can have a beneficial effect on products produced.

To summarize, the TDS is an ambitious attempt to create a standard measure of team effectiveness, and is based on a conceptual model of the factors that research has shown thus far to be most consequential for team effectiveness. It defines team effectiveness on three dimensions: 1) the productive output; 2) the social processes; and 3) the learning and well-being of team members. The process criteria of effectiveness (Hackman & Morris, 1975) include the three performance processes: 1) level of effort; 2) performance strategies; and 3) knowledge and skill of members. The heart of TDS is also the five enabling

conditions: 1) a real team; 2) compelling direction; 3) teams' structure; 4) organizational support; and 5) hands-on coaching.

The aims of the TDS study in this article were to validate the Swedish language version of TDS and to examine effects of an intervention to increase team effectiveness in a field experiment. The hypotheses for the validation data were that discriminant validity is satisfactory and that there exists differences between types of work teams.

Method

Participants

Data from 97 teams (with different degrees of independence; see Table 2) across different workplaces was collected with different sampling techniques. Participants (n=533) belonged to three types of work teams: performing teams (n=331), production teams (n=170), and service teams (n = 31) across four different types of work organizations. 408 group members came from what can be articulated as white collar organizations, 83 group members from what can be articulated as blue collar organizations, 34 group members from service organizations, and 8 group members came from work organizations dealing with education.

The response rate within each workplace varied from 50% to 90% and the response rate within each group varied from 75% to 100%. Data was collected with different sampling techniques; for the samples with a known population, the data was collected until the response rate was 80%.

Table 2. Degree of Independence and Main Task or Purpose (n= 97)

Degree of independence	Manager lead	Self-governing	Self-designing	Self-managing
Management teams	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0
Professional	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0
Task forces	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0
Prof. support groups	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0
Performing groups	n = 34	n = 10	n = 11	n = 0
Human service teams	n = 0	n = 2	n = 0	n = 0
Customer service teams	n = 1	n = 7	n = 3	n = 0
Production teams	n = 29	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0
Misc.	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0	n = 0

The Questionnaire

The TDS consists of ten sections. Section 1 captures the general description of the team. Sections 2 and 3 describe different types of teams. Sections 4-7 assess the model-specified conditions for team effectiveness. Sections 8 and 9 provide measures of the three effectiveness criteria. And finally, Section 10 captures demographic data. Except where otherwise noted below, all items make use of a five-point Likert scale ranging from highly inaccurate (1) to highly accurate (5). Group level composite scores are computed by averaging across items and respondents. Reverse-scored items are computed before analysis. Section 1 includes five items about team purpose on blank lines with a binominal scale. Example items include: “The team’s main purpose is to ...” and “My work on this team is just one part of my overall job in this organization.” Section 2 includes 14 items about team purpose on a five-point Likert-scale. An example item is: “The purposes of this team don’t make much of a difference to anybody else.” Section 3 includes items on degree of independence and authority, with two items on a binominal scale. Examples of the items include: “Both the purposes of our

team and the means or purposes we are suggested to use in our work are specified in detail by others” and “Our team has also the authority to specify what our team wishes to accomplish; its main purposes.” Section 4 includes team composition, task design, and norms, with 20 items on a five-point Likert-scale. An example item is: “This team has too few members for what it has to accomplish.” Section 5 includes organizational context, with 14 items on a five-point Likert-scale. An example item is: “Even teams that do an especially good job are not recognized by the organization.” Section 6 includes team leadership, with five items on a five-point Likert-scale. An example item is: “The team leader helps the team build a high shared commitment to its purposes.” Section 7 includes team members’ behavior, with five items on a five-point Likert-scale. An example item is: “Regular team members take initiatives to constructively resolve any problems or conflicts that develop among members.” Section 8 includes teamwork, and has 13 items on a five-point Likert-scale. The scales assess the level of effort members collectively expend on the task, the quality of team task performance strategies, and the degree to which the team uses members’ knowledge and skills. Example items include: “Members demonstrate their commitment to our team by putting in extra time and effort to help it succeed”, “Our team often falls into mindless routines, without noticing any changes that may have offered in our situation”, and “Members of our team actively share their special knowledge and expertise with one another.” Section 9 includes interpersonal processes and individual well-being, and has 13 items on a five-point Likert-scale. It covers quality of team interaction, with items such as: “Working together energizes and uplifts members of our team.” It also covers satisfaction with team relationships, with items such as: “My relations with other team members are strained.” Satisfaction growth is also looked at, with items including: “My own creativity and initiative are suppressed by this team.” General satisfaction is addressed with items such as: “I enjoy the kind of work we do in this team.” Finally, internal work motivation is covered by items such as: “I feel bad and unhappy when our team has performed poorly.” Finally, Section 10 includes demographic information, and has 5 items. An example item is: “How long have you been a member of the team you described in this survey?” For a more detailed description of the item selection of TDS, see Wageman, Hackman and Lehman (2005).

Procedure

The version of TDS used in this study was translated from English into Swedish and then translated back into English. The face validity of translation was tested on a few workgroups before the start of this research project. After minor changes, including the wording in two items being clarified, the questionnaire was distributed to work teams from different companies and was sent to group members by mail. Data was saved in an Excel file. Each participant wrote down a name in the demographic section of the web survey but was informed that they could fill out the questionnaire anonymously. Those who wished to remain unknown wrote down a fictitious name.

This individual name (fictitious or otherwise) and the name of each group made it possible to identify individual respondents while maintaining a high degree of confidentiality.

To collect data from a wide variety of companies, different sampling techniques were used: (1) Managers or their Personal Assistants contacted the author direct; (2) Managers or their Personal Assistants were contacted and asked to participate; or (3) Managers or their Personal Assistants answered an advertisement in a nation-wide newspaper. In most cases, response rates were possible to maintain, but not all effects of sampling were possible to mitigate for analysis.

For most groups, the questionnaire was distributed until it was completed by all group members. The exceptions were eight groups where the internal team leader didn't want to participate and five groups where the response rate was too low. These groups were not included in the analysis.

Results

Psychometric information on the TDS scales for 97 teams are presented in Tables 3 through 5 for the five enabling conditions, the coaching variables and the performance criterion variables. Descriptive statistics include means, standard deviations, average correlation within each scale, average correlation between the scales, and internal consistency reliabilities. The latter are presented both at individual level and group level, otherwise all analyses were made on the group level.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Psychometrics for the Five Enabling Conditions

	Items	M	SD	R within	R between	Alpha individual	Alpha team
Real team	8	3.51	0.39				
Bounded	3	3.61	0.53	.30	.22	.52	.82
Interdependent	3	3.62	0.49	.26	.21	.31	.20
Stable	2	3.20	0.63	.48	.19	.32	.37
Compelling direction	6	3.31	0.49				
Clear	2	3.30	0.57	.36	.32	.39	.57
Challenging	2	3.17	0.66	.61	.42	.63	.76
Consequentiality	2	3.46	0.61	.60	.34	.33	.35
Enabling structure	20						
<i>Team composition</i>	9	3.17	0.53				
Size	3	3.28	0.83	.42	.33	.36	.37
Diversity	3	3.04	0.66	.63	.45	.54	.65
Skills	3	3.19	0.57	.45	.35	.57	.68
<i>Task design</i>	8	3.22	0.52				
Whole task	3	3.57	0.48	.32	.24	.54	.58
Autonomy	2	3.33	0.53	.28	.20	.11	.12
Knowledge of results	3	3.06	0.62	.40	.35	.62	.67

	Items	M	SD	R within	R between	Alpha individual	Alpha team
<i>Group norms</i>	3	3.28	0.56	.59	.32	.71	.88
Supportive context	11	2.88	0.50				
Reward/recognition	3	2.70	0.60	.74	.67	.80	.81
Information	3	3.18	0.51	.41	.33	.56	.67
Education	3	2.95	0.73	.41	.33	.56	.68
Resources	2	2.84	0.81	.47	.23	.11	.12
Team coaching	4	2.61	0.57				
Availability	2	2.28	0.76	.82	.80	.76	.82
Helpfulness	2	3.10	0.71	.51	.46	.54	.67

Note: All data is analyzed at group level ($n=97$) beside data in the column *Alpha individual* that is Cronbach's Alpha's done at an individual level ($n=533$).

As Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics and Psychometrics for the Five Enabling Conditions* shows, the reliabilities and discriminant validities are in general acceptable but unsatisfactory for the following factors: interdependent, autonomy, and resources. Table 4: *Descriptive Statistics and Psychometrics for Leader and Peer Coaching Activities* presents psychometric data for the coaching measures, and Table 5: *Descriptive Statistics and Psychometrics for Team Effectiveness Criteria* presents psychometric data for the criterion measures. The factors in general had satisfactory validity and reliability.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Psychometrics for Leader and Peer Coaching Activities

	items	M	SD	R within	R between	Alpha individual	Alpha team
Leader coaching							
Task-focused	6	3.14	0.67	.84	.69	.86	.98
Operant	2	3.07	0.57	.90	.71	.86	.99
Interpersonal	2	2.85	0.63	.88	.80	.86	.96
Unhelpful directives	3	3.17	0.61	.86	.74	.85	.95
Peer coaching							
Task-focused	3	3.21	0.54	.96	.90	.70	.98
Interpersonal	1	2.90	0.70	*	*	*	*
Unhelpful interventions	1	3.00	0.66	*	*	*	*

Note: All data is analyzed at group level ($n=97$) beside data in the column *Alpha individual* that is Cronbach's Alpha's done at an individual level ($n=533$).

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics and Psychometrics for Team Effectiveness Criteria ($n=97$).

	Items	M	SD	R within	R between	Alpha individual	Alpha team
Process criteria							
Effort	3	3.15	0.60	.39	.30	.55	.65
Performance strategy	3	3.01	0.62	.39	.30	.55	.65
Knowledge and skill	3	3.30	0.52	.51	.45	.73	.76
Team social processes							
Quality of interaction	4	3.00	0.72	.44	.44	.63	.71
Relationship satisfaction	3	3.47	0.58	.73	.69	.86	*
Individual well-being							
Internal work motivation	4	3.35	0.43	.57	.55	.70	*
Growth satisfaction	3	3.28	0.54	.56	.57	.70	*
General satisfaction	3	3.50	1.66	.54	.51	.79	*

Note: Team-level reliabilities were not computed for the measures of motivation and satisfaction because these are individual-level constructs.

To test if the instrument could detect meaningful differences among different types of teams, one-way ANOVAs were conducted. Table 6: *Comparison of Composite Score Means for Three Types of Work Teams* shows means and significant differences across two different team types.

Table 6. Comparison of Composite Score Means for Three Types of Work Teams ($n=97$)

	Performing teams (n=29)		Service teams (n=11)		Production teams (n=57)		F-value
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Real team							
Bounded	3.86	0.48	3.48	0.63	3.51	0.50	5.2**
Interdependent	3.77	0.52	3.73	0.66	3.52	0.43	N.S.
Stable	3.32	0.91	3.13	0.66	3.15	0.43	N.S.
Compelling direction							
Clear	3.70	0.57	3.23	0.69	3.12	0.42	13.19***

	Performing teams (n=29)		Service teams (n=11)		Production teams (n=57)		F-value
Challenge	3.72	0.64	3.80	0.45	2.96	0.52	20.74***
Consequentiality	3.80	0.51	3.05	0.78	3.36	0.56	8.67***
Enabling structure							
Size	3.83	0.61	2.72	0.81	3.11	0.80	12.27***
Diversity	3.40	0.63	2.82	0.69	2.89	0.59	7.35**
Skills	3.05	0.74	3.49	0.43	3.20	0.46	N.S.
Whole task	3.84	0.47	3.51	0.52	3.45	0.43	7.15**
Knowledge of results	3.32	0.63	2.74	0.43	2.98	0.60	N.S.
Autonomy	3.25	0.59	3.42	0.51	3.35	0.51	N.S.
Group norms	3.67	0.55	3.47	0.76	3.04	0.37	17.69***
Supportive context							
Rewards/recognition	2.75	0.77	2.81	0.55	2.66	0.51	N.S.
Information	3.22	1.09	3.15	0.64	3.15	0.46	N.S.
Education	3.08	0.60	2.81	0.75	2.84	0.43	N.S.
Resources	2.72	0.94	3.31	0.0.69	2.81	0.75	N.S.
Coaching availability	2.71	0.83	2.62	0.63	1.99	0.62	11.74***
Leader and peers							
Task-focused, leader	3.06	0.59	3.23	1.06	3.16	0.62	N.S.
Operant	3.34	0.57	2.68	0.76	3.01	0.46	7.12**
Interpersonal, leader	2.89	0.51	2.59	1.12	2.89	0.55	N.S.
Task-focused, peers	3.02	0.46	3.40	0.56	3.26	0.56	N.S.
Interpersonal, peers	2.69	0.66	3.01	0.94	3.00	0.67	N.S.
Process criteria							
Effort	2.98	0.66	3.33	0.66	3.20	0.56	N.S.
Strategy	3.26	0.64	2.80	.66	2.92	0.57	3.84*

	Performing teams (n=29)		Service teams (n=11)		Production teams (n=57)		F-value
Knowledge and skill	3.19	0.48	3.71	.60	3.28	0.50	4.30*
Satisfaction							
Quality interaction	3.52	0.53	2.62	0.81	2.82	0.66	13.91***
Satisfaction relations	3.70	0.60	3.34	0.67	3.39	0.54	3.11*
Satisfaction growth	3.65	0.55	3.10	0.67	3.13	0.42	11.56***
Satisfaction general	3.83	0.71	3.42	0.53	3.35	0.59	5.84**
Internal work motivation	3.54	0.39	3.64	0.24	3.2	0.41	10.57***

Note: df=1,95 ***p<.001 ** p<.01 *p<.05

Post-hoc tests (Tukey tests) showed that production teams differed significantly from performance teams on the following factors: clear, challenging, size, group norms, whole-task, coaching availability and general satisfaction. Service teams differed significantly from performance teams on the factors of consequentiality, knowledge of result, knowledge & skills, and operant directives. Performance teams differed from the other types of work teams on quality of interaction, satisfaction with growth, and internal work motivation.

Lessons learned

Four problem items were identified. The item “Anyone who knows this team could accurately name all its members” had negative correlations with other bounded and real team items. The following three items resulted in higher Cronbach's Alphas if deleted: “This team is larger than it need to be”, “This team has a nearly ideal mix of members – a diverse set of people who bring different perspectives and experiences to the work”, and “This organization keeps its teams in the dark about information that could affect their work plans.”

One issue regarding the team leader items was possibly due to cultural differences between the US and Sweden. Sometimes, group members in the Swedish sample viewed the team leader as someone outside the team, and sometimes as a team member inside the team but with a leadership role. In the sample from the US, it is taken for granted that the team leader is a person outside the team and working as a link between the team and the organization. Therefore, it is suggested that the differing concepts of internal and external team leader should be considered in the future for the application of the TDS.

The Swedish version of TDS had fairly high internal consistency and could detect meaningful differences among different types

of teams. But to be able to examine if TDS actually predicts team performance, it is essential to make use of repeated measures, examining changes over time, exploring different interventions such as coaching style (Hackman & Wageman, 2005), goal setting (Cohen, Mohrman & Mohrman, 1999; Wegge & Haslam, 2005), feedback (DeShon et al., 2004) or norm setting (Taggar & Ellis, 2007) as well as more direct TDS relevant interventions based on initial measurement of the instrument. Woolley, Gerbasi, Chabris, Kosslyn and Hackman (2008) investigated effects of an intervention that was aimed at increasing collaborative planning on performance in analytic teams. Gurtner, Tschan, Semmer & Nagele (2007) examined the effects of reflexivity intervention on team performance.

The Field Experiment

The hypotheses for the field experiment were that the TDS-based feedback positively affects self-reported team effectiveness.

Participants and design

Members (n=237) from 31 groups with 5-11 group members participated in the study. The first measure of team effectiveness was conducted prior to the experiment. From this already existent database, groups were randomly delegated to the experiment condition (n=125 in 16 teams) and the control condition (n=112 in 15 teams). Among teams in the experimental condition, 78% participated in the study, and for the control condition 74% participated. The response rate within each group was 98%. The experimental condition consisted of an intervention with the TDS as a feedback tool between the first and second measurements. The control condition was a first and second measurement without any intervention.

Instrument

The Swedish version used in this study did not deviate from the original TDS instrument. The feedback intervention was a short

presentation by the author of this article to people responsible for teamwork at the different organizations. Knowledge about teams' self-reported perceptions of all factors were presented, but no direct advice was given during the feedback intervention.

Procedure

Directly after a randomizing procedure to separate groups from an existing database into experiment condition and control condition, the companies were contacted. As soon as they confirmed they wished to participate in the study, the web-based link to the survey was sent out to group members. The intervention was based on the result of the first measurement of TDS. That is, issues that were highlighted by team members were discussed for each team. This feedback was informative without any practice moment. Teams in the control condition received the feedback after the second measurement instead of after the first measurement. Additionally, questions about the time between the two measures were given to each participant just before the second measurement of team effectiveness (the TDS). The participants were asked to give information about whether there has been deliberate work to increase effectiveness (real organizational effort), insufficient effort, or no effort at all.

One week after the intervention, new data was collected in the same manner as before the intervention. The time between the

first measurement and intervention was different for the work teams so this time was included in the analyses. The data was aggregated and analyzed at the group level. The statistical power was far too low to analyze the different kinds of content on the interventions. To exemplify, 12 teams reported a lack of organizational support and five teams reported a lack of goal commitment (compelling direction).

Results

Repeated measure ANOVA analyses were conducted to examine differences over time with feedback interventions and participants' experiences of organizational teamwork as the two between-group factors (see Table 7: *Means and Standard Deviations for All Factors Over Time and Across Factors*). Overall differences from first to second measurement were significant for 21 factors out of 34. Differences across self-reported work on team effectiveness were significant for three factors. Differences across interventions and between groups were significant for six factors. Strongest effects were found for organizational support in terms of education and satisfaction with relations with other team members. Significant interaction effects were found for 12 factors (see Table 7: *Means and Standard Deviations for All Factors Over Time and Across Factors*).

Table 7. Means and Standard Deviations for All Factors Over Time and Across Factors

	First measure		Second measure		Within (time)		Between feedback		Between report		Interaction Feedback x report	
	M	SD	M	SD	F	sig.	F	sig.	F	sig.	F	sig.
Real team												
Bounded	3.64	.39	3.72	.40	6.72	.02	4.84	.04	N.S.		N.S.	
Interdependent	3.63	.40	3.65	.37	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Stable	3.12	.52	3.19	.52	8.23	.008	N.S.		N.S.		6.48	.02
Compelling direction												
Clarity	3.18	.47	3.24	.59	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		7.41	.01
Challenging	3.19	.57	3.25	.61	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		5.51	.03
Consequentiality	3.34	.57	3.37	.57	N.S.		5.33	.03	N.S.		N.S.	
Enabling structure												

	First measure		Second measure		Within (time)		Between feedback		Between report		Interaction Feedback x report	
	M	SD	M	SD	F	sig.	F	sig.	F	sig.	F	sig.
<i>Team composition</i>												
Size	3.22	.74	3.3	.71	10.70	.003	6.11	.03	N.S.		N.S.	
Diversity	2.97	.62	3.05	.64	10.84	.003	N.S.		N.S.		10.03	.004
Skills	3.2	.43	3.31	.44	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
<i>Task design</i>												
Whole task	3.46	.47	3.56	.49	10.84	.003	N.S.		N.S.		10.03	.004
Autonomy	3.38	.43	3.39	.45	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Knowledge of results	2.91	.51	3.0	.51	7.44	.01	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
<i>Group norms</i>	3.24	.42	3.31	.45	6.17	.02	N.S.		N.S.		5.03	.03
Supportive context												
Reward/recognition	2.7	.44	2.86	.38	24.18	<.0001	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Information	3.16	.43	3.26	.47	4.33	.047	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Education	3.06	1.09	3.02	.54	N.S.		7.87	.009	16.47	<.001	6.13	.02
Resources	3.96	3.61	3.1	.52	N.S.		5.86	.02	7.56	.01	7.42	.01
Team coaching												
Availability	2.15	.63	2.27	.68	15.11	.001	N.S.		N.S.		9.4	.005
Helpfulness	3.32	.42	4.13	4.26	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Leader coaching												
Task-focused	3.29	.62	3.37	.60	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Operant	3.08	.54	3.17	.56	8.97	.006	N.S.		N.S.		4.71	.039
interpersonal	2.97	.63	3.05	.65	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Unhelpful direction	3.2	.65	3.28	.67	4.9	.03	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	

	First measure		Second measure		Within (time)		Between feedback		Between report		Interaction Feedback x report	
	M	SD	M	SD	F	sig.	F	sig.	F	sig.	F	sig.
Peer coaching												
Task-focused	3.41	.45	3.48	.39	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Interpersonal	3.21	.60	3.3	.55	5.86	.02	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Unhelpful intervention	3.11	.50	3.27	.58	15.23	.001	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Process criteria												
Effort	3.33	.53	3.36	.45	6.16	.02	N.S.		6.32	.02	N.S.	
Performance strategy	2.99	.57	3.11	.53	17.41	<.0001	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Knowledge and skill	3.43	.43	3.5	.43	6.31	.02	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Team social processes												
Quality of interaction	2.9	.68	3.0	.68	9.48	.005	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
Relation. satisfaction	3.52	.48	3.56	.49	N.S.		8.21	.008	N.S.		N.S.	
Individual well-being												
Int. work motivation	3.41	.38	3.5	.47	6.51	.02	N.S.		N.S.		7.6	.01
Growth satisfaction	3.28	.52	3.37	.56	12.23	.002	N.S.		N.S.		N.S.	
General satisfaction	3.47	.54	3.55	.54	8.51	.007	N.S.		N.S.		9.24	.005

Note: The statistical measure was repeated measure Anova with DF = 1,27. The within factor refer to differences between first and second measure. The between group factor feedback refer to the feedback intervention. The between group factor report refer to experiences of effort to improve the teamwork during the time between first and second measure.

The time between first and second TDS measurements did not appear to affect these results. Additionally, a simple t-test of all factors in the TDS showed that the feedback intervention had an overall effect over time, with a mean of .66 (SD=8.19) for the first measure and a mean of 6.46 (SD=11.26) for the second measure (T=2.57, DF=29, sig. =.04). Overall differences over

time and interaction effects were most prominent. That is, for several factors, only for those teams where team members experienced that something had been done to improve team work did the intervention had any effect.

Discussion

This study was the first attempt to use the Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS) as the instrument to evaluate team effectiveness before and after an intervention based on the first measurement of TDS. It was the main purpose of this first before-after study to test direct effects of a TDS-based intervention, with a rather explorative approach. An attempt to disentangle the effects of the intervention from other possible events occurring during the

time between first and second measurement was done by simply asking participants about their experiences. The questions about team members' experiences during the time between first and second measure were important, but also had a possible flaw. These questions could only measure a perception or general attitude toward teamwork. If so, the result that it interacted with feedback intervention is interesting in itself but it is also a possible confounding variable.

The benefit of randomization was evident but the drawback here was that the time between the first and second interventions was different across the teams in the study. Many different things can happen between a first and second measurement, especially in real life settings, and the randomization procedure was not sufficient to deal with that problem. To deal with this issue, the temporal aspects were analyzed as a confounding factor, which did not appear to affect the result.

Another limitation concern was the short time between the first and second measure. However this was deliberate as the purpose was to examine if feedback intervention had any effect on team members' perceptions of their own teams.

The limitation of only using a tool-based intervention was deliberate. Other plausible interventions could involve goal-setting (Wegge & Haslam, 2005; Eisele, 2013), feedback (Deshon et al. 2004) and specific training procedures (Swezey & Salas, 1992). However, it was the main purpose in this first before-after study to test direct effects of a TDS-relevant intervention in a more explorative manner. Ongoing and planned studies in different countries will expand the design and test different kinds of interventions, including team training.

In short, the Swedish version of TDS has in general the same degree of internal consistency and discriminant validity as the original TDS tested on a North American sample. A suggestion for ongoing research is to continue testing the instrument in other cultures and in other languages.

Conclusion

Theoretical implications of the study are that a survey can be used to get a fairly valid overall picture of real-life work teams' effectiveness. Although other forms of data collection could also be used, a reliable questionnaire of team effectiveness is fruitful for future research on team effectiveness. Organizational stakeholders were in general positive to changes among groups after contact with the TDS instrument. This however needs to be investigated thoroughly in the future. Managerial implications of the study are that the communication between team effectiveness scholars, consultants and stakeholders is made easier with the most important factors that impact on team effectiveness are empirically identified.

In the future, facilitator, moderator and mediator analyses and model testing will also be conducted. It is important to report reliability and validity of the instruments under development. A confirmatory factor analysis to examine the structure among the scales could be the next step. Also, some factors not included in this study should come under consideration. For example, since the TDS was developed, Tekleab, Quigley and Tesluk (2009) have found that conflict management had a direct effect on cohesion, which in turn had a positive effect on team performance, and Rousseu and Aubré (2010) examined task routines as the key moderator variable.

To conclude, the Swedish version of TDS has reasonable high validity, but more studies are needed. More research based on the types of work groups not included in this study would be beneficial and more longitudinal studies are needed. The research has increased understanding of team effectiveness. Knowledge gained by the TDS can be used to make better interventions. The research suggests that the TDS can facilitate the planning of group processes. By collecting self-reported data based on group members' own views of group processes, and the main factors that affect these processes, it is possible to identify aspects of teamwork that are not easily observed. For example, Haskell and Cyr (2011) have highlighted the need to observe and provide feedback to group members. The data demonstrates that the use of feedback from the TDS can be helpful to create a participatory environment through highlighting a need for effective group norms. The TDS makes use of more process-oriented items than outcome-oriented items. The research emphasized the importance of collecting information about how a group contributes, how it makes use of its knowledge, and how it chooses appropriate performance strategies. Another main point is that the type of knowledge gained from the TDS is that it can be used to improve communication between facilitators and stakeholders about team effectiveness.

AUTHOR

Dr. Per Eisele is a senior lecture in psychology at Blekinge Institute of Technology, Management division, and teaches mainly on research methods. He has a PhD in psychology from Lund University and has been working in the fields of social psychology, work psychology and sport psychology. His research areas are team effectiveness and psychological work climate. Ongoing research is about further development of the Team Diagnostic Survey (TDS), examining effects of interventions to increase team effectiveness and testing models with mediating factors; for example, shared mental models. Planned research is about relationships between management styles, attitudes to teamwork and psychological work climate. He has also conducted research on group decision making, role ambiguity among team players, environmental psychology and general performance at work. His research has been presented at conferences worldwide and been published in peer-review

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Essentials of Intentional Interviewing: Counseling in a Multicultural World

by Allen E. Ivey, Mary B. Ivey and Carlos, P. Zalaquett

Cengage Learning; 2001, 2008, 2012. Paperback: 400 pages. US\$125.95. ISBN-10: 840034563, ISBN-13: 978-0840034564

Reviewed by Angela Lewis

This book is designed to clarify interviewing and counseling expertise through the use of communication skill units known as micro-skills, which the authors maintain will help readers to master the art of effective, intentional communication. While it is a text book that will comprehensively meet the needs of students of caring professions and facilitation beginners, I believe it is also a useful resource for anyone wishing to hone their interviewing skills in general. Readers familiar with Carl Roger's *person-centred* style of interviewing will recognize that the authors share Roger's ethic of positive regard and respect for the client, and his belief in experiencing the client's world (given that their text has a strong emphasis on counseling, Ivey et al. use the term 'client' to mean the person being interviewed). The text is written in an active voice, making it easy to understand and read, and while it is organized with chapters that build from one to the next, they are modular enough that the book can be used on a consultative basis.

A key message of this book is that the counselor or *interviewer* must possess what the author's call *multicultural competence*, a state of cultural awareness and sensitivity. The term *multiculturalism* is generally more familiar as a referent to racial groups, but Ivey et al. have expanded the definition in multiple ways to include all aspects that make up a person's cultural background; so their definition includes not only race but religion, gender, sexual orientation, relationship and physical ability. They maintain that interviewers will neither establish a relationship, nor grasp the client's issues, if they don't have an awareness of diversity and sensitivity to the client's uniqueness, coupled with an awareness of their own culture and world view, and that this will affect the outcomes and experience of the clients.

In Chapter 1, readers are encouraged to identify their own multicultural identities and examine how their beliefs and attitudes towards those who are different to themselves might impact an interview. Chapter 2 presents the three critical aspects of interviewing and counseling: ethics; multicultural awareness; and wellness. Then Chapters 3 through 12 present the micro-skills hierarchy, beginning with attending and observation skills and moving through the basic listening sequence, to questioning skills, clarifying skills and empathetic reflection of feelings. The book then goes onto discuss the skills of confrontation, the value

of exploring a story from multiple perspectives and the reflection of meaning, and includes a chapter on the role, use and value of self-disclosure and feedback.

Chapter 7 puts together the basic listening sequence micro-skills of questioning, encouraging, and reflection of meaning, and the five stage interview structure. This is based on the five dimensions of relationship; story; strengths; goals; re-story; and action. These stages are explained in detail, in terms of function, purpose, appropriate skills required and predicted results. As well, readers are instructed on how to conduct an interview using this framework, and are presented with a practical case study; as is the case with the majority of chapters in the book.

The final section brings everything together with a chapter on skill integration, a chapter on the application of the micro-skills framework in different settings, and a final chapter on determining the reader's personal interviewing style. Here the readers have an opportunity to review where they are at with the skills taught in the text, and are asked to think about integrating these skills with their own natural style of interviewing.

In summary, this book presents highly practical tools and resources and a large number of case examples and sample interviews in an engaging and easily understood format. It meets its intention of providing a text that can be used to conduct successful interviews or counseling sessions for practitioners at all levels of skill, with a particular emphasis on the needs of the novice or student in their field. There is also the option of completing chapter-specific quizzes and questionnaires online, and I found this a particularly useful way of embedding the learning. Along with providing a thorough background in the micro-skills framework and the five-stage interview structure for effective interviewing and counseling, this book makes a valuable addition to the library of anyone who wants to gain more skills in communication—something we can all benefit from.

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Leading Effective Virtual Teams: Overcoming Time and Distance to Achieve Exceptional Results

by Nancy M. Settle-Murphy

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Reviewed by Dr. Stephen Thorpe

As someone with expertise and interest in this area, my overall impression of *Leading Effective Virtual Teams* is very positive. Nancy Settle-Murphy has made a significant contribution in an accessible and easy-to-grasp format. I often describe the role of an online group facilitator in an analogy of a conductor facilitating a large musical concert where everyone in the audience has come with their own instruments, all with the intention of contributing to the concert. Coordinating the musical performance is then made a little more complex as the group facilitator is then tasked with teaching each of those participants how to use their instruments, and then, as they are doing that, to teach some perhaps how to read sheet music, and then it all becomes a little more complex again as participants may happen to come from different cultures, different generations, and speak a number of different languages. Add to this that they will also be turning up at different times, some will have trouble getting in the room, and others will want to be doing other things on their email while they are there. And wow, presto, it is all expected to come together in a stellar online group performance!

Thus, this book is a very welcome and helpful resource to assist both the novice virtual team facilitator, who is just finding their feet, right through to the experienced facilitator, by stretching them further. The book is especially helpful for facilitators new to working with teams in understanding, assessing, and leading virtual teams. There are techniques for simple ways to make team members feel included and welcome on teleconferences, right through to advice on the more advanced team dynamics, such as building trust across boundaries and addressing inter-cultural and inter-generational differences.

Highlights of the book include the dozens of achievable ideas for building trust, collaborating virtually, managing performance issues, and applying effective troubleshooting processes. There are also key processes to help ensure all are fully present and

engaged in the ongoing discussion. I especially liked Section 2.4 and the litany of commonly-made mistakes in cross-cultural communication, some of which I could happily admit to having fallen head first into them myself. Following from these however, Nancy has included a number of key success strategies that can turn each dynamic into a winning post for your team's efforts, and to harness the deeper opportunities that diversity offers in online group work.

Nancy Settle-Murphy has been an "early adopter" of virtual platforms and brings to life her years of expertise on facilitating virtual teams in this book. She also brings forth her vast knowledge of cross-cultural communication and how to solve the many challenges of working across time, borders and geography; all so important in today's world of global virtual team work.

I would recommend this book to anyone undertaking group work that involves collaboration technology of any kind. If you really want to step into the future of group work, this book is an essential resource to get you up to speed with the distinct competencies of effective online facilitation.

Stephen J. Thorpe is an academic, educator, and group facilitator who specializes in group work in the online world. His 2009 PhD investigated the use of storytelling as a team-building process in the facilitation of online groups. He is a director of Zenergy and the Acting Head of the School of Computing and Mathematical Sciences at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. He is also the Editor-in-Chief of Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal, an international multi-disciplinary publication focused on the art and science of group facilitation.

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Auckland University of Technology, Zenergy Ltd., New Zealand

Stephen is an academic, educator and group facilitator who specializes in the science of group work in the online world. He is passionate about online group work, group facilitation and online collaborative technologies. He is a Director of Zenergy and Acting Head of the School of Computing and Mathematical Sciences at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand.



Dr. Sascha Rixon - Editor

Babel Fish Group Pty Ltd., University of Melbourne, Melbourne

After completing an honours degree in linguistics in 2002 at the University of Queensland, Sascha travelled and worked in London in a variety of corporate environments. On returning from London, Sascha spent many hours in unproductive meetings and became curious as to how effective communication could facilitate more productive meetings. To this end, in 2007 Sascha commenced doctoral studies at the University of Melbourne exploring language in the workplace with a focus on the language use of facilitators in facilitated workshops. Sascha has co-authored an article on language use in facilitation in the *Group Facilitation Journal*.



Steven N. Pyser, J.D. – Editor

Temple University, Fox School of Business, Philadelphia

Steven is a principal in a consulting firm that provides dialogue, strategic planning, conflict management, and synergy services to educational institutions, corporations, and nonprofit organizations. He is a member of the faculty at the University of Phoenix, Greater Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Campuses, where he teaches undergraduate, graduate business, and management courses. Pyser facilitates public conversations and dialogues and conducts workshops on diversity, issues of public importance, group facilitation skills, and conflict management. He serves on the editorial board for *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* and as a staff editor for the *Journal of Legal Studies Education*. He received his J.D. from Temple University School of Law.



Bill Staples - Publishing Editor

Principal, ICA Associates Inc., Toronto

Bill Staples, Principal, Facilitator and Trainer, ICA Associates Inc., Toronto

Bill is respected worldwide and was the chair of the International Association of Facilitators Conference 2000 in Toronto which attracted 1,100 facilitators from around the world. Bill is the author of *Transformational Strategy: Facilitation of ToP Participatory Planning*. The ICA network of organizations has written and published many facilitation books including *The Focused Conversation Method*, *The Workshop Book*, *Winning Through Participation*, *The Courage to Lead*, and *Focused Conversations for Schools*.



**Dr. Andrew Rixon – Book Review Editor
Babel Fish Group Pty Ltd., Melbourne**

Andrew first discovered the power of storytelling at the age of 14 when, during a classical guitar lesson, his teacher – having heard him just play something quite mechanically – said, ‘You’ve got to tell a story. What can you picture?’ With one of the first PhDs in Complex Systems and Complexity Science from the University of Queensland completed in June 1999, Andrew had the opportunity to move to Boston and work for a management think tank applying complexity insights to the world of organisations. The founder and director of the boutique management consulting company Babel Fish Group, Andrew works as a professional facilitator and change consultant and has experience in working with organisations both within Australia and internationally, in the USA, the Netherlands and the UK. Andrew brings a spirited dynamic presence as a professional speaker, leadership coach and workshop leader. Principled, innovative and resourceful, Andrew enjoys living in Melbourne with his wife Sascha and dog George. Andrew can be contacted by email at andrew@babelfishgroup.com.



**Dr. William Reid – IAF Communications and Publications Director
Bill Reid Consulting, Nelson, B.C.**

Bill has had a distinguished career in public education and holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership. An innovational educator and trained facilitator, Bill has presented sessions throughout BC and the USA including the American Association of School Administrators National Convention in San Diego, Leadership Forum in Phoenix, and National School Conference Institute in New York. Bill does consulting out of his office in Nelson and speaks at conferences on a variety of leadership topics such as communications, team building, decision making, time management, planning, and goal setting. Bill is also on the Board of the International Association of Facilitators.

Group Facilitation: A Research & Applications Journal

Aim and Scope

Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal is a multi-disciplinary publication focused on the art and science of group facilitation. The aim of Group Facilitation is to advance our knowledge of group facilitation and its implications for individuals, groups, organizations, and communities. It is published annually.

The *Group Facilitation Journal* is intended for facilitators, mediators, organizational development and training specialists, managers, researchers, and others who seek to use facilitation skills in their practice. Articles represent diverse perspectives, including organizational learning and development, group and system dynamics, collaborative technology, negotiation, mediation, leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution, cross-cultural contexts, and education. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, facilitator roles within the group, interventions for conflict management, descriptions of specific facilitation methods, approaches to facilitating specific tasks such as idea generation or priority setting, using computer technology to support facilitation, increasing participation in organizations, exploring the underlying values, beliefs and models of facilitation, and applying facilitation skills and concepts to various settings.

The journal is comprised of the following sections, which are described below in more detail: Application and Practice; Theory and Research; Edge Thinking; Book Reviews.

Application and Practice is devoted to articles that reflect on facilitator experience. Articles appropriate for this section include reports on experiences gained and lessons learned presented in a reflective case study, and discussion of facilitator roles, problems encountered by facilitators or their clients, and intervention methods and techniques. Studies should be both descriptive and evaluative and should draw on existing literature appropriately.

Theory and Research is devoted to articles that explore, propose, or test practices, principles, or other aspects of facilitation models. Such studies are typically based on survey, experimental, ethnographic, or other research methods.

Edge Thinking is intended to stimulate thinking on new concepts and issues. Contributions may be less formal than the other sections, and might include dialogues, essays, editorials, and proposals for new areas of inquiry.

Book Reviews presents critical and comparative reviews of recent and classic books related to group facilitation.

Submission Guidelines

Submission guidelines and other information about the journal may be obtained on the journal website <http://iaf-world.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3498> or from the Editor (see below).

Original manuscripts should be submitted via email (preferred) to:

Stephen Thorpe
Editor-in-Chief
journal.editor@iaf-world.org

Group Facilitation: A Research & Applications Journal Book Review Guidelines

Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal presents critical and comparative reviews of recent and classic books related to group facilitation. These guidelines include recommendations for writing and submitting a review, information about the review cycle and reviewer qualifications.

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When writing a review, please include:

- overall impression of the book
- the highlights and structure of the book
- for whom the book would be appropriate
- what you found particularly helpful, unclear, weak
- your personal learning, if any
- particular benefits to you in your facilitation, if any
- value of the book for facilitators, if any
- significant contribution of the book, if any, to the field of facilitation
- your recommendation of "must read" portions of the book, if any
- a summary or wrap-up of your reading experience.

In addition:

- provide definitions of terms, acronyms, references, and background summary statements where appropriate.
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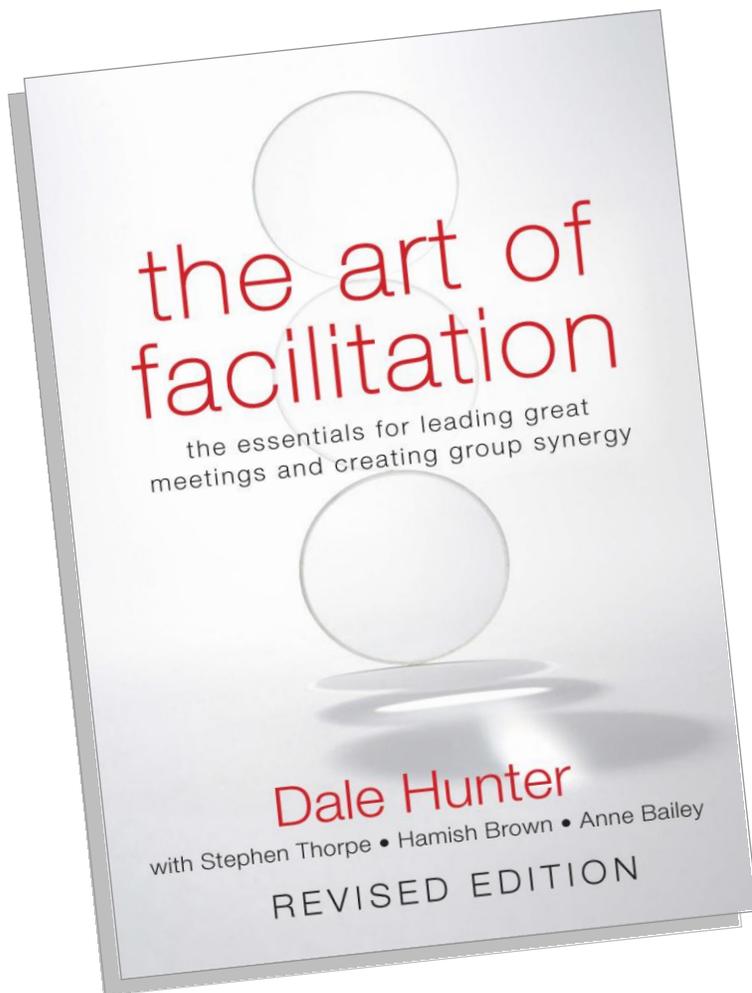
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Reviews are typically between 1,000 and 3,000 words. Submissions should be made via email in Microsoft Word or Rich Text (RTF) format. If you are interested in reviewing a book for the Journal, please contact:

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dale Hunter is a group facilitator, mediator, coach, and author in the field of facilitation. She is a director of Zenergy, a New Zealand-based company providing facilitation, mediation, and coaching services to government, business, and community sectors.

Stephen Thorpe is a facilitator specializing in online facilitation and a director of Zenergy. He is a Lecturer at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and editor-in-chief of *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal*.

Hamish Brown is a facilitator and registered psychotherapist specializing in psychodrama.

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