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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF FACILITATION

11 P Purpose					14 N Neutral
16 Et Ethical	20 Q Question			21 Ci Circles	25 Li Listen
33 Fl Flow	37 Ch Change	70 Fr Frontload	76 F Frame	88 Db Debrief	117 Fb Feedback

SKILLS FOR ENHANCING CLIENT LEARNING AND CHANGE

SIMON PRIEST
MIKE GASS
LEE GILLIS

The ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS of FACILITATION

Simon Priest, Ph.D.
Michael Gass, Ph.D.
Lee Gillis, Ph.D.

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info@tarrak.com

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THANKS to the gardeners who have always been important parts of our lives and through their caring, nurturing and love, have helped us to reflect on our own growth as facilitators.

DEDICATED to our children and animals. They have kept our lives in balance and provided true perspectives on our work. They are our best rewards and our greatest challenge as facilitators.

FOR Heidi and Tarrak;
Anthony, Amaryth, and Andrew;
Megan, Star, and Togwaak.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
Chameleons, catalysts, and cabdrivers

Organizations are dynamically conservative:
they fight like mad to remain the same.
Only when an organization cannot repel, ignore, contain
or transform a threat, does it respond to it [by changing].
—Donald Schon

True organizational change seems increasingly difficult to come by these days. Approximately 10% of learning from training and development experiences is actually applied in the workplace due to numerous oppositional barriers (Broad & Newstrom, 1992). These barriers often prevent employees from reflecting on their training and development experiences, integrating new learning in the workplace, and continuing such changes once back on the job. Anything managers can do to enhance the **experience**, **reflection**, **integration**, and **continuation** for employees ultimately increases the amount of individual learning leading to organizational change.

As managers of organizations, there are several approaches to enhance change and productivity in employees. One approach is to roll up your sleeves and become fully involved in their tasks, dictating to subordinates what needs to be done and how to do it, leading your charges by an example of hard work come "hell or high water!" Another approach is to sit back and let everyone do what they want, offering little direction or feedback to employees, assuming they know what needs to be done and expecting they will do it. While these approaches may work for some managers and organizations in certain circumstances, the process outlined here is very different.

The process advanced in this book takes a different path to increased productivity. Rather than direct from a "top down" perspective and work harder at tasks or take a "laissez-faire" approach and provide everyone with the freedom to do what they want, this approach seeks to engage employees by working on enhancing the **processes** associated with their tasks. This approach encourages managers to listen to employees and clarify tasks through questions rather than directives. It develops and reinforces open and participative environments, promoting ownership and responsibility rather than having management reduce employee investment. Once managers establish such a foundation, what follows is a natural process of supporting employees to remain focused on their outcomes, tasks, and associated processes. Also addressed are the inevitable concerns on how to deal with conflict and emotions constructively, while still encouraging and supporting multiple perspectives toward a conclusion. This is the process of **facilitation**: the process of managing tasks and relationships more efficiently so employees, as well as employers, become more successful.

The premise of this book is not to write an exhaustive text for a particular field or body of knowledge, but to try and address the elements informed professionals would use to guide their practice. The focus here is to provide only the essentials, achieving much more by identifying as little as possible and linking you, the reader, to as much information as is necessary to facilitate. The intended audiences for this book include:

- CONSULTANTS working outside an organization and wishing to enhance their understanding of facilitation methods and principles;
- TRAINERS working within an organization and desiring to strengthen their roles as human resource development professionals;
- MANAGERS leading groups of employees and looking for less directive and more empowering approaches leading to greater work effectiveness;

- FACILITATORS in other fields (e.g., therapists, teachers) seeking to refine their facilitation techniques in order to work with corporate audiences; and
- STUDENTS in organizational development or leadership courses wanting to improve their knowledge of facilitation theory and practice.

Here are some final thoughts to serve as a guide as you read this book and work to further enhance your facilitation. Colleagues recently asked us to describe ourselves in our roles as facilitators. After thinking about the numerous roles and responsibilities associated with facilitation and the short amount of time to give an answer, all three of us responded differently.

One of us said he was like a **chameleon**. In answer to a returned quizzical look, he replied that chameleons and facilitators both change their external presentations in response to a variety of internal and external factors in themselves and the surrounding environment. Such changes allow them to adapt to the environment where they find themselves. While changes appear externally, there are many internal features that remain the same regardless of the training environment. When chameleon and facilitator know the right elements to match, success typically results.

Another answered he was like a chemical **catalyst**. When substances combine to form new compounds in a chemical reaction, a great deal of energy is usually required to get the effect started. Once it has begun, the result sometimes releases enough energy to keep a chain reaction going. The goal is finding sufficient energy to overcome barriers to initiate the reaction and use catalysts to lower the initial energy requirement. A catalyst is inert matter combining substances together in a way that makes them more willing to change into new compounds. The reaction by this change agent takes less effort to get started and is easier to sustain once activated than without it. Like this reaction, a facilitator catalyzes change in a manner easier to initiate and maintain.

The third one replied he was like a **cabdriver**. He possessed extensive knowledge of the city, the traffic patterns and flow during various times of day, and the best thoroughfares to reach a given destination. The bottom line was that the client provided the destination, while the cabdriver or facilitator negotiated the route. His analogy held up best for clients in unfamiliar places who generally knew where they wanted to go, but didn't know how to get there. Through active questioning about their preferences, observations of their actions, and respect for their requests, he actively collaborated with them to arrive at this place in a way that best met their needs and provided an enjoyable ride.

In summary, we tend to see facilitation as a combination of three things. First, a facilitator remains intact within, but adapts on the outside to suit changing circumstances and conditions. Second, a facilitator enables others to learn by making it easier for them to overcome barriers and sustain their own change. Third, a facilitator works in concert with clients to reach their goals for learning by understanding their perspectives and negotiating with them to follow a mutually acceptable path toward change. Facilitators also make learning fun.

Simon Priest, Mike Gass, and Lee Gillis.
Seattle, Washington, July, 1999.

1
Defining Best Practice

I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide
the conditions in which they can learn best.
—Albert Einstein

Einstein knew one of the essential elements of facilitation: create conditions where people learn best. In this chapter, we define some key terms and examine the relationship between facilitation and programming. We then detail some of the essential facilitation elements from the perspective of people, purposes, and programs.

A. Make things easier for clients

In its simplest sense, facilitation means "to make easier." The goals of facilitation processes are to produce changes in peoples' feeling, thinking, or behavior (otherwise known as "learning"). These changes usually result from participation in some form of experience ranging from passive (e.g., meetings, lectures, videos, books) to more active ones (e.g., simulations, role plays, action exercises, adventure activities).

Unfortunately, people's attempts to learn or change are often blocked by barriers preventing them from **reflecting** on their experiences, **integrating** their reflective learning back to the workplace, and **continuing** these integrated changes in their work. Appropriate facilitation not only focuses on orchestrating experiences to create learning and change, but also seeks to eliminate barriers hindering learning and change. In its most complete form, facilitation is anything and everything you do before, during, or after learning experiences to enhance people's reflection, integration, and continuation of lasting change!

B. Facilitate or dictate

Why consider facilitation approaches? Why not just tell people what they are supposed to learn, or just leave them to figure it out on their own? Some of the benefits to facilitation are:

- greater buy-in or ownership by increasingly autonomous and independent employees;
- creation and reinforcement of an open, positive, and participative work environment;
- strong focus on processes that can be generalized to other organizational tasks;
- increased access to the resolution of concerns from a wide variety of sources;
- greater possibility for the inclusion of multiple perspectives in problem solving;
- less dependence on managers to always provide the “right” answers;
- more empowerment of employees to develop the best solutions;
- active building of rapport and relationships among the work force; and
- broader systemic perspective on how the organization conducts business.

C. Vary learning experience

Again, the basis for change is participation in some type of learning experience. However, since people learn in diverse ways, we recommend varying the content and format of the learning experiences based on what works best for clients. We suggest you make these experiences fun and entertaining. Here are a few of the many possible learning experiences you can draw on to create a program:

- attending meetings (staff assembly, professional conference, or consumer focus group);
- hearing lectures (motivational speakers, research case studies, or workshop presentations);

- watching media (television videos, software program CDs, or audio-visual slide shows);
- reading books (including the latest guru's self-help text or organization's five-year plan);
- enjoying leisure events (golf matches, company picnics, or volunteer service projects);
- conducting brainstorms (which involves generating ideas without restriction or evaluation);
- mediating negotiations (that may involve conflict resolution between two disparate parties);
- sharing in simulations (a scaled down representation of work where outcomes are similar);
- arranging role plays (when people adopt different actions outside their normal behaviors);
- scheduling future searches (a collective tracing of the past and visioning for the future);
- examining project management (people dissect successes or setbacks of real work tasks);
- engaging in action exercises (where learning is based on actual problems from work); and
- participating in adventure activities (group initiatives, ropes courses, or outdoor pursuits).

We make no further distinction about exactly what these **learning experiences** should comprise: this is your choice based on client needs and your preferences. We recommend the experiences you select for a program be connected with strategies of **reflection**, **integration**, and **continuation**, and these strategies be facilitated for optimal learning and change. These principles create a positive synergistic cycle for growth when connected together properly (as shown in Figure 1).

For example, a motivational speaker may be enough to excite people, but employees may not learn any valuable lessons without an opportunity to reflect with others on what was said. Also, these lessons will not be applied at work without some form of integration and continuation strategies. Facilitated learning experiences are best accomplished by an organized program possessing all the components of this cycle.

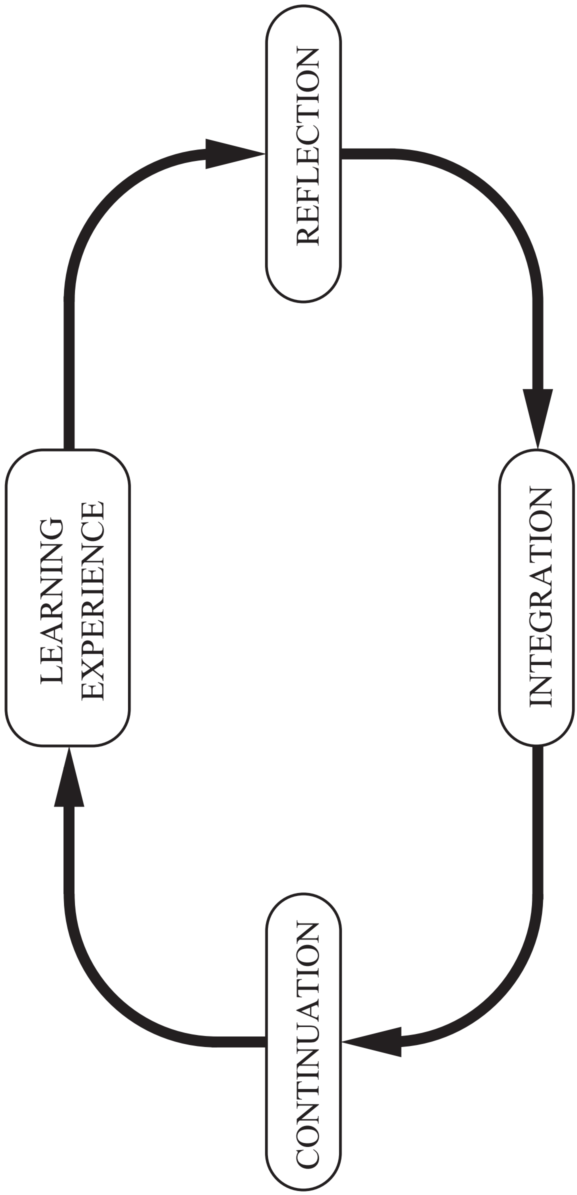

Figure 1: A clockwise cycle for client learning and change through facilitated experience

D. Know the purpose of program

Recall a **program** is a collection of learning experiences and **learning** is a change in the way people feel, think, or behave. Selecting the appropriate form of change is critical, because it determines your program purpose, guides your choice of learning experiences, and directs your facilitation style. While other types exist, the four program purposes most commonly sought for creating appropriate change in organizations, teams, and employees include **recreation**, **education**, **development**, and **redirection**.

> RECREATION programs change the way people **feel** by re-energizing, entertaining, and/or relaxing them. For example, one of the experiences listed above might be used at a conference to get people mingling and to help them get to know one another. This would be recreation, where the focus is on fun, socialization, and feeling good.
>
> EDUCATION programs change the way people **think** (as well as feel) by gaining awareness of learning needs, adding knowledge of new concepts, or understanding novel ways to look at familiar concepts. For example, some of the experiences above might be used to demonstrate the value of working together and to introduce the new vision of teamwork. This would be education, where the focus is on thinking differently.
>
> DEVELOPMENT programs change the way people **behave** (as well as think and feel) by increasing function. For example, once the value of teamwork is evident, multiple experiences are used sequentially to build new teams. This would be development, where positive functional behaviors are improved.

> REDIRECTION programs also change the way people behave as above, but by **decreasing dysfunction**. For example, some of these experiences might prove useful for helping a team that does not work well together (e.g., they willingly withhold information and openly distrust one another). This is redirection, where dysfunctional behaviors are diminished and replaced by more functional ones.

Once you are clear on the primary purpose of a program, and know this purpose addresses the needs of your **clients** (i.e., participants in the program) and **customer** (i.e., purchaser of the program), then your choice of experiences and facilitation styles is based on this knowledge.

E. Suit facilitation to program purpose

Learning experiences and facilitation styles should match your program purpose. For example, the intent of recreation programs is to change feelings. Since inherently enjoyable aspects of these experiences speak for themselves, such programs usually need little or no formal facilitation. Beyond logistics, recreation programs do not necessarily connect with Organizational Development (OD) goals or involve Human Resource Development (HRD) professionals. Therefore, the remainder of this book is concerned with the three other program types which rely heavily on varying degrees of facilitation.

Facilitation of education experiences (primary purpose: changing thinking) emphasizes reflection. Reflection examines the processes of an experience, enhances awareness of learning about those processes, and highlights changes in feeling, thinking or behaving from that experience. The education facilitator (perhaps observed by the HRD professional) adds reflective elements to the clients' experiences related to the OD goals of the customer. Once client thinking has been changed, the responsibility for integration and continuation is transferred to the HRD professional, who is accountable for helping clients to reinforce their changed thinking.

Facilitation of development experiences (primary purpose: changing functional behavior) concentrates on reflection and integration. Integration occurs when learning derived from experience transfers to the workplace and shows up as changes in feeling, thinking or behaving. The development facilitator (assisted by the HRD professional) works with clients to create integration strategies ensuring new learning is well connected to OD goals and applied at work. Once new behaviors have been tested at work, the HRD professional is accountable for supporting clients with their learning and change.

Facilitation of redirection experiences (primary purpose: changing dysfunctional behavior) blends reflection, integration, and continuation. Continuation permits clients to extend learning, maintain change, and lessen resistance to change. This is accomplished by providing time, resources, and opportunities to practice new learning as well as reinforce changes while on the job. The redirection facilitator (in full partnership with the HRD professional) works in an ongoing role to enable change, seamlessly linked to OD goals, to be supported in the work environment. The HRD professional co-facilitates the continuous reinforcement of client maintained changes.

A comparison of these four program types and purposes is summarized in Table 1 opposite.

PROGRAM TYPE	**PRIMARY PURPOSE**	**PRIMARY EMPHASIS**	**ROLE OF H.R.D. PROFESSIONAL**	**CUSTOMER'S O.D. GOALS**
RECREATION	Feelings	Experience	Not present	Not considered
EDUCATION	Thinking	Reflection	Observer	Partially related
DEVELOPMENT	Function	Integration	Assistant	Fully connected
REDIRECTION	Dysfunction	Continuation	Full Partner	Seamlessly linked

Table 1: A comparative summary of the four facilitated program types

F. Understand your personal belief system

You will work best when you are able to join with a variety of client belief systems, realities, and interpretations. Ironically, you can only approach such "state of being" when you know your own personal belief system and what issues you cannot "join with" or remain neutral about. These are sometimes referred as **non-negotiable values**: those beliefs you are unable or unwilling to change as a facilitator.

For example, in a particular situation several clients may make a number of sexist comments. For many facilitators, the depreciation of people based on their gender is not acceptable, especially under certain pre-established value systems. They would consider this to be a nonnegotiable value. After first pausing to see if any clients choose to bring up the issue, facilitators often address such an issue by directly confronting the behavior. They might express how these comments invalidate the group's value system and possibly the organization's effectiveness. They also might apply corrective actions by discussing the matter openly with the group and checking in with them at a later time to see if there is any continuing concerns.

When you take inventory of your non-negotiable values before working with clients, you begin to learn if you can remain neutral or not when issues arise. Moreover, you will be more prepared to deal with value-laden concerns, which constantly arise in learning experiences.

G. Be neutral to attain mobility

Achieving and maintaining a state of neutrality, without being distant from clients, assists you in being more maneuverable in your facilitation processes. In other words, you'll be able to assume a variety of positions concerning a topic without taking one side or the other. Becoming biased or fixed on a single path toward change can prove to be ineffective, especially in times of group conflict.

One way to maintain neutrality and achieve mobility is to remember and act on the maxim: "as a facilitator, I am responsible 'to' you, but not 'for' you" (adapted from King, 1988). This places clients in charge of what they gain from an experience, enabling you to maintain your flexibility and avoid getting caught up in clients' issues. In this way clients are able direct their own learning experience, freeing you to support them in their efforts for change in a relevant and lasting manner.

H. Understand and be clear on your role

The context you are working in as a facilitator will vary depending on the program design, leading you to adjust the elements of your learning experiences. Here are some examples of questions to consider in program design.

- Are you external or internal to the organization and groups being facilitated?
- How much of the learning objectives focus on process? On product? On an interchange between the two?
- What are the objectives of the learning experience? What will be viewed as success? As failure?
- Which responsibilities are yours as a facilitator and which are the client's (e.g., watching time; keeping the group on track; monitoring for infractions of ground rule and operating principles; preparing, sticking to, or modifying the agenda; moderating discussions; recording information)?
- How much power/influence do you have with the clients you are facilitating?

I. Strive for ethical practices

Ethical practices are those actions that are morally right and in the best interests of the client. Ethical practices not only address outcomes of learning and change (i.e., the "ends") but also the process by which those outcomes are achieved (i.e., the "means"). Here are some hallmarks of ethical facilitators.

> COMPETENCE - Promote and direct learning experiences within your own level of competence. Provide services within the boundaries of your education, training, and experience. Stay abreast of current changes in the field and participate in ongoing professional efforts to maintain your competence.
>
> INTEGRITY - Conduct learning experiences with honesty, fairness, and respect in interactions with both clients and peers. Avoid false, misleading, or deceptive statements when describing or reporting qualifications, services, products, or fees. Be aware of how your personal belief system, values, needs, and limitations can influence clients.
>
> RESPONSIBILITY - Accept responsibility for your behavior and decisions. Adapt methods to the needs of different populations and cultures. Ensure that you possess an adequate basis for professional judgments. Do not offer services when the constraints of limited contact will not benefit client needs (e.g., promising a single day program will resolve deep systemic dysfunction). Continue services only so long as it is reasonably clear that clients will benefit.

RESPECT - Respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people, including rights to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination. Strive to be sensitive to cultural and individual differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status. Do not engage in harassment or exploitation of clients. Respect clients' rights to make decisions as well as help them understand the consequences of their choices.

CONCERN - Be sensitive to client needs and well-being. Assist in obtaining other services if the program cannot for appropriate reasons provide the professional help clients may need. Plan experiences with the clients' best interests in mind both during and after the program.

RECOGNITION - Recognize your level of social responsibility, being aware of your responsibilities to community and society. Appropriately encourage the development of standards and policies serving your clients' interests as well as those of the public.

OBJECTIVITY - Avoid having multiple relationships with clients that impair professional judgment (when a power differential exists, multiple relationships can interfere with objectivity for both client and facilitator). Do not exploit or mislead clients or customers during and after professional relationships (this includes, but is not limited to, business dealings, close personal friendships, family memberships, sexual relations, and inappropriate physical contact).

No matter what course of action you select, the summum bonum (i.e., do no harm) ethic you follow as a professional should be guided by empathy for the client.

J. Program and facilitate for optimal learning

At the very least, facilitators should be able to lead simple discussions about learning experiences in education programs. Principles for such programs are outlined in the next chapter. On the other hand, most facilitators need to be able to diagnose needs, design programs, deliver experiences, debrief learning, help clients with their departure, and deal with any difficulties that arise. These goals are often at the center of development and redirection programs and are described in the remaining chapters of this book.

2
Discussing Basics

Even wrong answers to the right question
can sometimes be more valuable than the
right answers to the wrong question.
—Socrates

At a minimum, facilitation is the ability to conduct a basic discussion as a means to help clients reflect on, learn from, and change as a result of their experiences. This chapter investigates the concept of basic discussions, the role of questioning (also referred to as the Socratic Method after Socrates), guidelines for conducting basic discussions, and some of the skills for effectively facilitating basic discussions. Several alternative reflection methods, differing from well used verbal discussion techniques, are also highlighted.

A. Discuss processes in order to aid reflection

The purpose for holding discussions after learning experiences is to help clients reflect. Experience alone does not typically lead to learning or change unless it is accompanied by some form of reflection. Clients frequently become caught up in the power of their learning experiences and often miss the meaning of its message. Facilitated discussion helps clients uncover and accelerate learning and supports them through their change processes.

When facilitating individuals, discussions are unstructured with informal ways of talking about the experience. They highlight the lessons learned and weave a fabric of future strategies for effecting change. At a very basic level, discussion permits clients to analyze and verbalize learning from their experiences and plan how they will integrate this learning from their experience toward new change in their work lives.

When facilitating groups, discussions can serve as a way of reinforcing common perceptions (e.g., “That’s exactly how I feel”) and viewing situations from alternate perspectives (e.g., “I never thought of it that way before”). Discussion allows groups to share interpretations of occurrences, lessons, and strategies. Through this type of facilitation, groups frequently move closer together in the way they interact and enhance their teamwork.

When clients know a discussion will follow the learning experience, they often become more attentive to what is going on during the experience. When they understand what upcoming discussions will address, clients often exhibit a heightened awareness of relationship dynamics, tasks, products of learning, and group processes. This may also increase their willingness to contribute insights to discussion. Facilitators should proactively inform clients that reflective discussions normally follow experiences and the focus of these discussions will often be on group processes (i.e., how well people related to one another), product outcomes (i.e., how well a task was completed), or both.

While informal discussions can be very useful for exploring customers’ topics and discovering clients’ issues, more structured debriefing methods can also be useful for confirming facilitator’s thoughts and punctuating clients’ learning and change (e.g., funneling and frontloading which are covered later in this book). Either way, facilitators need to be thoughtful in asking the right questions when initiating and maintaining discussions.

B. Ask questions and avoid statements

Socrates educated learners by asking questions so they discovered answers for themselves. Through this type of self-discovery, clients are more likely to retain and take possession of their learning. In turn, such ownership brings greater probability of change because commitments tend to be more binding than when a facilitator states: "Your group is doing this and you need to do that!" It is also important to note that in this latter situation, the chance of resistance to change is much greater.

A good beginning rule for facilitators is always ask questions and avoid making statements. If you feel the need to make a statement, phrase it in the form of a question! One advantage of the questioning process is that it allows clients room for negotiation if they disagree with opinions.

From Gestalt Therapy (Borton, 1970), three questions to use in such discussions are:

- WHAT? = What happened?
- SO WHAT? = So what did you learn?
- NOW WHAT? = Now what will you do to change?

For most learners, these simple three questions are enough to sustain a minimal discussion and identify topics. However, other techniques (e.g., funneling and frontloading) are often necessary for confirmation of learning and can provide for greater depth and breadth of change than these three simple questions.

C. Form circles for efficiency

Discussions are usually best conducted in a circle with everyone sitting or standing. Circles tend to be warm, inviting configurations allowing clients to hear what everyone has to say and make eye contact with one another. The facilitator is almost always a part of this circle for the same reasons. Facilitators guide the discussion by asking appropriate questions, listening to responses, and observing non-verbal behaviors (e.g., body language, facial expressions). Physical signs of comfort or discomfort are also important to monitor. For example, if working outside and the sun is shining from an angle, facilitators ought to position themselves facing into the sun or move the group. If energy levels are falling, facilitators ought to end the discussion early and return to the topic when appropriate.

The facilitator often acts as a gatekeeper for discussion by providing everyone with opportunities to answer questions. Here are ten guidelines that may make sense to use once clients are in a circle.

> Allow SINGLE SPEAKING: one person talking at any time is a sign of respect and increases the chance for each person to be heard and for everyone to hear what is said.
>
> Give everyone the RIGHT TO PASS and either delay answering (be certain you come back to them) or politely refuse answering (make sure you don't return to them on that question).
>
> Share the established limits of CONFIDENTIALITY thereby assisting everyone in understanding what information can be talked about outside the group and what information is private within the group.
>
> Begin with POSITIVE issues before progressing to negative ones (which may intimidate some clients), and balance positive and negative issues throughout the discussion.
>
> Present SINGLE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS to the entire group.
>
> SPEAK loudly, clearly, and concisely so everyone can hear the question (and ask others to speak similarly so their responses are equally well heard).

Provide plenty of PAUSES for clients to think about the question, their answer, and then how they will respond within the group setting.

LISTEN to answers and accurately paraphrase responses in order to confirm intent and to clarify this intent for others.

Acknowledge and VALIDATE all responses with a verbal thank you or a non-verbal cue (e.g., head nod, smile).

Before asking the next question, SUMMARIZE what was discussed from the previous question and tie this summary to the new question.

D. Do this and don't do that!

There are an exhaustive number of items to consider when facilitating groups that vary with every situation. A more complete discourse on these items can be found in such references as Argyris & Schon (1978), Schein (1988), Schwartz (1994), and Webne-Behrman (1998). The following summarize ten key concepts to consider when facilitating and nine items to avoid (as well as what to do in lieu of these items) for constructing successful facilitation experiences. DO these ten.

- Take discussions seriously and schedule plenty of time for them.
- Provide the same amount of time for discussing as was spent engaging in each learning experience.
- Discuss frequently and immediately after each learning experience.
- Save lengthy discussions for later if the group needs a break.
- Have periodic and regular discussions throughout the day for longer experiences.
- Discuss close to the experience location so clients can

visualize their experiences.
- Select a special site for discussions free from distractions (e.g., noise).
- Welcome contributions with relaxed posture, open facial expressions, and appreciation.
- Remain alert for client stories and incorporate these into the discussion.
- Reinforce client body or verbal language with similar movements or words, when appropriate.

DON’T do these nine (and do something else INSTEAD).

- DON’T lead clients by suggesting words for them to respond with; INSTEAD, let them use their own words, since these have more value and personal relevance.
- DON’T save clients by finishing their sentences or thoughts for them; INSTEAD, support them in their struggle with this task, since they may learn more through this process.
- DON’T give answers (or worry about knowing the right answer); INSTEAD, ask questions guiding clients to their own right answers.
- DON’T accept only one answer as correct; INSTEAD, seek the variety, multiplicity, and depth that numerous and diverse answers may provide.
- DON’T compare clients with others who have gone before them; INSTEAD, encourage clients to self-evaluate themselves against criteria making sense for them.
- DON’T judge client actions as good or bad; INSTEAD, guide the group in its evaluation of the content, process, and broader context of their learning.
- DON’T give false feedback, insincere praise, or unwarranted criticism; INSTEAD, base feedback on constructive principles targeted toward growth (see later in this chapter).
- DON’T assume what is best for clients and force them to change; INSTEAD, guide them to their own determination of what is best and where they can take ownership for change.
- DON’T always examine negatives, mistakes, setbacks, failures, and other weaknesses; INSTEAD, vary examinations with occasional positives, successes, and strengths.

E. Establish appropriate atmosphere

Create an atmosphere where clients feel welcome and not threatened. Client investment in the group and willingness to change often stem from existing in a safe and supportive environment. Such an atmosphere is usually characterized by mutual trust, respect, equality, flexibility, freedom, empathy, and acceptance. Clients are able to take risks by experimenting with new thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in a safe and supportive atmosphere. In collaborative and supportive settings, clients typically take personal responsibility for their own learning. Creation of this kind of atmosphere requires facilitators to establish certain ground rules, as well as foster the development of particular operating principles from within the group (Chapter 5 addresses ground rules and operating principles in more detail). Change will come more readily in this type of setting than in critical, competitive, harmful, fixed, or controlled situations.

F. Listen effectively

Good listening skills are fundamental to communication and facilitation. If answers aren't heard or understood, then facilitating change by asking questions is difficult and may even be a waste of time. The following is a list of techniques to consider for effective listening.

- Maintain eye contact with clients (e.g., lean forward to invite disclosure).
- Signal your attentiveness with verbal and nonverbal affirmations (e.g., saying "yes" while nodding your head).
- Wait through pauses to encourage clients to resume talking; don't rush to fill silences and be patient.
- Use open-ended questions to encourage clients to continue talking or to probe for deeper elaboration (e.g., "What do you mean by that?" or "Please tell us more about this").
- Summarize and paraphrase clients' remarks in order to demonstrate your comprehension of their ideas.
- Respond to the feelings that may lie behind clients' words by

showing empathy for how they feel.
- Use a gentle tone of voice expressing care rather than judgment.
- Listen for action words (i.e., verbs ending in "-ing") depicting a process rather than a product orientation.
- Separate behaviors clients identify as unchangeable from those appearing to be changeable.
- Don't take the focus of the conversation away from clients by changing the subject or by agreeing or disagreeing. Simply indicate the message was understood and use neutral comments like "That's interesting" rather than good or bad value-laden labels.

Listening is a skill facilitators can always improve. Seeking input from other facilitators about what they do to enhance their listening skills is a worthwhile practice.

G. Provide appropriate feedback

Another important aspect of communication is giving and receiving feedback among clients and between facilitator and clients. Feedback can be defined as "the exchange of verbal and non-verbal responses among group members based on commonly observed behavior" (Upcraft, 1982, p. 81). Here are eight characteristics associated with providing appropriate feedback between a sender and receiver.

DESCRIPTIVE (rather than evaluative) - Descriptive feedback presents observations and does not assess the value of what clients have done. Describing behaviors, rather than your evaluative reactions to them, allows clients to use this information for change and reduces their defensive or resistant postures.

SPECIFIC (rather than general) - Specific feedback lessens possibilities for misinterpretation, while general feedback provides very little for the client to examine and learn from.

WELL INTENDED (not destructive) - The purpose of feedback is to produce positive changes and help clients become more functional. When your motivations shift toward feeling powerful at the expense of another, your feedback can be harmful and your motivations should be examined.

DIRECTED TOWARD CHANGE (something the receiver can act on) - Presenting constructive feedback about shortcomings clients have no control over can only increase frustration. Give feedback about behaviors clients can change and learn from.

SOLICITED (rather than imposed) - Feedback is most useful and produces more constructive results when clients are seeking it rather than when it is "thrust upon them." Ask clients if they would like to receive feedback, as well as the manner and forum for receiving it (e.g., when, where, how, who).

WELL TIMED - Feedback presented immediately following experiences reduces confusion that can develop over a period of time. However, some situations exist where this is not possible or appropriate (e.g., logistical constraints or the person is not ready to hear it), so you may have to contain the feedback until a better opportunity presents itself.

CHECKED OUT WITH THE RECEIVER - While giving feedback, check in with clients periodically to increase the likelihood the message and intentions you are sending are the ones they are receiving. Have them repeat to you the parts of the feedback they have found most valuable as a "reliability check."

CHECKED OUT WITH THE GROUP - When appropriate and possible, other clients can be used to provide a sounding board for feedback. They can provide further information on the reliability of the feedback and possibly offer other interpretations of what took place. Adding consistency or variation to the presented feedback can increase its richness and further its reception. However, be careful to monitor group dynamics in order to ensure negative consequences don't result from such a process (e.g., feelings of being "ganged up on" or the introduction of inappropriate side issues).

H. Know your basic theories

Aside from effective listening and feedback, an understanding of some foundational theories about group development, problem solving, and decision making can aid facilitators. Knowledge of these organizational development concepts and how they interact with facilitation will allow you to better comprehend client behaviors and enhance your facilitation ability.

Tuckman & Jensen's (1977) group development model is one of the most widely known and accepted theories. It suggests that most groups will evolve through five progressive stages, although some groups will skip steps and other groups may repeat certain steps. The list below summarizes differences between task and relationship dimensions among these five stages.

FORMING is characterized by discomforts, concerns, adjustments, and doubts clients experience when they first come together in a new group.

STORMING is when conflict arises and where clients question the way tasks are accomplished, but work through their interpersonal differences.

NORMING involves clients addressing appropriate and necessary standards of behavior through which a greater sense of order prevails.

PERFORMING finds clients concentrating on high quality productivity of tasks with mutual support among group members.

ADJOURNING includes termination of the tasks at hand and the transformation of client relationships as the group breaks up and moves apart.

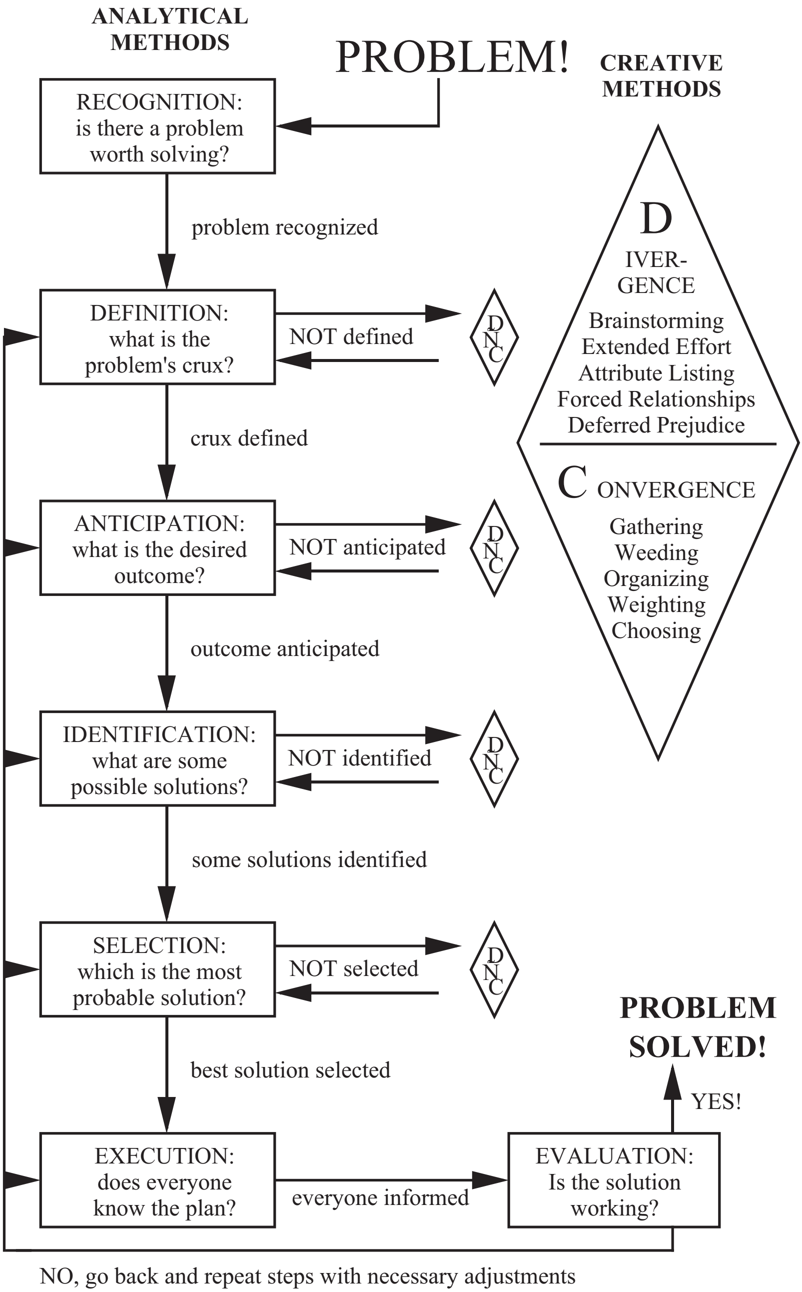

Figure 2: A multiphasic Problem Solving and Decision Making Model

Concerning problem solving and decision making, Figure 2 presents a linear theory incorporating both analytical and creative methods with both divergence and convergence methods (Priest & Gass, 1997a). In this model, seven analytical steps take you through recognizing the problem, defining the crux, anticipating the outcome, identifying several solutions, selecting the best solution, executing that solution, and evaluating whether it is working. If all seven steps go smoothly, the problem is solved. However, if the process falters at one or more steps in the middle, creative methods (shown by diamonds in the diagram opposite) are needed to diverge a variety of ideas or options and to converge or pick the most likely crux, outcome, or solution. In this way, the stalled process continues.

The divergence half of creative methods (in diamonds) uses five techniques to produce new ideas:

- BRAINSTORMING (generating ideas without criticism);
- EXTENDED EFFORT (not giving up too early during idea generation);
- ATTRIBUTE LISTING (taking inventory of the characteristics of ideas);
- FORCED RELATIONSHIPS (creating new ideas by combining the characteristics of old ones); and
- DEFERRED PREJUDICE (not jumping on the first good idea that comes along).

The convergence half uses five other techniques to help make the decision about which idea should be used:

- GATHERING (collecting all supporting information about an option);
- WEEDING (removing inappropriate options);
- ORGANIZING (ranking remaining options and putting their information into a quantitative decision tree or a qualitative comparative matrix);
- WEIGHTING (the relative importance of positive, negative, and neutral aspects for each option in the decision tree or comparative matrix); and

- CHOOSING (the one with the highest quantity for success or quality of satisfaction according to criteria established above).

By knowing the five stages of group development, facilitators can tell where their groups lie in the sequence and where they are likely to evolve. By knowing a variety of ways to solve problems and make decisions, facilitators can share this understanding with groups and identify how and why they might be experiencing difficulty with their differing opinions. In both cases, facilitators are well equipped for advancing client learning objectives and enabling critical change.

3
Differentiating Dimensions

All of us are lifelong experiential learners....
The question is not whether there will be
experiential learning, but how effective it will be.
—Urban Whittaker

The effectiveness of a learning experience depends heavily on the quality of its facilitation. The previous chapter reminded us that entry-level facilitators should be able to ask questions and organize discussions. In this chapter and those that follow, we explore the notion that facilitation is much more than discussing learning experiences. Facilitation becomes everything done before, during, and after learning experiences that enhances the reflection, integration, and continuation of change into the workplace. This chapter looks at the roles and responsibilities associated with this concept through the CHANGES model (Gass & Gillis, 1995a).

A. Enable flow of facilitation

Five interconnecting stages exist for enabling facilitation to flow through all aspects of each client's learning experience: diagnosis, design, delivery, debrief, and departure. **Diagnosis** is everything a facilitator does well before the program to determine clients' needs. **Design** is planning the program to meet those needs. **Delivery** involves presenting the program as planned, but with the flexibility to alter it if necessary. **Debriefing** helps clients to ascertain lessons learned from the program and how these can be abstracted as real change at work. **Departure** of clients after the program separates the facilitator from the group and encourages even greater independence of clients by helping them plan for action in the future.

The CHANGES model is grounded in these interconnected stages.

You may find you naturally use this programming approach, even though you don't use these names. You gather information about the group you are working with prior to meeting with them (diagnosis). From this information you think about how the group may react to certain experiences you have planned (design). Once you see the group participate in these experiences (delivery), you use their actions to organize a discussion. Information gleaned from this discussion (debrief) is used to plan the next learning experience and help clients integrate successes on their own (departure). While this is a simple linear order with each stage separate and isolated, a more complex and effective form of facilitation may have all five stages occurring simultaneously within a program.

B. Continue ongoing diagnosis and design

As stated above, all facilitators engage in diagnosis and design of a program or collection of learning experiences. One important difference to note is these two processes do not end at this point: they continue throughout the program. Experienced facilitators use information gained during the observation of clients engaged in learning and debriefing sessions to adjust working concepts or hypotheses about the clients' needs and modify the program design accordingly.

For example, say the group you are working with erroneously reports they communicate well with one another. During your initial assessment of the group you note they have a history of good communication skills. In an early debriefing, however, you observe some group members interrupting one another to get their point across while others profess to speak for the whole group when they are merely stating a personal opinion. Given basic communication rules are being violated (e.g., principles like single speaking and speaking for yourself), you might modify your opinion about their communication abilities. You might choose to test this new information and ascertain when and where they communicate well and poorly by designing a new learning experience validating or rejecting your hypothesis (e.g., using an experience where clients are prevented from seeing one another in order to see whether they can wait their turn to speak). This may provide valuable information about whether the poor communication you witnessed was an indicator of typical behavior or just an aberration of their norms. With ongoing diagnosis, you are constantly testing your hypotheses about the group in order to refine these for accuracy.

C. Readjust delivery as needed

During most programs, the facilitator's flexibility enables adjustments in the delivery of each learning experience. Novice facilitators often stick with their plan through "thick or thin," ignoring signs indicating lessons from the experience are not being learned. Flexible facilitators are able to change programs in order to address necessary learning adaptations.

Flexibility comes from drawing on experience and possessing a "bag of tricks" with a multitude of substitute experiences to fill gaps in learning. For example, having a learning agenda looking more like a "flowchart" and less like an "itinerary" can aid with program flexibility (e.g., if learning does not come on time, then the group is not required to stick to a schedule). Agendas should be mapped out where checkpoints allow for frequent assessment and readjustment. Having preplanned multiple learning experiences to choose from at various checkpoints can serve to increase facilitators' flexibility.

For example, in the communication and interruption example given earlier, you might have a flowchart with a first checkpoint after the early debrief. Knowing effective communication would be a necessary part of this debrief, you might have a variety of techniques to utilize, depending on how the group responded. If they did not move in an expected direction, then appropriate readjustment might involve having several ways to proceed listed on your flowchart (e.g., learning experiences designed to test this evaluation). By having a flowchart with checkpoints for assessment, you help yourself stay on track and are more capable of readjusting your delivery with minimal effort.

D. Seed to debrief and depart

After each learning experience and completion of the entire program, debriefing and departure occur. A good facilitator prepares for these two stages by seeding important concepts into earlier stages of a program (i.e., diagnosis, design, and delivery). This is a perfect opportunity to practice the old adage: "Begin with the end in mind!" For example, assess clients' expectations during the diagnostic stage by asking questions like:

- *What's the first sign you'll be able to notice that this experience has been helpful to you?;*
- *What's an initial indicator that others in your group or organization will be able to note when you start to...? (insert a behavior like communicate); and*
- *Please finish these sentences: "I expect this program to..." or "This experience will help me...."*

Answers to these questions can be written down on index cards, shuffled, and read by another person for anonymity or can be posted on a wall for all to see (provided confidentiality is not violated when appropriate). These questions are designed to plant "seeds of change" that will follow. As with gardening, you are trying to offer the client an image of what they are likely to notice when these "seeds of change begin to germinate and blossom."

During the learning experience, you may ask clients about critical factors mentioned in their answers. For example, using indicating language like "Is this evidence of cooperation or collaboration?"

and “How does this illustrate trust?” encourages clients to think about learning outcomes. By calling their attention to specific signs of desired change, you help them focus on seeing actions, hearing thoughts, or expressing feelings congruent with desired changes. This proactive seeding is critical to successful departure later on in the program. By having clients become aware of their goals, they are much more likely to know when they have accomplished them.

In developing seeds for debriefing, it is often helpful for facilitators to have a model for understanding how to structure the information presented to them. As shown in Figure 3, the CHANGES model is one way of organizing and using information in a systematic way.

E. Facilitate using CHANGES

The CHANGES model (Figure 3, Gass & Gillis, 1995a) is organized into seven interactive steps designed to acquire information for developing functional client change. These seven steps make up the acronym CHANGES and include: Context, Hypotheses, Action, Novelty, Generating, Evaluation, and Solutions. One way to view these seven steps is in a time sequence, where these steps take place in concert with diagnosis, design, delivery, debrief, and departure.

> CONTEXT- When preparing for a learning experience, gather all appropriate information you can about the customer in general and the clients in particular. Why has the customer or client group entered into this experience? How long will they be involved? What are their stated goals as a group and as individuals? How well do my competence and past experience match the clients’ needs?
>
> HYPOTHESES - From this context of clients’ needs, you establish hypotheses about their behavior. Create your initial hypotheses from information collected

by multiple methods and sources (as discussed in Chapter 4). Later, modify your hypotheses based on new information from tracking behavior patterns.

ACTION - Clients act in response to learning experiences with behaviors by either confirming or contradicting your hypotheses. By comparing observed behaviors with hypothesized ones, you obtain additional information to further assess client needs and to reconstruct, reinforce, revise, refute, or reject your hypotheses accordingly.

NOVELTY - Unfamiliar or new events often lead clients to grapple with the spontaneity of a learning experience. Spontaneous reactions to experiences are thought by some to provide a more accurate picture of their "true self" since clients lack sufficient time to form a "programmed" response. Strive to utilize the advantages novelty can bring to learning.

GENERATING - The intent of generating information (by observing clients' behaviors) is to determine how and why behaviors make sense to clients. Information generated by observation is a rich resource for rediagnosing clients' needs, redesigning learning experiences, and readjusting program delivery.

EVALUATION - Once information has been generated from observations of clients' behaviors, it can be compared with working hypotheses. Do clients' actions fit the working hypotheses? Are these hypotheses supported or refuted? What new knowledge now exists to revisit action, novelty, and generating in the next experience?

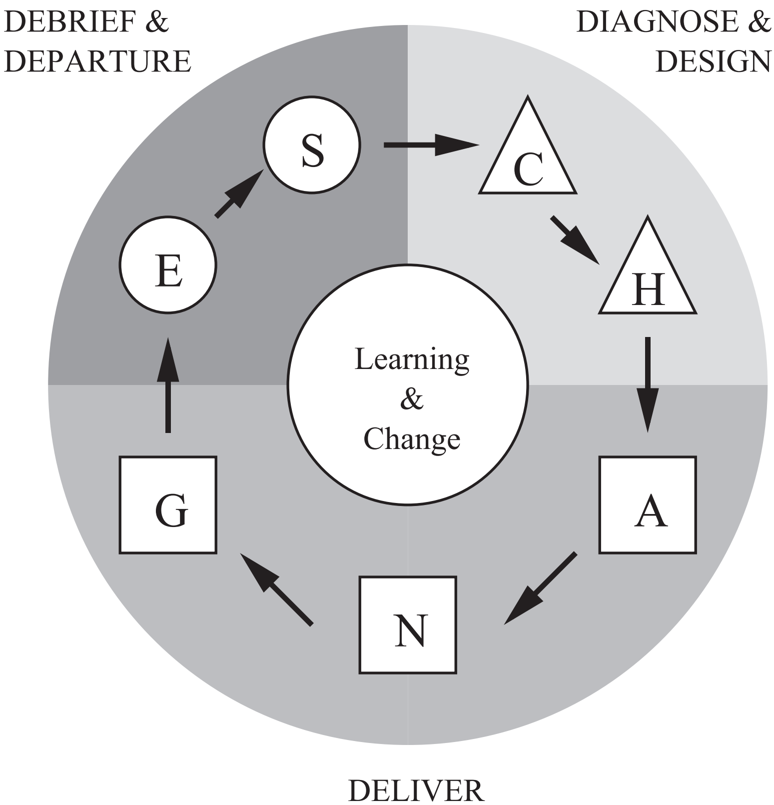

Figure 3: The CHANGES Model

C ontext

H ypotheses

A ction

N ovelty

G enerating

E valuation

S olutions

SOLUTIONS - Finally and most importantly, when your evaluation provides a clear picture of clients' concerns, it leads toward solution of those concerns. Integrate and interpret information gathered in previous steps to make decisions about how you will construct potential solutions to clients' concerns (see Chapter 7).

So much information becomes available to facilitators during learning experiences that methods to manage this information can prove valuable. The CHANGES model provides one useful way to acquire and organize information to systemically structure learning and change. Flexibility is a characteristic of effective facilitation in such systemic approaches, because it allows facilitators to adapt agendas and maintain sight of the overall learning experiences.

F. Understand principles and dynamics of change

Several concepts are worth bearing in mind when facilitating change processes in individuals, groups, and organizations.

NO PERMANENT RULES - There are no foolproof rules of change that succeed all the time; therefore, attend to the uniqueness of circumstances. Any attempt to impose inflexible facilitation and predetermined approaches runs the risk of failing by not addressing each specific situation.

ASSESSMENT IS CRITICAL - Facilitators must understand the detailed conditions of each customer's and client's situation. Gathered in the diagnostic stage, these details will always vary. Attending to these variations will often be critical to understanding client behavior and working with the client to produce healthy change.

ORDERS OF CHANGE - People are in systemic relationships with their behaviors. Changing specific behaviors without modifying the system interacting with those behaviors is **first order change** (e.g., asking people to work harder in the same organizational structure). **Second order change** involves changing the system where the specific problematic behaviors exist (e.g., restructuring the organization). As a facilitator, understand which method of change will serve as the best path to achieve lasting change. Be aware that if the problems clients face are supported by their work environment, first order change may not address the long-term resolution of their issues.

DISSONANCE - Change disrupts existing behavior patterns. Fostering change in learning experiences creates dissonance or disagreement between clients' existing and desired states of behavior. This dissonance arises from the interaction of specific client behaviors and broader behavior patterns within their organizational environment. Conflict often undermines change and restores the older equilibrium of dysfunctional patterns (another reason for seeing change as part of a system). In order for clients to be successful at dealing with dissonance and maintaining change, new behaviors must make more sense to them and fit into their working environment.

REWARDED - Change is rarely voluntary and "just do it" interventions are often ineffective in dysfunctional systems. Clients tend to behave in ways making sense to them and for reasons appearing to be their best alternatives. Recognize if you are asking clients to give up a behavior, they often expect something else to take its place. Although difficult to do, help clients find rewarding alternatives.

DILEMMA - Implementing change is an ethical decision. This is especially true with people who may not fully understand the ramifications of their change. This point raises some interesting dilemmas, particularly given the strength of some facilitator interventions. As you begin program design, it is important to think of circumstances where change would not be in the client's best interests.

INTERNALIZE CHANGE PROCESSES - To have a lasting influence, change must be internalized by clients. Their internalization depends upon your ability to design learning experiences where they will feel impacted. Choose learning experiences that are different, exciting, dramatic, challenging, relevant, meaningful, and memorable.

CLIENTS HOLD THE KEY TO THEIR CHANGE - Self-education is ultimately the best vehicle for a client to achieve lasting healthy change. We don't change people; they change themselves. As facilitators, we can create learning experiences that help them to see their own dysfunction. However, they must make the choice and do the work of changing to more functional situations.

Working on change issues with clients can be rewarding and yet confusing. If these principles don't seem to match your facilitation needs, remember to remain flexible. There are no specific "rules" applying to every situation. If learning and change are **not systemically supported**, then neither lasts very long. Engage your customers in your clients' learning and change.

4
Diagnosing Situations

Information is pretty thin stuff,
unless mixed with experience.
—Clarence Day

In the quote above, Day is referring to the requisite need for experience to assess and validate what we know. Without the experience of getting to know clients, the information we gain about their situations becomes conjecture or our "best guess at that time." When seeking the most accurate appraisal of clients' needs, the question becomes how we can use information and experience to provide us with the best assessment. This chapter examines multiple considerations for diagnosis of client needs, including: information sources, gathering methods, multiple intelligences, and learning styles.

A. Seek multiple sources of information

Consider this story.

I was once asked by a manager to do a team building program for a group in our company. The manager told me this group needed to improve their trust, support, cooperation, and communication. When I got together with the group for their program, I very quickly realized what they needed was a new manager! Their teamwork was excellent and they all complained that the manager (who wasn't present for the team building) was a poor leader. My mistake was relying on one person for the whole story....

One common mistake some beginning facilitators make is to use the initial contact as the only source of information about the client for designing the learning experience. If the initial contact is completely accurate and can share multiple and varied perspectives of the organization, then this may be all the information needed. However, this is rarely the case.

Other information sources facilitators should seek out include every group member with whom they will be working, those members of the organization who are above and below these group members (super- and sub-ordinates) in the organizational hierarchy, and those with whom the group does business (e.g., consumers and suppliers) both external and internal to the organization. Support staff (assistants, secretaries, receptionists, clerks and other co-workers) are also excellent sources of information. Do not make the mistake of only getting one story from the customer paying the bill.

B. Use multiple methods for gathering data

In addition to gathering relevant information from multiple sources, facilitators must also be open to multiple methods of gathering information. Utilize at least two of these three data collection methods in your diagnosis: interviews, observations, and instruments.

By **interviews**, we mean actual face-to-face conversations with the people listed above. Here are some questions we would suggest using for interviews.

- Although you may be interested in changing feelings, thinking, and behavior, which of these three is the most important one to change at this time?
- Why do you think this group needs facilitating?
- When will you know that the learning experience has been successful?
- Where (and how) do you expect things will have changed (or be different)?
- What are you expecting me to do in order to keep you informed on the group's progress?

- How do you see your role contributing to success in this facilitated learning experience?
- Who else do you recommend I speak with about these matters?

Observations denote actually listening to and watching clients as they engage in their work with one another and the other people listed above. In this process, facilitators look for patterns in:

- methods of communication and feedback,
- levels of trust and support,
- degrees of power and influence,
- ranges of cooperation and collaboration,
- types of problem solving and decision making,
- frequencies of success and failure, and
- examples of quality and quantity performance.

Instruments refer to pencil and paper tests or interactive computer surveys designed to assess teamwork, organizational climate, motivational culture, leadership potential, personality, and willingness to learn based on client responses to written questions. Instruments can be very helpful at pinpointing how the group compares to other normative populations. You may discover your clients scored higher or lower than average or differently than one another on items related to conflict, creativity, planning, communication, coping with stress, time management, or risk taking.

Your selection of procedures for gathering data requires a familiarity with these methods and training on how to use the information they produce. While there is a need to possess an appropriate level of competence and responsibility when administering instruments, even more important is the proper interpretation of the results to the customer and clients.

We have found certain companies and their employees value instrument-driven assessment because it provides concrete, written data for comparison. Others prefer more personal approaches coming from interviews and observations. Knowing the manner in which your client best receives information is another important skill in program diagnosis and design.

C. Consider multiple intelligences

Clients come with different personalities and values, and they also differ regarding the ways they learn best. Not all people work well being told what to do or how to complete a task. Some work better by seeing or being shown how to perform a task. Others do best when they can take a hands-on approach and learn by repeatedly doing what is required.

One source of information lies in the type of client intelligence. Gardner's (1993) Multiple Intelligence theory states there are at least seven different "intelligences" or ways of learning. Each of these intelligences indicate differences and preferences people possess when they learn. These seven intelligences include verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, body/kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, music/rhythmic, and visual/spatial. In traditional teaching methods, our society tends to emphasize two ways of learning: the logical/mathematical and the verbal/linguistic. In assessment, facilitators tailoring client experiences to preferred ways of learning and making use of more than two traditional forms of intelligence can increase their ability to enhance learning and change in others. Here are the basic premises of each learning style.

> VERBAL/LINGUISTIC intelligence symbolizes its meaning by relying on the spoken or written word.
>
> LOGICAL/MATHEMATICAL intelligence deals with inductive and deductive thinking/reasoning, numbers, and the recognition of abstract patterns. It

is activated in situations requiring problem solving, pattern recognition and meeting new challenges.

BODY/KINESTHETIC intelligence is touched through physical movement in various sports, games, and physical exercises as well as by the expression of oneself through the body (e.g., dance, drama, and expressive body language).

INTERPERSONAL intelligence is connected through person-to-person encounters where such things as effective communication, working together with others for a common goal, and noticing distinctions among clients are valued and important.

INTRAPERSONAL intelligence is awakened in situations causing introspection and requiring knowledge of the internal aspects of the self, such as awareness of feelings, thinking processes, self-reflection, and spirituality.

MUSICAL/RHYTHMIC intelligence is tuned in by the vibration and resonance of music or rhythm on the brain, including such things as the human voice, sounds from nature, musical instruments, drumming, and other humanly produced sounds.

VISUAL/SPATIAL intelligence is seen by creating unusual, delightful, and colorful designs, patterns, shapes, and pictures, as well as engaging in active imagination through such things as visualization guided imagery, and role-playing exercises.

The point of assessing intelligence preferences is to try and match program design and facilitation techniques to client preferences.

For example, a decision to include simulation activities, hands-on learning, or involve music or art in your program design can be enhanced by assessing the many intelligences in your group.

D. Consider multiple learning styles

Another source of assessment information is learning styles. Kolb (1984) established several theories about the use of learning styles when assessing how individuals and groups acquire information. Kolb believes everyone can be found along a combination of two intersecting axes: ways of **perceiving** (i.e., how we think about existing information) and ways of **processing** (i.e., how we handle new information). Ways of perceiving range from concrete experience to abstract conceptualization. Ways of processing range from active experimentation to reflective observation. These two intersecting axes form a grid with different learning styles falling into one of four quadrants: divergers, assimilators, convergers, and accommodators (shown in Figure 4).

> DIVERGERS learn intuitively through reflection. They are "big picture" people who work best when generating ideas, seeing situations from many perspectives, and organizing relationships into meaningful wholes. "Why?" is the typical question valued by this client. They want to know how learning material relates to them personally (experiences, interests, and in the future). The best way to facilitate divergers is to be a motivator. Divergers need time to reflect, especially through talking and feeling. They brainstorm well in small groups, but prefer to stay away from lectures.

> ASSIMILATORS learn by analyzing and reflecting. Assimilators are good at combining distinct and factual observations into a meaningful explanation

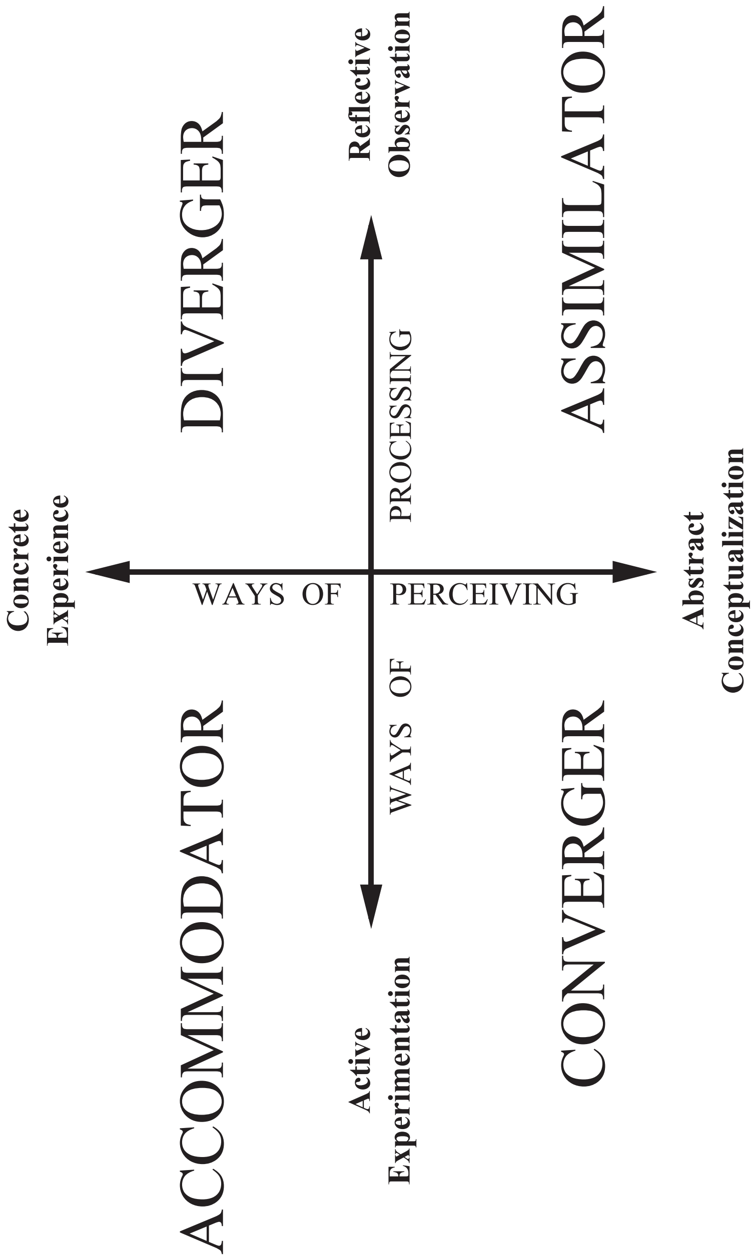

Figure 4: Kolb's Learning Style Grid

for a particular phenomenon. They also like to be sure that theories make logical sense. They are not into practical application as much as the abstract construction of theoretical models. "What?" is the question these clients want answered. They like information presented in a highly organized format, and benefit if they have time to think about the material. Your most productive role as a facilitator is serve as an "expert." They need time to reflect, and learn best from reading, researching, or listening to lectures.

CONVERGERS learn by thinking first and then doing. They work best when systematically planning, logically analyzing ideas, and finding solutions to problems. They are not "big picture" people, but learn best when dealing in minute detail. Finding single answers to questions with practical applications are these clients' greatest strengths. Convergers want to know "How?" They like to understand how things work, and learn best in safe trial and error experimentation with stringent guidelines. Facilitators should coach convergers and provide multiple opportunities for practice and feedback. Convergers are doers who need to read and research, in addition to experimenting. They learn from lecture when it is coupled with experimentation.

ACCOMMODATORS learn by doing what they intuitively feel is right. They are very flexible, adapting themselves to specific and immediate circumstances. They learn best when they have a body of experts to draw from. They are best at exploration and discovery. Accommodators like to ask "What if?" They flourish under minimal constraint. Discovering through doing is how they learn. You should assign broad tasks to them and monitor these tasks to make sure accommodators don't stray too far from your objectives.

As with multiple intelligence preferences, conducting assessments about learning styles can add valuable information to program design and tailor learning experience delivery to better suit client needs. By knowing clients' learning styles, facilitators can develop programs targeted to those individuals. If clients know or discover their own learning styles, they develop effective strategies for optimal learning. Designing a robust facilitation style alternating between experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation in a wide variety of formats using visuals, sound, reading, and talking can help maximize client learning.

E. Ask miracle questions

Find out what clients want by asking them for the best "gift" they can receive. While this may sound obvious and simple, many times clients enter learning experiences without anyone ever asking what they want from the experience and how they would like the experience to be conducted! Probably one of the best assessment strategies for assessing clients is to ask them to describe:

- important information about them relevant to the learning experience (e.g., background, learning limitations, time conflicts, other commitments);
- past similar learning experiences they have seen as engaging and what occurred in those experiences to make learning productive;
- the most important thing they could receive from the learning experience;
- criteria they will use to measure the success of their experience; and
- expectations (internal or external) they hold for the experience.

One way to obtain these critical pieces of information is to ask clients to proactively describe this learning experience as a "miracle!" Not only does this technique provide rich assessment information for the facilitator, it also fosters expectations for success in the form of a question (e.g., de Shazer, 1985). Miracle questions ask clients to focus answers to what success would look like before the learning experience even begins. Two miracle questions might sound like this:

FACILITATOR: Say at the end of this learning experience you're driving home with another participant, who turns to you and asks, "What did you think of that experience?" What will have had to happen in this program for you to be able to truly respond: "That was incredibly valuable! It could not have gone any better!"

FACILITATOR: Imagine yourself after this course. You're back home discussing your experience with a friend or family member. How would you complete this one sentence: "that was the best and most valuable program I've ever experienced, because I...?"

Clients' responses to these "miracle" questions indicate their definitions and impressions of success, which inform leaders as to what clients are looking for and hope to gain from the program. These needs and desires can form the basis of upcoming learning and change.

Clients often arrive at programs with apprehensions about what will happen (e.g., dreading embarrassment, afraid of looking incompetent). Facilitators can allay these concerns by implanting positive prospects at the outset of a program. Gathered early in a program, these responses can form the foundation for goal setting and may shed light on the values clients hold in high regard or the concerns they have for the future. Sharing anonymous answers aloud, or posting these on paper, focuses clients' energies on understanding one another and on successfully working for solutions rather than for failure by dwelling on problems. Ask a miracle question during interviews, on surveys, or at the start of a program, and revisit answers at the end of the program.

F. Reconfirm program purpose

With information gained from multiple sources and methods of assessment, you will have further information on whether clients are in need of a change in thinking or behaving. As mentioned in the first chapter, a group assessed with a need to change thinking will have education as its focus and concentrate on reflection for learning. Groups with identified needs to change behavior will be better served by development (enhancing function) or redirection (diminishing dysfunction) programs, and with emphases on integration and continuation of their changes. Once the program purpose has been confirmed from your analysis of the assessment information and from conversations with the customer, the program goals and objectives should be identified so the program is designed to meet the needs of the clients and the customer.

5
Designing Programs

Plans are useless, but planning is essential.
—Dwight D. Eisenhower
Thorough preparation makes its own luck.
—Joe Poyer

One critical element to designing learning experiences is planning, although facilitators deviate from their plan whenever doing so is in the clients' best interests. This chapter looks at how to design facilitated learning experiences from the facilitator's perspective, with particular attention paid to a sequence of steps as diagrammed in Figure 5.

A. Be guided by program purpose

When designing a program, bear in mind where you are going and how to get there. If you are guided by a program purpose and can connect your actions to clients' learning objectives, then you will likely stay on the right path. Keeping your focus on the program's purpose (e.g., education, development, or redirection), as well as the time frame you have to deliver learning experiences, is a simple way to keep on track. Help yourself in this process by asking yourself these four questions.

- Do the tasks you are asking of the group directly relate to their reasons for being there?
- Does each experience build on previous ones so clients can advance from past learning?
- Can the group accomplish the tasks you have set forth in the time frame allotted?
- Will there be enough time after the experience to discuss the learning drawn from it?

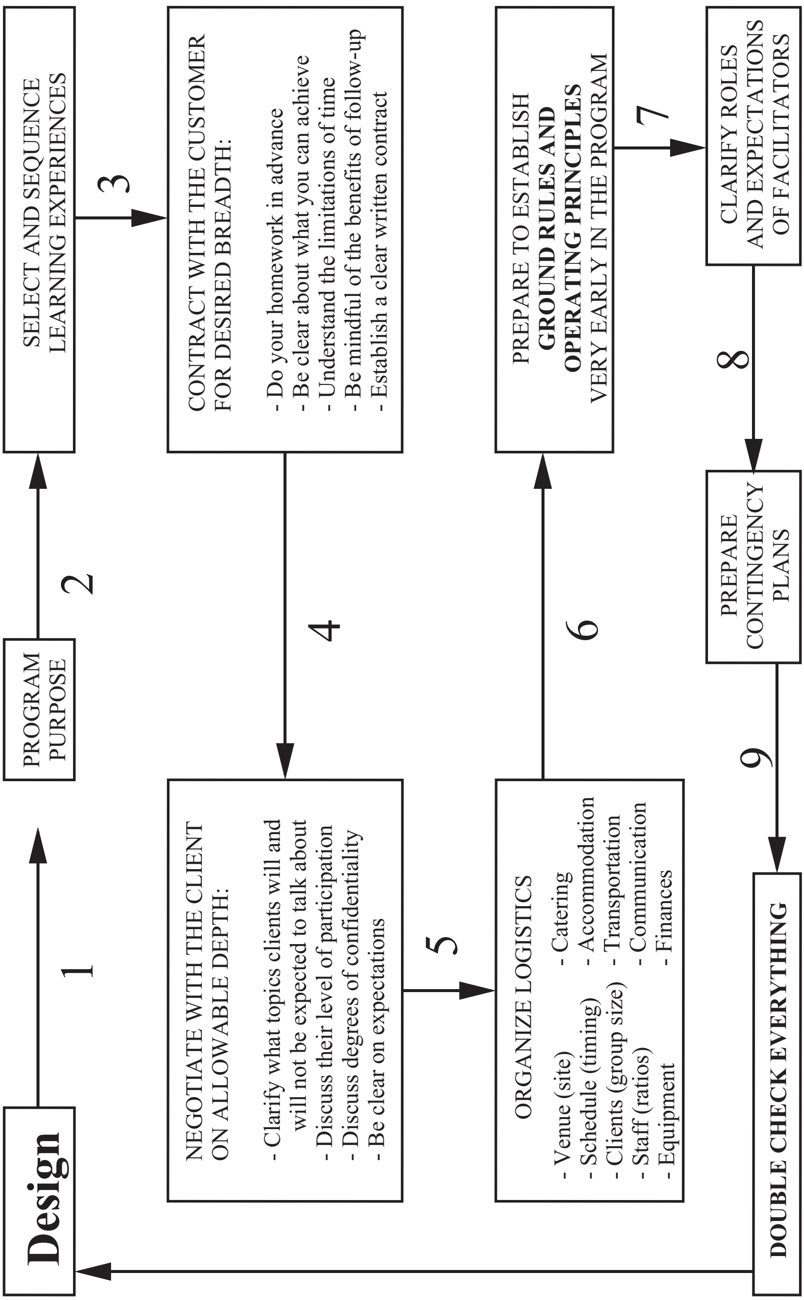

Figure 5: A sequence for designing facilitated programs from multiple learning experiences

When answering these questions, keep customer's desires and clients' needs foremost in your mind. Facilitators can become so excited about their own designs or ideas they can sometimes lose sight of what they have been hired to do: meet the clients' needs.

B. Sequence program content

Programs consisting of several experiences should be sequenced in order to optimize the learning. First, adopt the learners' perspective and have empathy for what they will be experiencing. Second, list the lessons to be learned from their experiences and organize these in a linear arrangement. Use one or more of these ranges to sequence: from known to unknown, from inductive to deductive, from general rules to specific examples, from observation to abstract principle, from reality to theory, from piece to whole, from simple to complex, and from primitive to sophisticated. Third, add conclusions with a learning summary and generalization to future change. Finally, incorporate an introduction explaining the expected usefulness of lessons and their connection to past learning and future change.

C. Contract with customers for desired breadth

Remember the customer is the person who hires you and he or she may not be an actual client in the program. Negotiating with clients typically occurs later. You have an initial obligation to contract with the customer to clearly establish the scope of what you are expected and allowed to do with your facilitation.

First, do your homework in advance. Gather information about the company's history and status in their community (e.g., state, country, world) to provide insight into how they operate. Such information can also add credibility to your presence with the company as you work through the particulars of what they want you to accomplish. This information can often be found through the Internet, public library, local newspapers, and in earlier diagnostic interviews.

Second, be clear about what you can and cannot achieve. You may have such a strong desire to obtain work from a particular customer that you may be tempted to oversell what you are able to accomplish. Be clear about the amount of content you can deliver with your current resources. Clarity can help prevent you from overselling yourself, which can lead to a frustrating experience for you, your clients, and your customer.

Third, understand time limitations. In initial conversations with customers who are not familiar with what you are capable of doing, or with customers who possess prior knowledge of the type of product you offer, expectations of what you can provide in a given amount of time may seem unrealistic. You should be clear about how long particular experiences will take, and plan for enough time so it can be done as well as the customer expects within the time frame allotted.

Fourth, be mindful of the benefits of follow-up. One of the most consistent complaints from customers and clients is the lack of follow-up to learning experiences. Proactively designing follow-up sessions into your contract is one way to insure integrated learning, continuing change, and program accountability. Follow-up also allows you to see how learning is being applied, as well as fine tune learning to subtle changes arising within any organization.

Fifth, establish a clear written contract that is in the best interests of both facilitator and customer, while keeping the clients' needs in mind. Such a contract might include:

- duration of the contract (when it is in effect and when it should be renegotiated);
- differentiation of the roles and responsibilities between customer and facilitator;
- termination and early cancellation or rescheduling contingencies for either party;

- processes for changing the contract (in case client numbers change);
- logistical considerations (time, location, objectives, agenda, transportation, equipment);
- professional fees: amounts and how they will be charged (hourly, daily, or set fee);
- reimbursement of expenses (accounting, invoicing, and payment procedures); and
- policies (e.g., drug and alcohol, health and safety, environment and waste disposal, accident investigation, and evaluation procedures).

D. Negotiate with clients on allowable depth

After you have established a contract with the customer, negotiating with clients about what they want to see and achieve in the program is often a wise idea. Such a process often covers "boundary issues" about what to expect from themselves, other group members, the facilitator, and their organization. Negotiating can help to clarify clients' roles and involvement, hopefully leading to a more appropriate learning experience. It can also lessen the possibility of misunderstanding and incorrect expectations when elements of the learning are integrated as change in the organization.

In such a process, first clarify what topics clients will and will not be expected to address. One of the least defined and potentially dangerous areas facilitators "stumble into" are issues that cannot be adequately addressed given the time and purpose of the program. With clients, proactively defining a list of appropriate and inappropriate topics for discussion can lessen this risk. One maxim that may outline this concept is "Don't take apart things you can't put back together!" Our experience has been that discussions about the client's home and family life are generally out-of-bounds for most experiences. In addition, discussions about the client's childhood and his or her cultural or ethnic background are areas better left unexplored unless you have an obvious purpose for addressing such topics.

Second, discuss clients' level of participation. Establish clear expectations or norms for participating in the learning experience. If non-participation is an option for clients, then they should be informed of this. On the other hand, if you expect clients to contribute at some level of participation in all experiences, this should be communicated. Allowing clients to choose their own participation level is often the best course of action. Have each client clearly communicate their participation level to the rest of the group. Even in cases where non-participation is a choice, negotiations with this client may encourage her or him to observe the learning experience and report those observations back to the group.

Third, discuss degrees of confidentiality. Agree with clients on clear "boundaries" about what can be shared with others outside their client group and what will and will not be communicated to the customer.

Fourth, be clear on your expectations for dealing with one another while in the group experience. Clients need clear guidelines for how they will work together and they generally benefit if clear commitments are established on how they will treat each other during the experience. As facilitators, we have found these commitments to carry more weight if they come from the clients themselves. These commitments form the basis of ground rules and operating principles.

E. Share ground rules and operating principles

Ground rules are preestablished expectations **created by the facilitator** for clients to follow during the learning experience to assist clients in their process. Facilitators expect clients to try and follow ground rules during the learning experience. **Operating principles** are those expectations **created by the clients** representing the way they would like to treat one another. Reviewing both of these with clients in advance of the program is very important to the success of learning experiences. Table 2 contains some suggested ground rules from facilitators and some typical operating principles clients often create.

One technique for creating such guidelines is to ask clients to write down how they wish to be treated and how they want to treat others in their group while they are together. From this list, clients can construct several sentences clearly describing how they will act toward each other. These sentences need to be written in a way that everyone in the group understands and can commit to behaviors they will see or hear from other group members.

We cannot stress how helpful clearly worded commitments are and how important it is that clients agree on what upholding the operating principles "looks and sounds" like. This process is "time well spent," particularly in situations with difficult clients where this activity serves to insulate them from problematic or dysfunctional behavior.

F. Organize Logistics

Program logistics are organized with the program purpose in mind. The logistics listed below are arranged in order of concern. Facilitators may wish to organize them according to this or another priority.

GROUND RULES (from the facilitator)	OPERATING PRINCIPLES (from the clients)
For the whole program	
violence in any form is unacceptable	honor time limits for break and task periods
agree or disagree with ideas and not people	turn off pagers and phones
respect yourself and others	agree to stay on task and/or topic
During the learning experience	
you are responsible for your own behavior	everybody gives their best at all times
you select your own level of participation	everyone shares rewards and consequences
you are accountable for your own learning	we hang together or we will hang separately
In the debriefing discussion	
speak for yourself and not for others	only one person speaks at a time
listen and talk about topics in the present	no interruptions and no side conversations
you have the right to pass at any time	listen carefully to what others have to say

Table 2: A comparison of sample ground rules and operating principles

VENUE - The location for the program should be selected on the basis of its ability to support learning experiences. The benefits of a particular location should be weighed against the costs of time and distance needed to reach it. If working outdoors, several concerns may include weather, safety, emergency help, and restroom facilities. If working indoors, concerns might be sufficient lighting, temperature, air quality, space, and furniture. Get to know the venue in advance. Some questions to help decide between on-site and off-site locations are:

- Does the company want to choose the site (perhaps their own learning center)?
- What distractions (scenery or incoming phone calls) will interfere with learning?
- What familiarities (comfort or security) will enhance the learning?
- Is the site available for the times and dates needed?

SCHEDULE - People like to know what to expect. We have found it best to share the entire length of the program itinerary with clients. If providing a written itinerary, be as general as possible in order to allow for the flexibility to change, yet also be specific enough for them to be informed. Too much specificity can cause conflicts when a change is made. Be sure to indicate break times (and stick to these) so clients can focus their attention on the learning experience knowing they will receive a welcomed break soon. Ask for and expect people to be back on time.

TIMING - Facilitators need to consider overall program length as well as the individual length of each learning experience to maximize learning. When scheduling these periods, consider clients' attention spans and the potential of the learning experiences to captivate their attention.

CLIENTS - How many people is too many in a learning experience group? How many is too few? A minimum number of people are necessary to generate group dynamics and to share diverse ideas or opinions about a learning experience. Beyond a maximum number, quieter individuals can avoid learning and change by quietly "hiding among the masses." For interactive and experiential learning situations, a small group of 8-12 clients is an ideal range. A minimum and maximum of 5 and 15 are acceptable extremes. Many times facilitators have to make a decision about naturally occurring group sizes when working with teams of predetermined numbers outside this range. In lecture or workshop presentations, larger group sizes are common. However, if you want to optimize learning from reflection and integrate learning as continued change, then group sizes should be kept small. In these cases, you may utilize smaller "break-out" groups of 8-12 to discuss matters and then return to share their realizations with the greater whole.

STAFF - Once the group size is set, the number of staff can be determined: one facilitator to each small group of 8-12 people is a typical ratio. However, the luxury of several facilitators is one some customers cannot afford. Unfortunately, when working with larger groups and limited numbers of facilitators, superior outcomes obtained from small group interactions are sometimes sacrificed for the sake of saving money. We have found one compromise is to use facilitators-in-training for some less critical situations. We would not would not recommend using such facilitators in times of conflict, but they may be invaluable during general discussions.

EQUIPMENT - If you require clients to bring personal equipment to the learning experience, give them a list. Otherwise, provide necessary items like pens and paper for note taking. If you are using audiovisual media (e.g., overhead projector or computer software), check these in advance and double-check them on arrival at the venue in case they interact poorly or are not compatible. Have a back-up plan (e.g., flip charts with markers or a blackboard with chalk) in case overheads and computer presentations fail.

CATERING - Hungry or thirsty people do not learn well. Be sure food and drinks are nutritious and tasty. Provide ample time for people to consume it, as rushing can lead to indigestion and prevent learning as well.

ACCOMMODATION - Poorly rested people do not learn well either. Be sure the accommodations are comfortable and relaxing. Allow some free time for people to enjoy the local facilities.

TRANSPORTATION - Getting to and from the venue is probably the most dangerous part of any learning experience or program. Employ professional services or allow clients to drive themselves in accordance with company policies and mileage reimbursement procedures. Do not transport clients in your own vehicles, as your financial exposure could be very high if an accident ensues.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION - This logistical concern is a double- edged sword. On the one hand, we want clients to have access to their work and their organizations want them to continue their jobs while at the learning experience. However, clients can easily be distracted from the learning experience in an effort to keep up with their workloads. We recommend discussing this concern in advance with clients, asking them how they want to address it, and then holding them accountable to this agreement. Nevertheless, providing access to voice mail, faxes, e-mail, and courier services outside of the program goes a long way toward relaxing clients and getting them ready to learn.

FINANCES - Be sure the customer understands and accepts the costs associated with all logistics.

G. Clarify facilitator roles and expectations

When operating as an individual facilitator, there is only one person to take credit for what goes well or blame for what goes poorly. However, larger program designs often require multiple facilitators to work in concert with one another as co-facilitators or assistants. Co-facilitation and assisted facilitation each provide their own set of unique challenges. If roles are proactively clarified between co-facilitators, or between lead and assistant facilitators, problems are less likely to emerge. Our experience has been that some of the following logistical issues are best talked about before working together:

- understanding of client needs and expectations (e.g., from the diagnosis data);
- agreement on program practices and agenda to address those needs and expectations;
- share of duties and responsibilities before, during, and after

the learning experiences;
- who interacts with the customer and how (e.g., act as an intermediary to other facilitators);
- who interacts with clients and how (e.g., match or clash of demographic characteristics);
- who handles logistics (e.g., venue, schedule, catering, accommodations, transportation, equipment);
- how facilitators will work together (e.g., pace, style, interaction, stealthy communication);
- how disagreements or conflicts will be resolved;
- financial arrangements (e.g., payment, reimbursement of expenses and program costs); and
- agreements concerning follow up contracts.

H. Prepare contingencies

Flexible facilitators prepare contingencies. Facilitator flexibility is most apparent in your ability to adapt to changing conditions (e.g., weather, malfunctioning equipment, loss of several group members from the program due to emergency work commitments). No other aspect of facilitation requires us to "walk our talk" as much as having a back-up plan or being able to create one on the spot. While much of this flexibility comes with experience, we cannot say enough that facilitators need to anticipate what can go awry and have a plan for this. Nevertheless, despite the best preparation and flexibility, the unexpected will still happen and must be dealt with immediately. Chapter 9 addresses some of these issues on what to do when your limits are tested.

I. Double check everything

One of the hallmarks of designing effective programs is that a change in one of the program elements can require other elements be adjusted accordingly. Double-check all aspects of your program design whenever anything changes.

6
Delivering Experiences

By far the greatest thing is to be a master of the metaphor. It is the only thing that cannot be learned from others; and it is also a sign of genius because a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in the dissimilar.
—Aristotle

Metaphors are just one of many tools at a facilitator's disposal for influencing change prior to any learning experience. This chapter examines several tools under the general headings of frontloading, intervening, framing, managing information, and observing behaviors. **Frontloading** is a discussion held prior to the experience focusing on learning and change within the experience. **Intervening** is a brief interruption in the middle of a learning experience. **Framing** addresses the way an experience is introduced so learning can be maximized in meaning and relevance for the client. **Managing information** refers to the variety of dynamics a facilitator sees in clients and how this information is organized into useful categories. **Observing behaviors** addresses the methods facilitators use to gather critical client information from verbal and non-verbal clues.

A. Optimize change from primary experiences

Figure 6 shows five combinations of facilitation methods extending from experience as the central basis for all client learning. The first method shows the experience alone. Learning and change in this situation are addressed by the client alone, and may or may not occur immediately after the experience. Years later, clients might recognize the importance of their experiences. Learning may occur, but not before numerous opportunities to change may be lost. The following methods (briefly described below and explained in more detail throughout this chapter) avoid missing the opportunities of this first situation and center clients' efforts on achieving optimal learning and change.

The focus on optimal learning and change begins in the second method. Debriefing is added to enhance the possibility of change occurring from increased reflection **after** the learning experience. Debriefing can be as simple as having a general discussion based on a few questions, or as complex as sequencing several questions for a specific and focused discussion. If debriefing follows the learning experience, the chances of achieving change typically increase.

The third method of incorporating frontloading represents a fundamental shift in facilitation. Many facilitators typically think discussion only occurs after a learning experience. However, what would happen if reflection occurred before the experience? The notion of frontloading asks questions normally reserved for debriefing **before** the experience. As a result, change occurs directly during the experience instead after it. When clients compare their new behaviors with previous ones from other experiences during debriefing, the likelihood of change continuing after the fact is greatly increased.

In the fourth method, the facilitator asks questions **during** the experience. This intervention typically occurs when the group appears "stuck" and unable to learn. It frequently takes the form of an interruption with an insightful and carefully chosen question from the facilitator. The purpose of this question is to guide clients back toward successful change during the experience.

In the fifth and final method, introduction to the learning experience is enhanced by including a richly framed metaphor. When learning has new meaning and relevance to clients they are more likely to invest in it, integrate it, and continue it. The use of metaphoric

1 - experience alone
2 - debriefing the experience
3 - incorporating frontloaded change
4 - intervening in the middle of experience
5 - adding metaphoric frames to the introduction

F? = Frontloading Questions
D? = Debriefing Questions
M = Metaphoric Frame
I = Intervention
C = Change

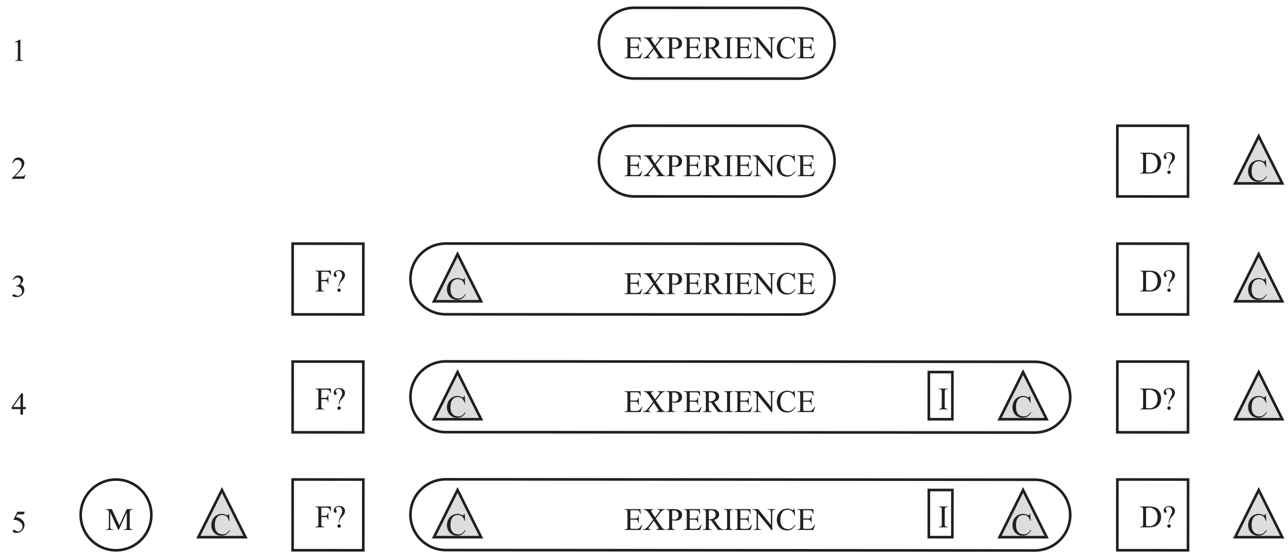

Figure 6: Optimizing the experience

frames, which connect the learning experience to clients' work lives at a deeper and sometimes different level, can produce change before the experience.

Facilitators can debrief to reinforce framed, frontloaded, or intervened changes by observing client behaviors and managing the information derived from these observations. These debriefings typically are different in structure than ones found in the second method, being more focused and client-directed. Blending debriefing, frontloading, framing, and interventions with learning experiences aids facilitators in optimizing integrated and continued change. However, take care not to overuse these techniques or mix them all together to the point of confusion.

B. Frontload to punctuate learning

Practicing things that work generally leads to more productive behavior than practicing things that don't work (i.e., perfect practice makes perfect, not practice makes perfect). Frontloading a few key issues prior to beginning a learning experience can center clients' attention on key lessons. As stated earlier, frontloading means to simply place the learning and change "in front of" or prior to the experience by reflecting earlier than usual. Frontloading can involve revisiting past lessons, motivating with objectives, and identifying function and dysfunction (each is detailed in the next 3 sections).

While frontloading can add great depth and application to learning, we caution you about the impact of too much frontloading. The average person can organize five to nine things in their mind at once. A typical learning experience has at least a half-dozen important points that must be retained by clients for effective learning to occur. Adding more than two or three extra points to the introduction by frontloading may overload clients, possibly causing them to forget key information. Bear this in mind when using frontloading as a facilitation tool.

C. Revisit past lessons

Revisiting takes advantage of the fact that learning experiences are generally connected to one other. Facilitators can ask clients to target key lessons from their past experiences. Revisiting past lessons, whether recent or somewhat removed in time from the present situation, avoids having to use up valuable learning time by repeating "lessons already learned" or having to wait for debriefing or discussion to bring up these topics again after the learning experience.

Revisiting questions posed by a facilitator prior to a learning experience reminds the group of behaviors they have already identified or committed to work toward. It brings past lessons "front and center" for client focus. For example, just before the learning experience begins, and after you have explained the objectives of the task, you can interrupt with a frontloaded question:

FACILITATOR: One more thing before we begin, what were the commitments the group made last time?
CLIENTS: We decided to focus our attention on three factors as a group. One was to be patient and allow each person to speak if they wanted. The second was to take a quick inventory to make sure all ideas were presented and heard. The third was to have one person clarify and restate the task to everyone to make sure our plan was understood before we implemented it.
FACILITATOR: Okay, thanks for that information. Just a quick reminder: before we begin this learning experience, do you want me to check in with you about keeping these commitments in the next debrief?

Instead of using both questions above, facilitators could use the first question to bring commitments to the forefront, or the second question to alert the group to future discussion topics. Either way, clients are more likely to act on their revisited affirmations during this learning experience, something they may not have done otherwise.

D. Motivate with learning objectives

One way to motivate clients in experiences is to have them understand why learning may be important in their work. All other conditions being equal, an employee who sees the benefit of "What's in it for me and my organization?" will be more invested in the learning than an employee who questions the relevance of the learning experience. Focusing on present as well as future applications furthers employees' levels of motivation and investment in the learning experience. Consider this frontloading:

FACILITATOR: So before we begin this learning experience, can anyone share what they see being learned or gained from it?
CLIENT #1: Actually, one of the things that might be valuable is seeing how each person works on a task.
CLIENT #2: Along with that, I think we might receive some insight on how we handle group situations, when there are a lot of unknowns.
FACILITATOR: How might either of those benefit you at work?
CLIENT #3: Well for one thing, if I had an understanding of what roles we all played in our jobs I think we could be more efficient in how we went about accomplishing our goals.
FACILITATOR: Okay, it will be interesting to see if those things happen. Let me write those two pieces of information down on the flip chart and when we're finishing let's see if they happened or not.

Again, the facilitator in this example is reinforcing the answers, keeping them in the clients' minds by writing them down and giving notice of an intent to check back later.

E. Identify functional and dysfunctional behavior

Identifying behaviors that assist the group (i.e., functional behaviors) as well as those behaviors that obstruct the group (i.e., dysfunctional behaviors) prior to the learning experience can help to focus clients. Functional questions ask which behaviors will help bring about success and how the group may optimize these. An example of functional frontloading might be:

FACILITATOR: In looking at this next objective, does anyone have any ideas about what the group may need to do in order to succeed?
CLIENT: I'm not quite sure, but one thing that seems pretty certain is that everyone is going to need to be part of the planning. We're going to have to make sure everyone is communicating clearly to one another about what is going on.
FACILITATOR: Do people agree with this idea? If so, what strategies does the group have for making sure this will happen and it will be successful?

Similarly, dysfunction questions ask which behaviors might hinder success and how the group can avoid, overcome these, or do some things differently. An example of dysfunctional frontloading might be:

FACILITATOR: In looking at this next objective, does anyone have any ideas about what the group may want to avoid doing so it won't fail?
CLIENT: We sure do want to avoid running into the time problems we ran into on the last project. When we didn't watch our time, we ran into a number of bottlenecks on the production end.
FACILITATOR: It seems like everyone else is agreeing with you on this. What can the group do to ensure this same setback doesn't happen again?

In both of these examples, the facilitator asks the clients to identify a behavior that will either help or hinder their process, and then asks them how they can make sure this does or does not occur. In this way, different learning experiences will tend to occur (especially if compared with previous ones) and subsequent comparisons during debriefing may provide additional learning.

F. Intervene with appropriate questions

When appropriate, one option for facilitators is to intervene during the learning experience. There are a number of reasons why facilitators should intervene (e.g., physical or emotional safety issues, lost learning opportunities). However, an equally good number of reasons exist for facilitators not to intervene and "rescue" clients (e.g., creating natural conflict, letting them struggle with a problem). If facilitators intervene too often, clients learn to depend on being "saved" by them when encountering difficulties. Resist the temptation to intervene, interject your opinion, or solve problems for clients in these cases. Examples of times when facilitators do need to intervene include:

- when serious or repeated violations of human rights, ground rules, or operating principles occur;
- when a teachable moment arises;
- when time runs out or is about to expire;
- when a group or individual gets side tracked and might benefit from refocusing;
- when a group or individual gets stuck in a rut and might benefit from a break; and
- when facilitator input or suggestion may be beneficial without taking learning opportunities away from clients.

Remember one of the facilitation guidelines is to do as little as possible so clients can do as much as possible. By intervening with appropriate questions, facilitators can enhance the group's ability to analyze and learn from what is happening at that moment in time. For example, in the middle of a learning experience, communication among group members breaks down with everyone talking at once and no one listening. At the appropriate moment, you might interject a single question and ask: "How is your communication working for you at the present time?" Or you might call a time-out to discuss why things are going poorly. The group stops the learning experience at this time to discuss this issue until they feel ready to continue with the experience. When appropriate and possible, intervention roles can also be given to group members so they can take on more responsibility for their own processes.

G. Focus on context rather than content

There are several occasions where individuals and groups can become "bogged down" in the details surrounding problems. While considering the depth of content in a problem can be important, it may be more valuable to ask the group to focus on the broader context of their efforts. Two intervention questions focusing clients' attention around this context might be:

- How does what you're doing fit within the larger design of the organization?
- Are the processes you're employing best equipped to accomplish your objectives?

Since these questions require facilitator and clients to think differently, one way to approach the task of focusing on context is to take a break and have one person restate the group objectives. Following this restatement (which should take less than 5 or 10 minutes), the clients can examine whether their current progress is relevant to the context of what is occurring in their company.

One way to accomplish this is to call for a "process check." Here clients step away from the task or discussion at hand. In a group (with or without the facilitator's aid), they revisit the operating principles they have established and identify whether or not these are being followed. If they have not been following these, a discussion of the discrepancies leads to a reaffirmation or change of those operating principles before clients reengage in their current learning experience.

H. Frame introductions

Several approaches can be used when preparing clients to address issues. The most common one is to gather as much information as possible to highlight potential directions they can take. Examples of information sources include: client interviews, financial data, past performance history, 360 degree feedback tools, and competitor comparisons.

When framing, the facilitator works to coordinate these issues in the context of all of this information. The term **framing** is used much in the way an artist uses a picture frame to focus the attention of the observer on the details within the frame. When information is introduced in this manner, this process allows clients or groups to focus their attention on the most pertinent issues. Consider this example for a group of clients who all want to be leaders and refuse to acknowledge the importance of followership:

FACILITATOR: I feel very lucky to be here with you today. I am impressed with what your organization has been able to achieve over the past three years and delighted with the training resources they have invested in each of you so far. I've been asked to work with you in the area of leadership by providing some practice based on your earlier readings and your watching of videos demonstrating leadership. So everything we do here will be focused on advancing your leadership potential. However, before we get into the leadership aspect, I'd like to ask you to share your past experiences as followers of good and bad leaders. Who'd like to begin with their story?

This approach is based on the belief that the more the group knows about the issue, the more likely they will resolve the problems they are facing. This approach works well with functional groups involved in development programs, particularly when they have ample internal and external resources. However, it tends to not work as well with dysfunctional groups engaged in redirection programs or those groups who lack sufficient resources. We recommend the careful use of solution-focused methods for dysfunctional groups as presented in the next chapter.

I. Frame metaphorically to increase integration

Transfer is a critical concept in integration and continuation. It occurs when learning or change acquired in one environment is maintained in another. For example, when a new behavior or thought obtained in the learning experience is applied to work, it is said to have transferred from that learning experience to work. Ease of transfer depends heavily on the similarity of both environments. From the list of learning experiences in the first chapter, we can identify some closely related to work and others that bear little resemblance to work. Here are a few obvious examples:

VERY SIMILAR TO WORK
- Simulations (representations of actual work tasks)
- Action Exercises (based on real work problems)

VERY DIFFERENT FROM WORK
- Leisure Events (golf, picnic, and service projects)
- Adventures (outdoor activities and ropes courses)

Experiences closely related to work have an advantage because learning is naturally integrated, change is easily continued, and a great deal of positive transfer can occur because of the similarities between the two settings. Unfortunately, similarities sometimes permit bad habits to flow the other way, with clients negatively transferring their dysfunctions to the program and bringing the baggage of work with them to the learning experience.

The experiences bearing little resemblance to work have an advantage because such transference is poor, restraining negative transfer, but this factor can also makes positive transfer of learning and change more difficult. Finding a way to enhance the positive transfer, while also restricting the negative transfer, often provides a key to providing breakthroughs in learning. The use of metaphors is one way to attain these enhancements and restrictions on transfer.

A **metaphor** is an idea, object, or description where one item represents another as a means to denote the comparative likeness between the two. People naturally use metaphoric structures (e.g., similes, stories) to connect, communicate, and make sense of new situations they cannot fully explain:

- *I'm not sure how to describe it, but it was a lot like....*
- *I've never experienced anything similar before, but it was as if....*

The use of metaphors allows seemingly different environments to appear similar in the clients' minds. Since metaphors narrow the cognitive gap between these environments, the positive transfer of new learning occurs more easily from the experience to work. One of the things making this possible is the fact that metaphoric structures require clients to handle information differently. This difference in thinking bypasses client dysfunction, reduces habitual negative transfer, and creates an increased awareness of new possibilities. When framed correctly, metaphors become cognitive bridges permitting positive transfer of new learning and change with far greater rates of success than the negative transfer of old work habits.

Metaphoric debriefing and metaphoric frames are two ways to enhance transfer. **Metaphoric debriefing** (discussed in the next chapter) asks clients to make metaphoric comparisons between their learning experiences and work during the debrief phase.

Metaphoric framing introduces the learning experience as if it were work (although it obviously isn't), but in a way that makes it seem a lot like work (where it possibly could be). Here is a metaphoric frame for golf, presented in order to make the game more meaningful and relevant to corporate life:

FACILITATOR: In this experience, called the "Sales Game" (golf), each of you have your typical personal quotas of 18 contracts (holes) per day while also minimizing your use of resources (making as few shots as possible). We know the key to successful sales is using the right approach with a customer (ball). This right approach usually takes several preparatory pitches (shots), to get the customer in a comfortable situation (on the green) before the closing presentation (putt) gets the customer to sign the contract (ball goes in the hole). Sometimes, if we don't use the right amount of finesse (imprecise stroke), we can fall short or overshoot our objectives for a customer and we'll have to do a lot of extra work to get them to sign a contract. So your approaches should be well thought out in advance (plan your positioning and club selection accordingly). Any questions so far?
CLIENTS: No, not yet. Seems pretty straight forward. Just like a game called golf!
FACILITATOR: Now you also know that our company is planning to change a few rules about how we do business and that involves moving toward more team oriented selling where each of you supports the others. In this experience, you are free to experiment with the rules of the sales game. We are interested in exploring how we might all work together to achieve a 4-person team quota of 72 contracts (4 x 18 holes) using less than 288 resources (4 x 72 par). For example, to achieve this, you may discover that some of you are better at initiating contact (driving), while others are much better at closing (putting) and so you might choose to share your customers (play for one another). Part of your well planned approach might be teamwork. Any questions now?

For the frame above, the facilitator might demonstrate the terms in parentheses, while verbalizing the rest of the frame aloud to the group. Occasionally a client will object that the frame doesn't represent anything at work. This is one of those times that the facilitator avoids trying to explain the frame any further and simply asks others to explain how they interpret the metaphor:

FACILITATOR: You may be right. I've never really done your job before. Perhaps someone else can explain this better than me. Anyone see how this is like work?
CLIENT: I guess I can see the parallel to caring for customers, not wanting to place them in any awkward situations like a bunker or the rough, and not to lose them along the way by putting them in a water trap or out-of-bounds area.

By drawing on clients' metaphors, the frame can be strengthened and the facilitator can avoid getting caught in a potential conflict or antagonistic position with clients. The end result is clients begin changing their plans or actions even before the learning experience begins.

J. Refract client's metaphoric language

Metaphor statements are figures of speech presenting a rich comparison and insight into a client's or group's reality. When offered by clients, they may present possible avenues for facilitators to advance client perspective, insight, and growth. This is particularly true in situations where direct suggestions have not worked. Utilizing clients' language to create metaphors can be a rich source for assisting them in their change processes, as in this example:

CLIENT: I can't believe how difficult this problem is for me.
FACILITATOR: Wow, it sounds tough; how is it affecting you?
CLIENT: It feels like a huge burden, like I'm carrying around a ***bunch of bricks in a suitcase*** *and it's* ***weighing me down****!*
FACILITATOR: Have there been other times you have felt like this?
CLIENT: A few actually.
FACILITATOR: Can you tell me what you did at those times to ***lighten your load****?*

In this situation, the client presented a vivid representation of the influence of the problem to the facilitator. Rather than reflecting the client language back to the client using the same words (like a mirror bounces light), the facilitator refracted the client's language by reshaping it to suit the situation, while still maintaining the theme (like a lens refracts and concentrates light). Seeds for metaphors often lie in the client's words, so listen carefully. Not only can metaphors provide a wonderful link to the clients' perceptions of the problems, but possible clues for how clients may handle a problem and track progress toward resolution of a problem. This takes advantage of how the learning experience analogously parallels the clients' situations.

K. Observe client behaviors

Once an experience has begun, the facilitator has multiple roles. One of the most important roles is observing client behaviors and group dynamics within the learning experience, as these are critical to facilitated debriefings.

Observations of group processes and interactions primarily focus on listening to what clients say (verbal) and seeing what they do (non-verbal). Client language and action, especially the congruence between these two, generates significant information on how clients view and interact with their reality. Table 3 outlines some clues from verbal and non-verbal client behaviors.

Note "why" questions are deliberately avoided here for their speculative nature as well as their undesired focus on past behaviors. We encourage you to do the same for several reasons. First, "why" questions can lead you into a sort of "analysis paralysis" mode, since you are asking for inferences that may not be well founded. As a facilitator, always try and keep in mind you never have enough information to be pessimistic!

Second, your speculations are far more subjective than information that can be acquired through other information sources (e.g., direct and shared observations of behavior by others involved in the learning experience). Third, you run the risk of increasing a client's resistance to change as you explore reasons for their behavior. Fourth, solutions to problems are generally not found in sources of "why" information, but more in "what" and "how" information.

CLUE	VERBAL	NON-VERBAL
Who?	Who speaks to whom? Who speaks for others?	Who makes eye contact with you or with others? Who avoids looking at people?
What?	What is the discussion topic? What is NOT discussed?	What are the clients doing during discussions? What are they doing when NOT speaking?
When?	Is the topic of discussion timely? When do clients avoid the topic?	When are clients ready to learn or change? When are they resistant to either or both?
Where?	In which direction do they try to take the discussion?	Where do they stand? Do their positions say anything about power or influence?
How?	How do they attempt to shift the topic of discussion?	How do clients treat one another? How do they interact in times of conflict?

Table 3: Questions to consider while observing client behavior in learning experiences

L. Impart circular feedback loops

As discussed earlier, clients can be empowered to observe their own behaviors and report back to their co-workers. Other than assigning observers, one way to achieve this is to make everyone accountable for sharing feedback. Good feedback can be one of the strongest precursors of learning and change. To this end, facilitators should seek to implant circular feedback loops in the group. This means having clients observe one another and appropriately share those observations privately or publicly (depending on situations).

Relationships in groups are **recursive** and **reciprocal** (i.e., one person's actions positively or negatively influence the behaviors of others and vice versa). Encouraging and monitoring these recursive and reciprocal interactions can further the development of most groups. By facilitators introducing feedback loops, clients typically increase their efforts toward functional change.

M. Manage information and group dynamics

A wealth of information occurs in learning experiences, often more than you or your clients will be able to process. Determining and managing the important content, as well as associated processes of this information, is critical to your success as a facilitator. One way to manage information is to use the clients' intended learning objectives as a screening device to determine the type of information to access and assist in guiding potential change processes.

Based on the work of Schein (1987), Schwartz (1994) has identified nine general forms of management responsibilities used by facilitators. While these responsibilities may overlap and serve more than one purpose, they can be used to assist in determining relevant information. Table 4 lists these nine types of responsibilities, their purposes, and an example of a question associated with each.

Use this list to guide you when managing and determining what client information is most relevant. For example, if the learning objective was to assist a group in developing their group process, you would look to focus on their process, and not on the content of what was being said. For suggestions on how to do this, see "Renegotiate when IT happens - CLIENTS" in Chapter 9.

RESPONSIBILITY	PURPOSE	SAMPLE QUESTIONS
Exploring	Further understanding through facts, feelings, and events	How did that happen? What is your goal for doing that?
Seeking Specifics	Clarifying information by gathering precise examples	Exactly what happened during the event? What things in particular are they doing that you don't like?
Emphasizing Process	Examining and improving client's underlying processes	How did you specifically go about doing that? What did others do after that occurred?
Diagnosing	Analyzing situations	What do you think causes the problem? What is the best solution to the problem?

Offering Content	Offering ideas on how clients might solve their problems	Would it be useful to add two more employees to the task?
Giving Feedback	Reflecting on functional and dysfunctional behaviors	Does this achieve what you set out to accomplish? Can you tell them how it made you feel when that was said?
Holding Discussion	Determining how discussion topics will be arranged	Would each person please share your opinion before we move on? How long do you want to discuss this?
Teaching Concepts	Instructing clients with skills to address their own issues	What are some approaches to use for conflict resolution or for diversity training?
Reframing	Assigning new meaning or interpretations to events	Could people have stopped contributing, not because they are unmotivated, but so they don't offend others?

Table 4: None forms of management responsibilities for facilitators

7
Debriefing Learnings

The skill of...learning in which people tend to be the most deficient is reflection. Demand for the solution...is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection.
—John Dewey

Dewey also wrote that reflection involved looking back over the past, applying lessons in the present, and preparing for change in the future. This chapter looks at **debriefing**: the reflective element occurring after the learning experience and prior to most change. It also details two specific techniques for reflective debriefings: **funneling** with sequenced questions and **solution-focused** questioning.

A. Funnel for learning and change

Funneling is a debriefing procedure asking six sequential questions. In chemistry, funnels take a broad mass of matter and concentrate it down into a narrow stream, while also filtering out debris and impurities. Facilitated funneling does much the same. By asking carefully sequenced questions that filter out irrelevant content, the broad experience can be focused on learning and distilled into change. A sequence of question filters is diagrammed in Figure 7.

Note these filters are simply expansions of the three basic "what," "so what," and "now what" questions from Chapter 2 and incorporate the three reflection, integration, and continuation steps from the experiential cycle in Figure 1. The "what" question covers the three **reflection** filters of review, remember, and identify. The "so what" question addresses the two **integration** filters of sum

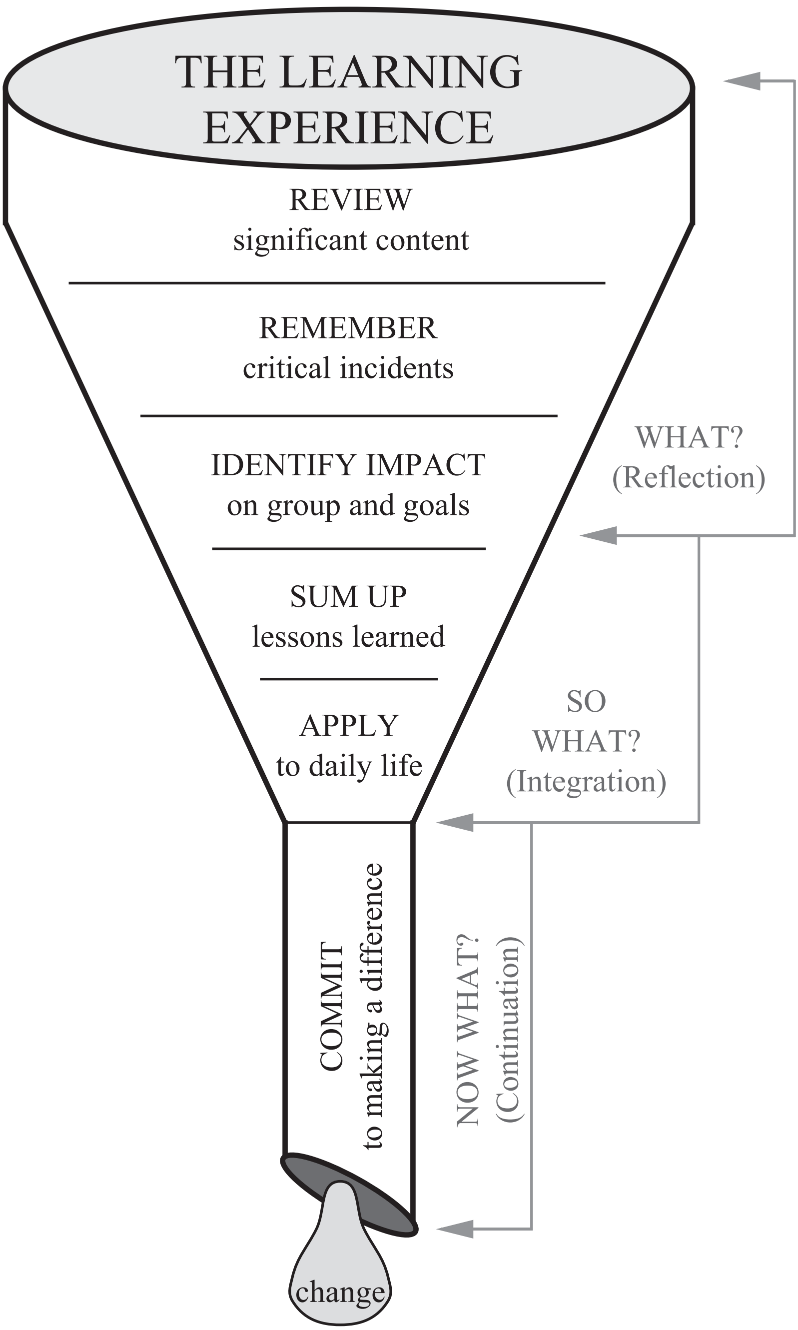

Figure 7: The funnel model of debriefing

up and apply. The "now what" question outlines the **continuation** filter of committing to change. Asking these six questions in order is recommended as a guide for facilitators following the cyclic model mentioned earlier. Obviously, this pattern can be modified for client needs or program circumstances.

B. Obtain permission before advancing

In order to advance to the next level (i.e., a new filter), answers to questions from the previous filter should give permission for the facilitator to continue. That permission can be implicit (with no one opposing the line of questioning) or explicit, as in this example:

FACILITATOR: Can we talk a little more about communication?
CLIENT: Yes!

Permission is usually implied rather than obviously stated. However, clients may sometimes oppose the line of questioning. The following example illustrates this type of opposition, where a facilitator has repeatedly observed everyone talking at once and no one listening to anyone:

FACILITATOR: Can you think of a place where your communication could be improved?
CLIENT: No! Our communication is fine.

FACILITATOR: Can you cite an example of poor communication from that experience?
CLIENT: Nope! The communication went very well.

FACILITATOR: Do you recall a time when everyone was talking at once?
CLIENT: No! Didn't happen.

FACILITATOR: Do you recall a time when no one was listening to

you or your ideas?
CLIENT: Naw! Everyone was always listening.

FACILITATOR: Okay, I must have made a mistake. Instead, can we talk about ...?

Note how these questions began broad and general, then moved to narrow and specific. This is one procedure to follow to appear less confronting to clients. In the above case, clients were either disagreeing, unaware, resistant, denying, or apathetic and unwilling to talk about communication. The facilitator did not have permission to go further and appropriately went somewhere else (how to deal with the disagreeing, unaware, resistant, denying, or apathetic client is described in Chapter 9). One general rule of thumb for funneling is if permission can be obtained at one filter, go to the next level. However, if it isn't granted, start over with another topic. Don't force clients to go somewhere they don't want to go.

C. Review significant content

Deciding what topic to funnel is initially accomplished by gathering information from one or more of three sources: customers, clients, and facilitators. The customers have identified some needs during diagnosis. The clients have identified some needs during separate sessions and/or have brought up topics during previous debriefs. The facilitators have observed the topics during those diagnoses, in previous debriefings, and/or during recent learning experiences in the form of critical incidents. So the first filter is a question designed to isolate probable topics worth funneling from all the possible topics composing each learning experience. Here are three examples of reviewing for significant content:

FACILITATOR: Can you take turns reviewing the most interesting things that happened?
CLIENTS: (begin telling the story of occurrences in order until)....

FACILITATOR: The communication story sounds intriguing, can you say some more about that?
CLIENTS: (continue discussing communication, thereby indicating an acceptance of the topic)

FACILITATOR: What were some skills you used to achieve that last task?
CLIENTS: Teamwork, trust, cooperation, communication, (the list continues)....
FACILITATOR: Communication is interesting, can you explain its importance?
CLIENTS: (indicate an acceptance of communication, by talking about its value)

FACILITATOR: Could you do the following for me? Hold up a number of fingers that measures your group's level of communication, from zero (absent, fists) to ten (perfect, both hands open).
CLIENTS: (hold up various combinations of hands and fingers)....
FACILITATOR: Looks like an average of about five. Could each of you please share your thinking behind each of your numbers?
CLIENTS: (explain their choices and have begun to accept the topic of communication)....

The point of this first filter was to have clients agree on talking about the chosen topic (communication in this case). Once communication was being discussed in a general manner, the facilitator received permission to seek further specific instances regarding this topic.

D. Remember critical incidents

The second filter is designed to focus on an issue observed by a facilitator during the delivery of the experience and to guide clients to raise this issue first. If clients do not bring it up during the debriefing, the facilitator could raise the issue as a last resort. However, if clients are disagreeing, unaware, resistant, denying, or apathetic, incidents raised by facilitators are less likely to secure permission from clients to converse further. Before asking them to remember critical incidents, the facilitator reviews the topic they are currently discussing:

FACILITATOR: Okay, now that we are talking about communication, can anyone remember a time when your communication was particularly effective?
CLIENTS: (share several examples of good communication)
FACILITATOR: Good. How about a time when communication was ineffective?
CLIENT: I remember when no one seemed willing to hear my ideas.
FACILITATOR: Who else remembers that occurrence?
CLIENTS: (continue to discuss their recollections of everyone talking at once)....

Mentioning communication helps remind people of where they are in the conversation and anchors further discussion to items related with communication. This reduces the chance clients will talk about other things and helps them concentrate on singular topics to confirm learning and punctuate change. For discovery of new client issues, the simple discussion methods described in Chapter 2 should be used.

The final question ("Who else remembers this?") secures buy-in from clients. If the majority can remember the incident, then it did indeed happen and the facilitator has permission to proceed to the next level. If only a minority can remember, then the facilitator encourages others to convince the "hold outs" by sharing their personal impressions (convincing done by the facilitator is a potential error that can lead to conflict, where clients may see the facilitator as a potential antagonist). If permission is not obtained, seek other incidents people can agree upon or change the topic of conversation.

E. Identify impact on individuals, group, and task

Once clients remember the critical incident, then the third filter can be used to find out the result of that incident. The facilitator summarizes the previous two filters in order to remind people of where the conversation is centered, and then asks a question to identify its impact:

FACILITATOR: Okay, we're talking about communication and you've brought up a time that most of you recall everyone talking at once and no one listening. What was the impact of this on the group goal or task?
CLIENT: It prevented us from sharing ideas. Some of the ideas that didn't get shared were ones that would have simplified solving the problem.
FACILITATOR: Who agrees or disagrees with this view?
CLIENTS: (discuss their levels of agreement, thereby indicating permission to proceed).

FACILITATOR: Can you identify the effect this talking episode had on the group?
CLIENT: I noticed our morale seemed to drop at this point.
FACILITATOR: Who else noticed this? (OR) Did anyone notice anything different?
CLIENTS: (share their observations, thereby expressing permission to proceed).

FACILITATOR: How did this event of no one listening make you feel personally?
CLIENT: Very frustrated!
FACILITATOR: Who else felt this way? (OR) Did anyone feel differently?
CLIENTS: (confide their emotional states, thereby imparting permission to proceed).

Note the facilitator was interested in a variety of impacts: on individuals, on the group, and on their task. Depending on the topics and contract with the customer and clients, the facilitator might only concentrate on one of these areas. After clients further identified each impact, the facilitator again sought buy-in and agreement from a majority of individuals about each issue raised. Reinforcing client permission allowed the facilitator to move on to the next filter.

F. Sum up the lessons learned

Once clients have remembered the incident and identified its impact, the facilitator investigates their learning. The fourth filter asks for a summation of lessons clients learned from the experience. Once again, the facilitator summarizes previous filters and then asks:

FACILITATOR: On the topic of communication, we've mentioned how talking without listening impacted the group and you personally. Can you sum up what you learned from this?
CLIENT: We need to have a moderator for ensuring that good ideas get shared.
FACILITATOR: What do others think of this?
CLIENTS: (clients discuss their learning about moderators, and thus give permission).

FACILITATOR: What is the most important lesson each of you learned about communication?
CLIENT: We've two ears and a mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we speak!
FACILITATOR: That's interesting, what does this mean for you or your group?
CLIENTS: (clients share their lessons about this, and thus provide permission).

As lessons are brought out by clients, the facilitator checks for buy-in at that level and then moves to the next filter. Clients will often jump from what they learned to what they should have done. Following the funnel approach, facilitators celebrate the step forward to change, but ground clients in their learning to reinforce the value of this change.

G. Apply lessons to work through metaphors

Once the lessons have been shared, the facilitator can examine how this fits with clients' lives. The fifth filter asks clients to apply their learning to work. Once again, the facilitator follows a brief summary with this kind of question:

FACILITATOR: You've shared your learning with one another about everyone talking and nobody listening. Now I'm interested in knowing if this ever happens at work?
CLIENT: All the time. This is how our staff meetings tend to run!
FACILITATOR: How was that last experience like your staff meetings?
CLIENTS: (Outline the parallel pieces of the two and create metaphoric connections).

FACILITATOR: How can this experience be applied to your job?
CLIENT: We just don't speak up with new ideas, because no one listens.
FACILITATOR: Tell me a story or paint me a picture with words about what that is like?
CLIENTS: (Describe their lives with figurative language and metaphoric links).

Metaphor identification may be extremely important in this filter and can convey permission to proceed to the final level. As discussed in the previous chapter, metaphors allow seemingly different settings (i.e., work and the learning experience) to connect in the client's mind. The closer the gap between these two settings, the more likely learning from experience will transfer into change at work.

H. Commit to making a difference

Once the meaning and relevance of the learning experience has been united with work, the last filter can be employed to seek change. The facilitator sums up everything so far and then asks for a commitment to do things differently:

FACILITATOR: We've discussed the miscommunication of everyone talking and nobody listening. We identified what you learned from the impact and how it was a common pattern at work. What will you do differently in the next experience?
CLIENT #1: We need a moderator.
FACILITATOR: Okay, who is going to take responsibility for doing that?
CLIENT #2: I will.
FACILITATOR: Alright, who is willing to assist and support her?
CLIENT #3: I'll double-check and provide her with a gentle reminder.

FACILITATOR: What will you commit to change when you return to work?
CLIENT #1: We could use a moderator at our staff meetings.
FACILITATOR: Can you reword that in the form of an "I statement" please?
CLIENT #2: I will be accountable for moderating ideas at future staff meetings.
FACILITATOR: What do people think of him taking on this role?
CLIENT #3: I think he's a good person for this job.

These two examples show continuation into the next learning experience as well as the workplace. The first example could be used in the beginning of a sequence of several learning experiences, and the second example could be used toward the end of a program shortly before clients return to their jobs. As with both of these cases, clients typically state what they need, but too often nothing is done about what they intend for future situations. Facilitators must be prudent here and get personal pledges from people about what they will individually do to make a difference or bring about change. One way to do this is by using first person language (e.g., use of "I" statements). As commitments are made, the facilitator can ask whether this is an appropriate role for that individual and who is going to help this person accomplish the task.

I. Repeat funnels to confirm changes

If debriefs are interspersed between multiple learning experiences, opportunities to repeat a funnel will be possible. For example, if the first funnel was about a negative topic (miscommunication), then the repeat funnel should be about a positive one (improved communication), provided the client's communication has improved. By way of illustration, here is a quick review of the six filters:

FACILITATOR: Can you ***review*** *some examples of where communication worked?*
CLIENT #1: The addition of a moderator was pretty good.
FACILITATOR: Do you ***remember*** *a time when the moderator was particularly effective?*
CLIENT #2: During our planning, the moderator made sure all ideas were shared.
FACILITATOR: What was the ***impact*** *of that incident on the group and task?*
CLIENT #3: One of those ideas solved the problem and everyone seemed more together.
FACILITATOR: Can you ***sum up*** *what you have learned about moderators?*
CLIENT #1: Using a moderator is really the way to go when you're working with a project team like ours.
FACILITATOR: Can you ***apply*** *this insight to your office?*
CLIENT #2: We'll change staff meetings to include a moderator.

FACILITATOR: Who is going to **commit** *to making that difference?*
CLIENT #3: I will, as long as I can get some support from....

Note this example does not include any probing questions where the facilitator seeks greater depth from responses, nor buy-in questions demonstrating permission. If a facilitator added these as necessary, then the funneling process would be much longer and more detailed. However, the above example succinctly demonstrates how the six filters fit into a funnel sequence.

J. Focus on solutions

The descriptions provided above represent problem-focused facilitation, where the facilitator focuses on the client's problem and seeks to eliminate it. Solution-focus represents a different approach of facilitating co-created solutions with clients. Research has shown solution-focused approaches can be effective, particularly with dysfunctional groups in redirection programs (Priest & Gass, 1997b). Table 5 is a summary of the principal differences between both approaches.

Problem-focused facilitation looks to solve problems by closely investigating their causes and determining what can be done to reduce their influence on clients. Problem-focused facilitators often investigate who or what sustains the problem, when and where it occurs, how it has continued to be a problem, and how clients can try harder to overcome the problem. Problem-focused facilitators generally assist clients by learning as much as possible about the problem and then working with clients to eliminate these problems.

PROBLEM-FOCUSED Facilitation	SOLUTION-FOCUSED Facilitation
centers on reducing the problem	centers on enhancing the solution
looks at what clients are doing wrong	looks at what clients are doing right
emphasizes what clients don’t want	emphasizes what clients do want
highlights what could have been done better	highlights what is already being done well
seeks to eliminate weaknesses	seeks to accentuate positive client strengths
is interested in why the problem happens (what causes and maintains the problem)	is interested in when the problem doesn’t happen (exceptions to the problem)

Table 5: A comparison of problem-focused and solution-focused facilitation methods

Solution-focused facilitation does not ignore the presenting problems; it strives to bring about their resolution by helping clients identify, construct, and implement solutions to the problem. In this approach, facilitation centers around:

- identifying what clients have done in the past that has been successful (solutions), rather than what they have done in the past that has been unsuccessful (problems);
- emphasizing what clients are doing already that is useful;
- looking for what is currently working for clients, rather than focusing on the elimination of what is not working; and
- assisting them in doing something different (solutions), instead of investing in something that isn't working for them (problems).

A solution-focused facilitator often looks for "exceptions" to the problem (e.g., when or where the problem doesn't occur, investigates how the problem doesn't happen) and establishes how clients can work differently at another solution, rather than harder at the same problem to accomplish more lasting change (Gass & Gillis, 1995b).

Recall the earlier example (from page 92), where the facilitator asked clients to hold up the number of fingers that represented their opinion of their communication (from 0 = absent to 10 = perfect). After the group held up an average of five fingers, problem-focused and solution-focused facilitators would ask different questions.

- PROBLEM-focused: How come your score wasn't 7 or 8? What is missing from the group that prevents it from being higher than 5? How can we replace the missing pieces? What were some past failures we can avoid? How did we fail in those instances?
- SOLUTION-focused: How come your score wasn't 2 or 3? What is present in the group that keeps it from going lower than 5? How can we do more of those present pieces? What were some past successes we can build on? What were we specifically doing to succeed?

K. Rephrase questions with a solution-focus

The problem-focused facilitator sees the glass as half empty and seeks to resolve the problem by finding out **why** the glass isn't more full. The solution-focused facilitator sees the glass as half full and seeks to fill the glass even more by finding out **how** the glass became so full. Since these views differ, facilitators using a solution-focused approach often need to rephrase their questions differently than problem-focuses. Table 6 opposite contains some examples of problem-focused questions rephrased into a solution-focused approach.

Note the rephrasing of questions is not as simple as merely putting positive spins on negative topics. Solution-focused facilitation requires different perspectives and techniques. In the questions above, the solution-focused facilitator is seeking precise examples of client behavior, assisted by appreciations of "how" rather than "why."

L. Consult clients as experts in their own lives

Facilitators using solution-focused approaches believe change is not possible; it is inevitable and will involve hard work. We have found it easier and more beneficial for our clients to center their attention around constructing solutions rather than eliminating problems. We have also found it better to encourage clients to increase already established successful behavior patterns than stop or alter existing problematic behavior. Efforts and activities centering on constructing solutions are distinctly different from efforts and activities designed to eliminate problems. Problem-focus philosophy sometimes views facilitators as the experts at what needs to be done, while solution-focused philosophy sees clients as the experts in their own lives.

PROBLEM-FOCUSED Question	SOLUTION-FOCUSED Question
What prevented folks from listening?	How were you able to focus on what was being said?
What troubles did people have in assuming leadership roles?	What unexpected leadership qualities did you notice in others?
What individual actions were blocking group cooperation?	How did others specifically contribute to enhancing cooperation?
How were trust and support hindered?	How were trust and support helped by you in particular?

Table 6: Examples of converting problem-focused questions into solution-focused ones

As discussed in Chapter 6, proactively identifying functional and dysfunctional behaviors is one method of frontloading. A problem-focused facilitator might frontload clients' attention on issues that have been particularly troublesome for them in the past and how they might avoid repetition in the future. A solution-focused facilitator seeks to frontload by asking each client to do something to make the others feel better about their ability to work together and to be aware about what others were doing to achieve this task.

For some functional groups, simply identifying dysfunctional behaviors they have noticed in their past interactions can serve as a psychological filter to prevent the behaviors from occurring. On the other hand, for many dysfunctional groups, highlighting problems can create a self-fulfilling prophecy where clients are likely to continue repeating problems. They are much better suited to recalling similar times when they did not engage in dysfunctional patterns, leading them to focus on exceptions to their problems.

This type of approach strives to guide clients to see they are the experts on themselves. They are the ones best able to recognize actions leading them to where they wish to go. Labeling functional patterns and not dysfunctional ones can lead clients to different behaviors and viewing themselves as competent. This perspective makes the enhancement or discovery of functional behaviors more likely.

M. Vary tense for past, present, and future

Solution-focused facilitators believe unsuccessful behaviors are clients' best efforts at finding solutions. As a result, facilitators use clients' language and values in order to further understand and respect them. When listening to a client's description of a problem, use the **past** tense to describe how an issue used to be a problem. Use the **present** tense to describe a current exception or when the problem did not occur. Use **future** tense to describe how the client will continue to apply the solution. This subtle verbal technique seeds the idea that solution behaviors are happening now and will continue to happen while problem behaviors are part of the past and less likely to reoccur.

*FACILITATOR: In the **past**, when **did** you decide between these typical alternatives?*
*CLIENT: When we allow**ed** the majority vote to rule and this **led** to hidden resentment.*

*FACILITATOR: Is there a way that you **decide** differently **now**?*
*CLIENT: Yes, sometimes we **choose** by reaching consensus.*

*FACILITATOR: How **will** you use consensus in your **future** decision making?*
*CLIENT: We **will** start by taking time to share and talk about our ideas and choices.*

N. Be curious and inquisitive

Solution-focused facilitators ask questions recognizing and helping value clients' strengths and coping skills. These questions are designed to seed ideas that change will indeed happen and clients will recognize it when it does. For example, a facilitator may initially ask the following:

FACILITATOR: What's the first sign you'll be able to notice this experience had been helpful to you? (OR) What's the first sign others will be able to see when you start to make the changes you plan to make at work?

As the program continues with this group, the facilitator may ask clients to help explain some of the behaviors being observed. For example:

FACILITATOR: I was aware in the last task that the group behaved in a way I have not seen before; will someone help me understand what was going on in order for this difference to occur?

A critical piece for being successful with this technique is to be honestly curious about the clients' behaviors. Honesty is the key. You need to continue to strive to remember that clients, not you, are experts regarding their behavior,. By remaining curious and having clients "explain" their behavior, they may acquire a new perspective. Their new perspectives may bring targeted behaviors to the forefront of their attention, while also continuing to reinforce their capabilities and expertise.

O. Build on what works or find exceptions

Initial elements of solutions can often be found in clients' exceptions to perceived or real problems (e.g., de Shazer, 1988). Problems do not happen all the time; there are times when the same conditions are present but the problem behavior does not occur. Solution-focused facilitators look to center their facilitation efforts on these times. What conditions are present when the problem does not happen? How can those conditions be reconstructed for current or future situations? Solution-focused facilitators help clients identify when things are or were "going in the right direction" and try to reinforce what is already working and "coach" participants to do more of it!

During debriefing, a problem-focused facilitator might center clients' attention on identifying, analyzing, and discussing those problematic elements obstructing their planning. The intent of this verbal discussion would be to increase the clients' abilities to correct this problem and plan more effectively next time. However, this might even make the task of planning more difficult for them as the problem of being unable to plan becomes even more entrenched in their thinking, language, and reality (Gass & Gillis, 1995b).

With a different focus, a solution-focused facilitator might ask clients to identify, analyze, and discuss times during the learning experience when they were actually planning well. If they stated there were not any such times, the facilitator would ask them to consider and discuss what it might look like if they imagined they were planning well (i.e., a "hypothetical" exception). To further their "mind set" around solutions, the facilitator could also ask them to highlight and focus on:

- what they would look like if they were planning better;
- what they would be doing differently if they were doing a better job of planning; and
- how they would know if they were planning better.

Here again the role of the solution-focused facilitator is to ask clients about a new path in their planning instead of the dysfunctional route that has been consistently followed in the past. In this process, the facilitator has clients imagine what it might look and sound like for them to be acting in a way that would lead to their desired goal. Focusing on behavioral conditions they would have exhibited, or especially behaviors they demonstrated, helps focus clients on what works. Similar to talking about actual exceptions to the problem, having clients discuss hypothetical examples helps them to plant seeds for future solutions to arise.

P. Consider alternatives to verbal debriefing

Debriefing depends heavily on symbolic language. If clients are poorly versed in language skills or are uncomfortable expressing themselves, then nonverbal alternatives may be less threatening and more effective than verbal discussion. Here are some suggested alternatives to verbal debriefing:

- ART (cartoons, collages, drawings, graphs, paintings, sculptures, or maps);
- DRAMA (dance, skits, human sculptures, or reenactments);
- WRITING (music, poetry, journals, short stories, news reports, or essays);
- PHOTOGRAPHY (pictures, slides, videotape, or instant film snapshots); and
- READING (stories, texts, quotes, morals, fantasies, legends, parables, or fables).

Any of the above can be used as "stand alone" methods, or may be used to further discussion as clients are asked to explain their presentations of these products. Be certain to vary the routine of these alternatives, mix them with discussion, use them in moderation, and apply them appropriately to the age and culture of the client.

8
Departing Clients

There is nothing more difficult to take in hand,
more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain
in this success, than to take the lead in the
introduction of a new order of things.
—Niccolo Machiavelli

Machiavelli reminds us change can be difficult, dangerous, and not always welcomed by the "status quo" back in the office. Even though learning experiences and their associated reflective processes have been accomplished, clients often face challenges in their efforts to integrate and continue changes in the workplace.

To ensure the integrity and continuity of learning, facilitators need to be aware of the processes associated with assisting clients in transition or the period of "**departure**." Departure implies leaving a safe harbor and embarking on a new journey. This chapter outlines similar dynamics occurring near the end of learning experiences, while addressing ideas for program closure, action planning, follow-up procedures, transfer strategies, and anchoring techniques.

A. Be aware of closure dynamics

During the conclusion of learning experiences, clients typically focus on wrapping up loose ends and bringing work to a close. Important things for facilitators to recognize are the dynamics often accompanying closure. At this time, clients may:

- experience trouble coping with closure;
- reflect on their overall task effectiveness;
- lose the focus they achieved during the experience;
- encounter difficulty in addressing unmet goals or making plans

for the future;
- enter situations where they must find new resources for meeting these needs;
- begin to "think ahead" to what they will be doing next personally and professionally;
- attempt to sabotage the learning experience as a way to avoid confronting the need to change; and
- fear the loss of connections they have made with others.

Facilitators plan and adjust the direction and closure strategies of learning experiences based on these factors. These elements affect client behavior, their ability to accomplish closure tasks, and successfully benefit from future integration of learning. For example, in a final evaluation of a program, some clients may summarize benefits and incorporate their growth into future interactions, while other clients may deny the experience is over or regress to previous conflicts.

B. Foster closing reflection with integration focus

Reflection during closure differs from reflection during the learning experience. During the learning experience, reflection seeks to improve practice (e.g., how to do the next experience better). During closure, reflection looks to generalize those improvements to work (e.g., how to do the job better). As a result, discussion summarizing or applying learning should be related to work and not learning experiences. One way to do this is to have clients set goals for change at work based on learning commitments made during the experience:

FACILITATOR: Several of you asked to appoint a group mediator in our experiences today. I'm curious how things were different when one of you mediated?
CLIENT: I noticed we fought less and wasted less time. Also, our ideas got shared more and were better understood with mediation.
FACILITATOR: Okay, do you see a role for mediation at work?

CLIENT: I think our creative conflicts could be better managed by a mediator.
FACILITATOR: Okay, what's one goal we can each set for obtaining a mediator?

The above process may be repeated for each learning outcome during the program. For each one, clients might be encouraged to write personal goals and possibly share these with the group. Clients are more likely to follow through on their goals by owning commitments made in front of significant others, especially with support expressed by those people.

Goals oriented toward change lead into action planning (addressed in Section D of this chapter). Written goals often follow the SMART acronym for clarity and effectiveness:

- **S**pecific (precisely stated with understandable clarity);
- **M**easurable (defined outcome that can be evaluated);
- **A**chievable (possible given the resources available);
- **R**ealistic (challenging, within certain resource limits); and
- **T**ime-bound (linked to deadlines).

C. Transfer learning with metaphors

Transfer represents successful integration of learning from experience into a client's life. In any closing part of the learning experience, focus clients on their future situations.

Once again, three types of transfer are worth considering and these depend on the relationships between learning and future situations: specific, non-specific, and metaphoric transfer. Two of these indicate the principal differences between training and development, while a third highlights the uniqueness of facilitation.

Specific transfer involves learning particular skills for use in closely related situations. Learning to give first aid is an example for preparation as a paramedic. The same skill is used in similar situations, and specific transfer becomes the mainstay of skills training programs. Learning is for predictable work in the present.

Nonspecific transfer refers to the learning of general principles or behaviors and applying them to vastly different situations. Learning to give first aid as a means to gain compassion for others is one example. A similar skill is generalized to a different situation, and nonspecific transfer becomes the goal of employee growth and development. Past learning is for uncertain changes in the future.

While specific transfer focuses on training and nonspecific transfer centers on development, **metaphoric transfer** is an important tool for facilitators. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, metaphors highlight parallels between learning and future situations. The use of metaphor makes seemingly different situations appear similar for the client. Metaphors allow new learning (that might normally transfer non-specifically) to occur at work with greater integration and continuation than usual (approximating that of specific transfer). Just as in debriefing and framing situations, having clients note metaphors during closure heightens transfer for learning and change.

D. Plan for action

Action planning involves writing down what will change as a result of what was learned. A simple action plan answers six questions:

- WHAT will you do?
- WHY will you do it?
- WHERE will it be done?
- WHEN will it be done by?
- WHO will confirm it is done?
- HOW will they know it is done?

What	Why	Where	When	Who	How	?
Objective & number	**Rationale for change**	**Location for change**	**Final date**	**Person responsible**	**Evaluation criteria**	**Resources required**
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						

Figure 8: A sample action plan

Take time to carefully go over these answers with clients so they can provide feedback for one another and offer support for intended changes. Certain plans may warrant a deeper **force field analysis** (Lewin, 1951), where helping and hindering factors are examined in order to anticipate what else might need to happen or be done to achieve success. Laying out each action on a chart, and ranking each action in order of importance, may be helpful in providing a strong reminder and visual representation for clients. Such a chart is found in Figure 8.

Action plans can be completed for individuals, groups, or organizations. We have found it best to complete individual plans first, weave these into group plans, and then combine these into an organizational plan. Encouraging people to sign and date action plans, and having their signatures witnessed by others, adds to the likelihood of their success.

Action plans are dynamic and not carved in stone. Clients should revisit, reevaluate, and renegotiate their plans as necessary. One method to reinforce this is to keep a copy of each action plan and mail these back to clients after three to six months as a reminder or recommitment for change.

E. Anchor experiences

Anchoring clients back to their learning experiences helps to integrate their learning by keeping it fresh in their minds. Here are a few examples of connecting anchors.

- Keeping logs, workbooks, or journals as a means to recall learning.
- Summarizing and framing flip charts used in the program for hanging in offices.
- Involving significant others (co-workers or family) for feedback sessions.
- Giving mementos (e.g., photos, videos, gear, T-shirts, pins, poems, self-made totems) in some a "graduation" ceremony.
- Sending reminders (e.g., letters, postcards, phone calls, e-mail, faxes) to each client.
- Incorporating individual action plans into a larger group or departmental plan.
- Sharing personal action plans with others back at work.
- Organizing formal or informal meetings and socials.
- Assigning projects and workloads (linked to learning outcomes).
- Organizing coaching and mentoring schemes (e.g., using the buddy support system).
- Providing a list of attendees (e.g., e-mail, fax, phone numbers) to help network support.
- Creating professional support groups for alumni of programs.
- Scheduling plenty of time for additional reflection and planning at work.
- Linking performance or bonus incentives to learning and change from the program.
- Anticipating barriers to transfer and preparing response strategies.
- Evaluating new behaviors (can be ongoing, not just on the last program day).
- Celebrating success within the culture through recognition and publicizing positives.
- Reporting individual learning within the team or team learning within the corporation.
- Reassembling groups for discussions of progress toward applying new learning.

- Offering reunions with audio-visual reminders (e.g., photos, videos).
- Holding refresher programs at work of one or two short exercises.
- Revisiting the program venue for rejuvenation in the form of a mini-program.
- Designing a completely new program to build on previous learning.
- Encouraging clients to design the next phase of their program to address remaining development issues.
- Teaching debriefing skills to clients so they can become self-facilitating.
- Applying funneling techniques for self-facilitating clients to use with their work issues and problems.

F. Get feedback on your facilitation

After the learning experience is over, ask clients for some comments on the program and your facilitation (this is your chance to improve!). Obtain feedback individually or in groups from verbal conversations or non-verbal evaluation forms. This process will depend upon which is most appropriate and will provide you with valid, objective feedback. Several evaluation areas to cover include:

- preparation for the learning experience (whether adequate information was received);
- meeting of course objectives (rank these separately and have them evaluate each one);
- relevance of program content (whether the learning will be useful at work);
- appropriate amount of time dedicated to each topic area covered;
- consideration of logistics (venue, equipment, catering, accommodations, transportation, communication);
- most beneficial program elements and why (list the positives they liked);
- least beneficial program elements and why (list the negatives they didn't);
- program elements worth changing and how (list the things they would alter);
- assessment of facilitator effectiveness (request ranking and explanations of opinions); and
- other comments and suggestions.

Thank clients for the "gifts" they provide. Examine the evaluations and put their advice into action.

9
Dealing with difficulties

Change imposed is change opposed:
people don't resist change, they resist being changed.
—Sipri Cuthbert

In our experience, facilitation processes generally proceed in the manner outlined in the first eight chapters of this book. Clients receive, learn, and integrate valuable lessons from their learning experiences. In most cases, facilitators can expect their best efforts will be valued by clients. However, facilitation processes do not always proceed as intended for a variety of reasons. We can recall several times when our client observations and interventions were "off target" and the learning experience was confounded in some way, or when clients reacted unexpectedly despite our best intentions. This chapter addresses some of the essential methods for dealing with a variety of client difficulties. It covers problematic behaviors, disruptive situations, unexpected disclosures, and what to do when all else fails.

A. Approach difficulties as gifts

Difficulties in facilitation "look" and present themselves in diverse ways. Some difficulties appear in the form of subtle behaviors and others are fraught with obvious conflict and confrontation. Some may have nothing to do with what you are trying to accomplish as a facilitator, while others may be the direct result of the manner or content of your presentation. Whatever the basis of a problem or the symptoms demonstrated with it, facilitators should avoid attaching blame to difficulties and understand resolution can be a turning point in a client's learning experience. You will be more successful when you can view difficulties as gifts of insight from clients and not a personal affront to you.

One way you may be able to accomplish this shift in thinking is to recognize when clients present their problems in this manner, they are still participating in the experience and they often provide you with critical elements to resolve the very behaviors they are presenting. Even though their cooperation may seem minimal at the time, when clients remain with you, they often are waiting to see if you come up with something more relevant or appropriate for them. If you can view problems not as oppositional, but as the clients' ways of encouraging you to better understand their needs and issues, you stand a much better chance in reaching them and providing a successful learning experience. See difficulties as opportunities!

B. Respond stepwise to problematic behaviors

All facilitators strive to provide appropriate learning experiences for clients. Yet sometimes clients fail to respond and begin to exhibit problematic behaviors instead. How to deal with these situations often provides some of the greatest challenges for facilitators. While a variety of differing client problems exist, it is our experience that most problematic behaviors possess certain elements that often interact with one another. One helpful way we have found to change problematic facilitation situations is by examining how clients behave in these situations. Most fit into one or more of the following categories:

- UNINFORMED - clients are truly unaware of the dynamics or directions of the learning experience;
- DISAGREEING - clients disagree with the perception, interpretations, or directions of others;
- RESISTANT - clients consciously or unconsciously do not want to follow the direction of change;
- DENYING - clients refuse to accept the existence of problems in the learning experience; and
- APATHETIC - clients lack the motivation to learn or the belief they can indeed change.

BEHAVIOR TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS	RESPONSE STRATEGIES
UNINFORMED	Don’t know, but will go (once aware)	Seek clarification from others (not the facilitators)
DISAGREEING	Know, but wants to go elsewhere	Negotiate, thinking of a client’s best interests
RESISTANT	Know, but won’t go anywhere	Be confused or utilize paradoxical methods
DENYING	Won’t know and won’t go	Be sincere and utilize double bind methods
APATHETIC	Simply don’t care!	Identify obstacles, move clients on, then let go!

Table 7: Five types of problematic client behaviors and stepwise responses

These five forms of problematic behavior can also be examined on levels of client awareness and motivation to learn or change. If we view problematic client behaviors as a progression, we can respond stepwise to each behavior with a different strategy. These behavior types and strategies are summarized in Table 7.

This approach directs facilitators to begin by considering the easiest problem first (i.e., unawareness), unless evidence to the contrary is obvious. Should a strategy fail to make a difference in the behavior, the facilitator continues to address the next behavior in the progressive sequence.

Approaching problematic client behavior "out-of-order" may be disastrous. For example, if clients are simply unaware or uninterested in debating and the facilitator starts addressing them as if they were apathetic or resistant, they could become extremely offended (and even become resistant!). We encourage you to consider taking the five strategic steps in the manner indicated. Here is a summary of the five steps.

- Initially approach clients as if they are uninformed and seek clarification for them from other group members.
- If this misses the mark, presume they may disagree and negotiate with them on what they want.
- If this doesn't work, speculate they may be resisting and use confusion and paradox techniques.
- If this fails, suspect that they might be in denial and apply a double bind situation.
- If the issue remains unresolved, assume they are apathetic and give them deserved personal space.

This stepwise progression allows facilitators to err on the side of being respectful when dealing with difficulty. A more complete explanation follows for these five progressive steps and how to address their specific issues.

UNINFORMED - Sometimes clients' difficulties in making decisions are simply based on a lack or misunderstanding of information. One way to check on this is to ask the group for clarification of what is happening. Affirmation and reminders from group members who are aware of occurrences helps to effectively guide unaware clients to a point of comprehension. This **clarification technique** can also "punctuate" key interpretations of the learning and inform you as to what the group is perceiving. One note of caution is to try and avoid enhancing clients' understanding with your own contributions. If you attempt to explain something, and the client is really presenting a behavior other than being unaware, suddenly the conflict may shift to center on you and you may find yourself placed in a position from which you cannot facilitate. Strive for clarifying information to come from the clients themselves, not from facilitators.

DISAGREEING - When a facilitator offers an observation or intervention to a group, you sometimes are met by one or more clients disagreeing with that opinion. In this case, the first step is to listen to their perspectives and strive to find some common ground. Listening is an important distinction here, because facilitators can be wrong and clients often have different ideas (not to mention ones that are quite good and possess greater knowledge) about where the group should be going. If you are able to hear these ideas and acknowledge them, you may be able to **negotiate** a compromise or find yourself in a position where one of you sees the other's viewpoint more accurately and chooses to move in that direction. Group disagreement with the facilitator can be an extremely positive indicator of group cohesiveness and consensus about where the group feels they need to go. If the group needs to go in a direction you feel is positive, follow along with the group. However, if this cohesiveness is leading the group to make unhealthy or unproductive decisions (and being unaware is not an issue), then resistance could be the source of the difficulty.

RESISTANT - While initially appearing similar to being uninformed or disagreeing, the resistant client does not wish to learn or change regardless of how much additional information or negotiation you offer. This client knows the direction to take, but refuses to change. Since this resistance can be unconscious or conscious, it is imperative you understand their reasons for resistance. While the resistance may appear to be dysfunctional, think of it as the clients' best way of handling the situation in which they find themselves. One way to address client resistance is through **confusion technique** from a "one-down" position (where the group members are the most important people). Here you have the opportunity to genuinely profess your lack of understanding over why things appear the way they are:

FACILITATOR: I've done this learning experience thousands of times before and I've never seen a group respond this way; can someone please explain it to me?
FACILITATOR (after some explanation from the clients): No, I don't get it; can you say that another way?
FACILITATOR (after more explanation): Sorry, it must be me; I'm a bit tired; can you give me that one more time?
FACILITATOR (after considerable explanation): Nope, I still don't understand; can you clarify this part for me?

FACILITATOR (after extensive detailed explanation): Okay, I think I've got it now; let me see if I understand correctly by summarizing it this way....

From this information, the facilitator provides an accurate summary of what clients have stated, checking in with them on major points and reflecting back to them what they said and how they acted. This is done by the facilitator observing and interpreting client behaviors in keeping with their explanations. The confusion technique can only be successful when presented in a fully sincere and respectful manner. Note that this technique generally fails when it is presented from a "one-up" position (where the facilitator is the most important person) as a way to gain power over the group.

When faced with resistance from one client or an entire group, you may become confused. As a result, you are better off increasing your questions of the clients rather than becoming combative with them over their resistance. When they repeatedly explain to you what is going on, and since you repeatedly don't seem to understand their point, clients usually try to find alternative ways of explaining their behaviors. As a result, they also receive the added benefit of looking at themselves from the multiple perspectives they generate while trying to help you understand. One benefit about this technique is the more you don't catch on, the harder clients work to explain to you and the easier it becomes for everyone to understand.

Paradox is reserved for cases where confusion technique falls short, because clients are conscious of their resistance and being deliberately oppositional. A paradox is seemingly contradictory information appearing to oppose commonly accepted practice. Prescribing behaviors imitating the symptoms observed and reversing encouragement into discouragement are both examples of paradoxical methods from a facilitator.

For example, if you had a group of people who insisted on criticizing one another through the guise of humor, and if you felt it was in their best interests to change this behavior and all direct attempts to do so had failed, then you might ask the group to take a few minutes to be as humorous as they possibly could. By prescribing the symptom of humor, and as the humor gets out of control, they may see how criticism comes through the humor and what is really underneath their so-called good natured ribbing.

On the other hand, if the group is comfortable with your usual encouragements, take a very different approach and be discouraging for a change. This is an attempt to have them be encouraging with one another in order to compensate for your "out-of-character" discouragements. This approach tends to have a very confrontational attitude and should be done with great care and integrity, and only with your clients' best interests in mind. This strategy works because the unusual nature of the situation and the information received by the clients confounds their resistance, unless they are in denial.

> DENYING - When a group is engaged in denial, it is similar to being resistant in that they won't budge, but different in that they won't accept the observation or intervention being offered to them from the learning experience. Much of their unwillingness to learn or change may be due to their inability to see the value of learning or a fear of what will be different after change. Either way, clients refuse to admit they need to learn or change, let alone do either.

In dealing with denial, the use of **double bind** techniques can be effective. These techniques are a "last resort" approach to dealing with problematic client behaviors and should be used sparingly with great sincerity and honesty from the facilitator. In this context, "bind" means to restrict movement and "double" means to provide two choices. When facilitators become frustrated, we often end up creating a lose-lose negative double bind for a client by giving them the ultimatum: change or go elsewhere! In both instances the client loses by changing temporarily (only because the facilitator is around) or leaving the program and missing out on its benefits. Obviously, what we really want are win-win positive double binds for clients where their choices are both beneficial and advantageous to learning and changing. Consider this example for a group who have disagreed with and resisted all attempts to address their sexist behaviors throughout a program.

FACILITATOR: In this next experience we will be planning a project as a team. Teams who have trouble with sexism usually do this activity by electing a male leader who moderates the group's input to the project. Most of the ideas that come from the more vocal male members get accepted and those ideas that the quieter females are able to share, commonly get discounted, or reworked and reworded so they eventually come from the male perspective. In the debrief, these groups typically identify their gender inequality as a point of concern and identify they need help with this.

This presentation offers two choices to the group: act sexist or act differently. While the first choice may initially appear to be a negative option, it can be very positive. If the group continues its business as usual behavior, especially after having it described and defined so accurately for them, they may have difficulty avoiding admitting some aspect of their sexism in their debriefing. By such admission, they give permission to speak about an issue that was previously buried deep in denial. If they find a non-sexist way to act in the second choice, they have acquired a new set of functional behaviors to compare with their previous problematic ones. Positive reinforcement in the debrief can lead to change on the job. If neither option transpires, consider the idea that they may be apathetic: they may not care any more!

APATHETIC - Sometimes problems can become so overwhelming or omnipresent for clients they lose their motivation for change or learning. A state of "learned helplessness" (e.g., "What's the use; it won't make any difference!") occurs and clients show little motivation to change. Three steps for dealing with apathetic clients are to identify obstacles, move clients along, and let go. First, brainstorm the obstacles, costs, and benefits of change with clients, and then conduct a force field analysis of driving and restraining factors influencing these obstacles (Lewin, 1951). Second, help clients to move beyond by coping with, circumventing, or reducing the strength of these obstacles; and by taking one small step at a time to accomplish this. Third, let them move on and accept that you can't enable everyone to learn or change, especially those who aren't ready.

C. Intervene when clients are disruptive

Another form of client behavior presenting difficulties in the learning experience is accidental or purposeful disruption. Figure 9 provides a flow chart illustrating one process for handling the various ways clients can disrupt learning experiences. As you can see from this flowchart, the facilitator makes a series of four choices and then takes action on the basis of these choices.

Initially, you might take a break at the earliest convenient time and hold a side conversation with the disruptive client. Ask questions to figure out how the disruption happened. Try and understand what the client was thinking before, during, and after the disruption. Gather enough information from this conversation to decide what to do next.

In this process, first ask yourself whether the source of concern underlying the client's disruptive behavior is externally or internally relevant to the learning experience. If the reason for the disruption

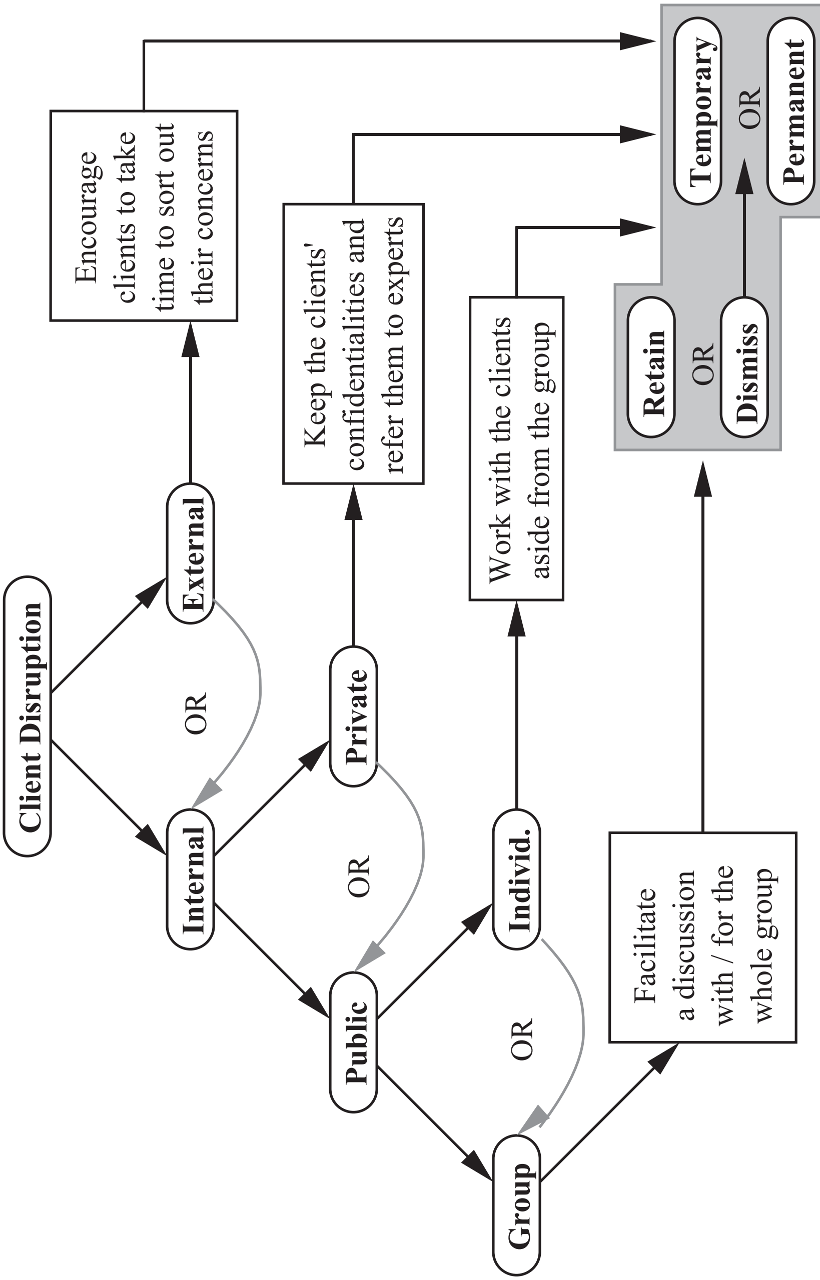

Figure 9: A flowchart for intervening in client disruptions

has nothing to do with the program (e.g., recent news of a family friend being hospitalized), ask the client if they can address the issue during the next break. If the situation is critical, allow the person to deal with it immediately. If left unresolved, external concerns can easily become internal ones.

Second, if the reason is internally related to the learning experience, ask yourself whether the concern is private or public. If it is a private one (e.g., a flashback on a previous crisis or trauma), maintain confidentiality and find an expert who can assist the client with those concerns. In addition to making every reasonable attempt to keep these concerns private, remain vigilant for rumors that have the tendency of making the concerns become more public.

Third, if the concern is already public, then it typically warrants discussion with others. Ask yourself whether the concern is about one or more individuals or the whole group. If it is about an individual or a few people, find the time to bring them together with the disruptive client for further dialog. Work with them to sort out their concerns. If the concern is holding back the progress of the group, deal with it as soon as possible; if not, it can wait until later. Personal concerns have an uneasy way of spilling over into group concerns if left unchecked.

Fourth, if the concern is about the group, call a group meeting and broach the topic or assist the client in bringing it up for discussion. Conduct the meeting as you would for any other meeting using your facilitation abilities. In choosing a time for this discussion, consider whether the impact of this concern will grow if not addressed immediately.

Finally, the four interventions for external, private, individual, and group concerns will either work or they won't. If the concerns remain and the disruption does not evaporate (or perhaps worsens) you may be forced to decide whether to retain or dismiss the client. Once you have made the choice to dismiss the client from the learning experience, you will also need to consider whether the dismissal should be a temporary suspension or a permanent expulsion. Some specific incidents of client disruption leading to the need for interventions are discussed below.

SILENCE - Silent clients can be difficult to understand, since they can have many reasons for not talking (e.g., fear, shame, reluctance, and shyness). Whatever the cause of their silence, they can be quite a challenge. Your first task is to talk with quiet, uninvolved clients and find out their reason for being silent. Their response will best tell you how to proceed. Many facilitators find they can receive nonverbal feedback from traditionally silent members and do not need to have them speak out in the group. At other times the facilitator may observe the individual not acting silent in other situations and may wonder why they are silent in discussions. Rather than comment on this silence in front of the entire group, try some of these techniques:

- non-verbal responses (thumbs up or thumbs down, show fingers on a scale from 1 to 10);
- rounds (go around the circle offering people the chance to take their turn to say one word);
- written preparation (provide questions on paper and have them read their written responses);
- reflection preparation (solo, partner, or triad time spent thinking about the discussion topic);
- report presenting (people share summaries of their small break out group discussions);
- trigger questions (make a controversial statement that will evoke passionate replies); and
- closed questions (after receiving a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer, request more information).

CONTROL - Monopolizing the group is frequently fueled by clients who seek control and avoid discussing significant issues. While group members initially allow the controller to talk, they may eventually become irritated with this person and the topic of control will surface for discussion. If the issue is not handled by the group and becomes a barrier to their function, work directly and individually with the controller to streamline the conversation.

If this conversation fails to bring a change, be more direct during group discussions. Listen to an overbearing speaker for one useful comment. Latch on to that comment by interrupting, paraphrasing the point, and then asking others what they think of the topic the controller raised. If the controller speaks again, reemphasize your question, "What do **others** think about this point?" Other tips include: introducing a talking stick or "strike anywhere" matches to the discussion (people can speak only so long as they hold the stick or can keep their match lit); having a few observers from the outside report back on who speaks and for how long; or throwing a ball of string between speakers (it unravels and shows who speaks the most by how many segments lead to that person).

ANXIETY - Individual conversations can often determine what is fueling a client's fears. If the fears are rational and realistic where clients are frightened over how they might perform in an upcoming learning experience (e.g., one that perhaps involves public speaking), you may wish to remind them about the group's operating principles. You may also wish to revisit the group's commitment to individual efforts and their right to choose how they will pass or participate in their learning. If the anxiety persists, and cannot be contained for the duration of the program, you may want to encourage clients to share their apprehensions with the group. It might be inappropriate to spend group time dealing with personal issues that are not holding back the group. If the fears are irrational or unrealistic, this is likely beyond your contracted responsibilities as a facilitator and is a "can of worms" you do not wish to open. Encourage this person to seek outside assistance (e.g., counseling).

DEPRESSION - Sad or depressed clients should be handled in a similar way to frightened clients. Some experts believe depression can be anger turned inward so angry, sad, and depressed clients may in fact have similar causes. Nevertheless, seek professional assistance in this situation.

ANGER - If the client's anger is external to the learning situation, acknowledge it and assess whether the anger can be separated from the group discussion. If the anger is interfering with the group, the client may need to be excused for the day or an appropriate period of time.

HOSTILITY - Hostile clients fall between angry and violent ones. Usually the volatility will arise during a group learning experience. If so, you may wish to take a short break and speak individually with the client in order to determine the cause. The break also serves as a "cooling off" period for the client.

VIOLENCE - Violent clients should not be tolerated under any circumstances. If violence erupts, the most practical course of action is to remove the individual from the group. You must make a judgment call as to whether this person should be allowed to return. Our experience has shown that if a history of similar patterns exists, the most prudent course of action is to tender a permanent dismissal.

BIGOTRY - The sexist or racist client can present unusual difficulties for the facilitator and the group. Comments made by these individuals may be overt or subtle, and can serve to destroy a working alliance within a group unless dealt with immediately. Like violence, the group usually has already drafted a working agreement for its operating principles excluding sexist or racist comments. Sometimes clients are unaware they are making comments viewed by others as sexist or racist. If this is the case, information from others may be all that is needed for the behavior to cease. If you have determined a client knows the comments are sexist or racist and is unable to contain these comments, consider the individual to be resistant or in denial and address this accordingly.

GROUPTHINK - Another dynamic creating resistance to change or new ideas in highly cohesive groups is the concept of "groupthink" (Janis, 1972). Groupthink happens when new information, especially contrary to how the group currently thinks as a whole, is suppressed or avoided by its members out of fear of being criticized or excluded. Some groups can become so cohesive and powerful that individuals will not speak up even when they feel the group is headed in the wrong direction. As a facilitator, you may be able to break groupthink by asking the group to revisit their agreement for working together. Discussion of operating principles can reduce the likelihood of groupthink and increase productivity.

BIAS FOR INACTION - "Paralysis by analysis" is a term used to describe resistant groups wishing to incessantly discuss or plan to the point they are unable to act, or delay so long their opportunity to act expires and they no longer have to act. This behavior may be defused by frontloading with a simple question like: "If we wanted to avoid getting down to action, what are some things we could do to prevent this?" Once the group has generated a long list of these delay tactics, they are less likely to actually do anything that is on their list.

D. Manage unexpected disclosures

While not foolproof, one tried and true method for handling unexpected disclosures discussed earlier is to have a clear agreement with clients about the range of topics to discuss during their experience together. This prevents most inappropriate disclosures from surfacing. Despite these preventative measures, clients may occasionally share inappropriate information during or after an experience. When managing unexpected disclosures, first acknowledge what the client is expressing when sharing the disclosure, as in this instance:

FACILITATOR: I can clearly hear how the frustration you experienced with your father is similar to how you are feeling right this second. However, even though the frustration you are feeling has brought back a memory from the past, can you talk with us now *about how that feeling keeps you from being as effective as you wish to be?*

Your task as a facilitator is to bring the client back within the boundaries of the depth contract you established with the group. Acknowledgement of the client's unexpected disclosure is an important skill in this situation as it allows both the client and the group to know you heard the disclosure, yet are setting clear boundaries around it. Bringing the client back to the "here and now" is equally important to keeping both the group and the client on track and consistent with their initial commitments to learning and change (Ringer & Gillis, 1995).

E. Renegotiate when "IT" happens

Forrest Gump was credited in the movie for coining the phrase that became a bumper sticker phenomenon in North America several years ago. We use the idea of "it happens" to describe our experience when things go awry despite our best contingency planning and facilitation competence. When the unexpected event happens (as it will), consider how change will be impacted and who will be inconvenienced the most. When you expect the impact to be negative, then renegotiation is called for with those being inconvenienced: yourself, other facilitators, the client group, the customer organization, and outside resources. Address these in ever-widening circles, starting with yourself.

Renegotiate with YOURSELF when clients are not learning or changing as quickly as you want them to during the program. Ask yourself whose agenda is most important. If you honestly answer "your own agenda," reflect on whether you are teaching or facilitating and then reexamine your need to control the group. If you answer "their agenda," talk to the clients, then own and share your concerns and see where they want to go.

Renegotiate with yourself when your program design is faulty. For example, you have planned too much to do and too little time to do it or vice versa. Cutting material is certainly easier than creating new material "on-the-fly." Working from the philosophy that it is better to have too much content than not enough, carry extra materials with you and have a back up plan for using them when needed. If you have unfilled time, use it for additional reflection, but choose a new way of doing this (see Chapter 7 for alternate suggestions).

Renegotiate with OTHER FACILITATORS when they fail to work together to create and maintain an effective relationship benefitting the clients. Note that facilitator conflicts can most often be attributed to a lack of mutual trust (Corey, 2000). When trust is lacking, clients are bound to sense the absence of harmony and their learning experiences may suffer. If facilitators cannot put aside their conflicts, the lead facilitator should delegate tasks according to the strengths of individuals or dismiss some facilitators.

Renegotiate with other facilitators to take time for experiential diagnoses, especially when you have no diagnostic information and you meet a "cold" group without knowing anything about them. Have a collection of familiar exercises you can substitute for prior interviews, observations, or instruments. For example, watching an intact group engaged in a problem-solving activity requiring planning and collaboration may offer many interesting insights to their teamwork.

Renegotiate with the CLIENT GROUP when they violate ground rules or operating principles. We have provided a number of suggestions for problematic and disruptive behaviors in this chapter. However, not all transgressions are so obvious or extreme. Consider clients who hold side conversations, or speak tangentially during their group's debrief. Bring these behaviors to their attention in light of applicable ground rules (e.g., active listening from a position of mutual respect) and operating principles (e.g., staying on topic) and discuss these with the group. You may find a desire on the part of clients to renegotiate these principles. Lastly, be flexible on those rules that are not fixed, offer assistance and ask how you can help them manage violations in the future.

Sometimes groups are not in violation of their "contract," but are reluctant to discuss difficult issues. For example, when they fail in a learning experience, some clients want to talk about the task and outcomes rather than the relationships and dynamics that likely led to their failure. Your role is to redirect these clients to talk about processes. For example, asking one simple and polite question can provide the impetus for this shift to happen:

FACILITATOR: How much more time do you want to take discussing the result, before you are ready to talk about our interactions?

Renegotiate with the CUSTOMER ORGANIZATION when the customer's needs conflict with those of the clients. Facilitators should hold the clients' best interests in mind and these should come before the customer's desires. While this may cause a short-term loss of income, in the long run your reputation for integrity and attention to clients will bring increased compensation and requests for your services. Talk to the customer about what is in the clients' best interests and how addressing these needs benefit the greater organization. If this fails, share the customer's goals with the clients and see whether they are willing to compromise. If they are inflexible, either go with their needs over the customer's desires or don't work with this customer.

When clients depart from the program, they sometimes maintain an unhealthy reliance on facilitators and this calls for renegotiation with the customer organization as well. Talk to the customer about offering more support at work in the form of time and resources for clients to apply their learning and change. Encourage human resource professionals from the organization to take your place and slowly wean clients to greater independence.

Renegotiate with OUTSIDE RESOURCES when logistical problems arise such as uncooperative weather, venue, equipment, catering, accommodation, or transportation. While little can be done about unexpected weather while outside, obtaining additional equipment (i.e., clothing, shelter, external warming or cooling) can help make the weather more bearable.

When more or fewer people than expected show up for a program, have contingency plans established within your contract as well as the design of the learning experience. Renegotiate with outside resources to change the amount of staff, space, food, or equipment. Renegotiate with the customer for more finances to cover the added costs of enhancing or reducing these options (hopefully your written contract contains provisions for this). Modify your program design and schedule to handle the change in group size (larger groups typically take longer while smaller groups generally move faster).

Facilitating large groups is simpler if you are able to break into smaller groups and have additional facilitators to assist. Without sufficient staff, you may have to ask some clients to forgo direct participation. One way to achieve this is by using a "fishbowl" technique where the optimal number participates, while others conduct important observations that they report back to the group during the debriefing. Change these roles as often as possible during the experience.

Facilitating small groups can actually be more difficult because of fewer interactions and less diverse dynamics. Since debriefs will have less sharing of perspectives, you may need to compensate by offering a few of your own. If doing so, be careful when presenting these as questions so the small group does not think your way is the correct or only way.

CONCLUSION
Colors and competent consultants

The important thing is this:
To be able at any moment to sacrifice
what we are for what we could become.
—Charles duBois

One of the two final aspects of being a facilitator is noted by duBois above. Letting go of what we have attained so far and taking a risk on something unfamiliar is necessary to learn and change. Effective facilitators realize becoming better at facilitation is a continual journey and not a final destination. Having worked as facilitators for most of our lives, we are continually learning new theories and methods that constantly inform and improve our practice. This book has outlined some of the essential elements needed for facilitating learning experiences:

- desiring to make things easier for clients through facilitation techniques;
- knowing a variety of learning experiences and program purposes to use;
- understanding one's own beliefs and ethical roles as a facilitator;
- discussing processes with clients, rather than products, to aid their reflection;
- asking questions, avoiding statements, and guiding discussion;
- listening effectively and providing appropriate feedback;
- knowing basic theories about group development, problem solving, and decision making;
- conducting needs assessments with multiple sources, methods, intelligences, learning styles, and miracle questions;
- designing programs by sequencing experiences, organizing logistics, and preparing contingencies;
- frontloading, intervening, framing, managing information, and observing;

- funneling, obtaining permission, and utilizing solution-focused questioning;
- closing, goal setting, action planning, anchoring, and emphasizing metaphors;
- dealing with difficulties;
- responding to problematic client behaviors;
- investigating client disruptions;
- managing unexpected disclosures; and
- coping with things that go wrong in a program.

The final aspect of being a facilitator is understanding that helping clients with learning and change takes more than excellent facilitation alone. Even if you are an expert in all the facilitation competencies listed above, you still need to know all you can about your specific clients and the experiences you are using to assist them with their learning and change. These additional consulting elements were not discussed in this book and may be areas for you to explore in your future development as a consultant.

The competent consultant is someone balanced in competence related to facilitation, clients, and experiences. This balance of these three competency areas (or the collective synergy of attitude, behavior, confidence, experience, knowledge, and skill) are color-coded in the Venn diagram of Figure 10 opposite.

This model possesses both personal and programmatic applications. A person could strive to become a competent consultant by obtaining expertise in all three areas. A program, in order to have maximum effect and provide optimal opportunities for learning and change, should have people present with separate competence in each of the three areas. The three areas of competence are associated with a primary color.

- BLUE = the facilitation expert
- YELLOW = the client expert
- RED = the experience expert

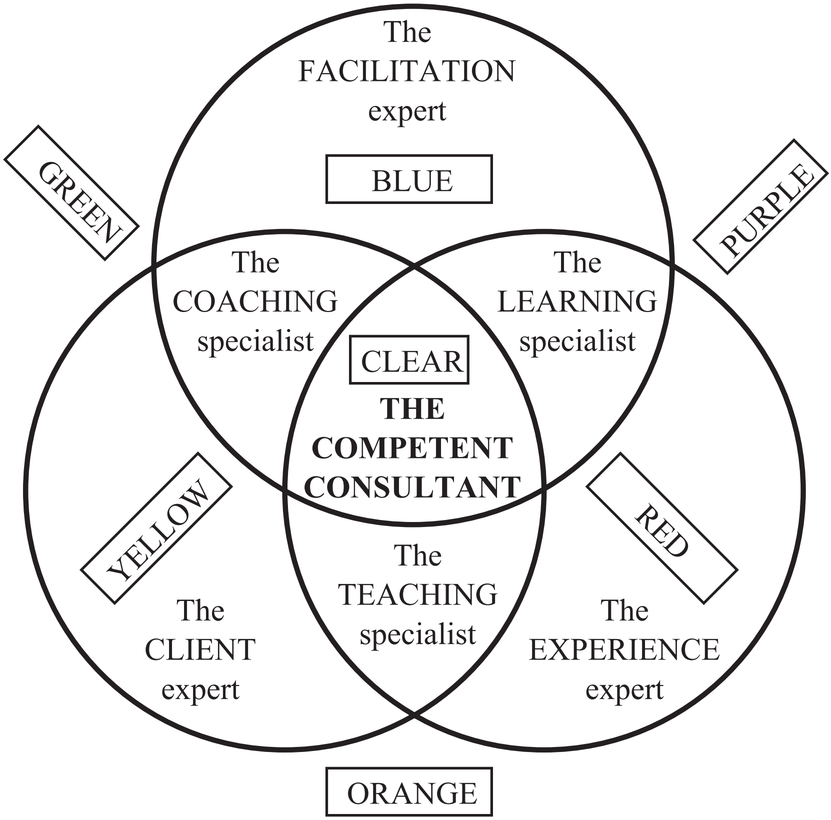

Figure 10: A model of competent consulting

BLUE is the FACILITATION expert
YELLOW is the CLIENT expert
RED is the EXPERIENCE expert
GREEN is the COACHING specialist
PURPLE is the LEARNING specialist
ORANGE is the TEACHING specialist
CLEAR is the COMPETENT CONSULTANT

The FACILITATION expert is a person who knows as much as possible about the specific techniques of facilitation (e.g., the contents of this book as listed earlier). This "master" of human relationships might be an organizational psychologist, group trainer, family therapist, individual counselor, social worker, or medical psychiatrist. These individuals bring critical information about the hallmarks of working with people. They recognize what it takes to help people relate and where they might conflict. Note that facilitation is merely one piece of the overall consultancy puzzle here.

The CLIENT expert is a person who knows as much as possible about the uniqueness of the client group and its organizational context. This cultural authority might be the employee, line supervisor, team manager, departmental director, or executive officer of the company (or all of these individuals). These people bring familiar understanding about the idiosyncrasies of each particular organization. They realize what it takes to make that corporation run and where the organization's problems might reside.

The EXPERIENCE expert is a person who knows as much as possible about a particular learning experience. This experiential task leader might be a role play director, motivational speaker, book author, software programmer, brainstorming conductor, future search organizer, action-learning consultant, or adventure guide. These people bring intimate comprehension about what it takes to provide the best learning when conducting each experience. They know what it takes to make the program work, where it fits best, and where it doesn't apply.

A successful learning program depends on the presence and synergy of all three of these experts. Alternatively, three other combinations of competence exist with corresponding secondary colors.

- GREEN = the coaching specialist
- PURPLE = the learning specialist
- ORANGE = the teaching specialist

> The COACHING specialist combines the capabilities of the facilitation and client experts without the comprehension of a experience expert. These developers of people know how to coach leaders within the client's culture, but are less skilled at selecting the best learning experiences.
>
> The LEARNING specialist combines the talents of the experience and facilitation experts without the understanding of a client expert. These trainers know the combination of facilitated learning experiences, but they are less skilled at customizing learning to meet the client's needs.
>
> The TEACHING specialist combines the proficiency of the client and experience experts without the information of a facilitation expert. These instructors know how to suit the learning experiences to the client's culture, but they are less skilled at bringing lasting change without facilitation.

A successful learning program depends on the presence and synergy of any two of these specialists or any pairing of one specialist and one complimentary expert. For example, the experience expert and the coaching specialist, the facilitation expert and the teaching specialist, or the client expert and the learning specialist may complement one another's skills in ways that create successful learning experiences.

Finally, the competent consultant is the one person who is cross-trained in all three areas and carries a well-balanced corresponding tone combining all the other colors:

- CLEAR = the competent consultant

  The COMPETENT CONSULTANT is created from the collaborative and harmonious interaction of these three competencies embodied within a single person. The competent consultant is capable of providing learning experiences specifically suited to the unique client culture and facilitated for optimal change. Therefore, a successful learning program can depend on the ability of one competent consultant or, in the absence of that perfect balance, any of the combinations of two specialists or three experts mentioned earlier.

In conclusion, if you are a good facilitator who excels at this book's content, your next objectives might be to strengthen your client and experience capacity so you can work toward the ultimate goal of being the most competent consultant you can. If you don't have these competencies to balance your facilitation ability, be sure to partner with people who do have these skills.

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GLOSSARY

Action Planning: a departure technique used to prepare clients for change by writing down tasks to be performed.

Active Listening: the process of listening with the intent of understanding the speaker's point of view; listening with an attempt to both know and understand what the person is saying without judging the person.

Anchoring: a departure technique to remind clients of their experiences and lessons learned.

Brainstorming: a method for generating a large number of ideas in a short period of time without judging their value or merit. "Piggybacking" or building on to one another's ideas during this process is encouraged.

Change: the process of shifting between two states. In the facilitated context, behavioral change is moving from past conduct, through present practice, to future actions.

CHANGES: a model of the continuous diagnosis, design, delivery, debrief, and disembark stages of programming.

Check-in: a process done at any time during a learning experience to quickly assess what's cognitively or emotionally occurring with participants. This quick assessment is often done before moving on to a next topic or phase of learning.

Clarification Technique: used for dealing with uninformed problematic behavior. It involves deliberately seeking additional information from clients, not facilitators.

Clients: the people participating in the program. It is sometimes used interchangeably with the term "group."

Closure: during departure in the final part of a program, the facilitator emphasizes transfer of learning and integration of change, and clients may need additional help to separate from one another and to disengage from the facilitator before departing.

Confusion Technique: used for (consciously or unconsciously) resistant problematic behavior. It involves being genuinely bewildered by a lack of understanding over why things appear to be a certain way.

Consensus: a decision-making process used where all group members find a decision to be acceptable. In this process, every group member must agree to stand by this decision. If one member can't agree to this, the group does not have consensus.

Continuation: fourth step in a cycle of experiential learning, after integration, where learning and change are maintained at work.

Contracting: setting program design limits with the customer and deciding on permissible program breadth.

Customer: the person who purchases the program, learning experiences, or facilitation services. The customer may also be a client. The word is used interchangeably with terms like "company," "corporation," and "organization."

Debriefing: the reflection phase of the program. It can include techniques such as discussion, funneling, or solution-focused questioning.

Delivery: the presentation phase of the program. It can include techniques such as frontloading, intervening, and framing.

Departure: the final phase of a program. It can include techniques such as closure, action planning, and anchoring.

Design: the planning phase of the program. It can include techniques such as contracting with the customer, negotiating with the client, and organizing logistics.

Development Programs: a type of program where changes in functional behaviors are the primary purpose.

Diagnosis: the assessment phase of the program. It can include techniques such as interview, observation, and instrumentation used to determine the clients' needs.

Discussion: a debrief technique and verbal form of reflection where clients discuss their experiences after these have concluded. It is primarily used as an unstructured method for exploring and discovering new topics or issues.

Double Bind Technique: used for dealing with denying problematic behavior. It involves restricting client movement to the pair of behavioral choices provided. It is a technique of "last resort" and should be used sparingly with great sincerity and honesty from the facilitator.

Dysfunctional Behaviors: "negative" conduct or detrimental actions that may hinder clients or the group.

Education Programs: a type of program where changes in thinking are the primary purpose.

Empathy: the process of understanding the feelings, thoughts, and points of view of others.

Facilitation: to make easier. It is the process of producing change by applying reflection, integration, and continuation techniques before, during, or after a learning experience.

Facilitator: the person conducting the program.

First Order Change: modifying specific personal behaviors within a client's system, but without adjusting the system that interacts with and supports those behaviors.

Framing: an introduction or delivery technique having clients and the group focus their attention on the most pertinent issues and less so on issues that fall outside of this focus. Often associated with the use of metaphors.

Frontloading: a delivery technique for placing reflection before the experience (instead of after) so that learning and change come during the experience (rather than much later).

Functional Behaviors: "positive" conduct or constructive actions that may help clients or the group.

Funneling: a debriefing technique that utilizes six sequenced questions to filter out irrelevant content of the conversation and focus clients toward change. It is primarily used as a structured method for confirming and probing deeper into existing topics and issues.

Ground rules: pre-established expectations created by the facilitator for clients to follow during a learning experience.

Group: two or more people participating in a program. It is sometimes used interchangeably with the term "clients."

Groupthink: when new information, contrary to how highly cohesive groups normally think, is suppressed or avoided out of fear of being criticized or excluded.

Instruments: a diagnostic technique of pencil and paper tests or interactive computer surveys that assess clients' needs based on their responses to written questions.

Integration: third step in a cycle of experiential learning, after reflection, where learning and change transfer to work.

Intervening: a delivery technique, where the facilitator interrupts during the learning experience to redirect client behaviors with a single question.

Interview: a diagnostic technique of a face-to-face conversation with clients to help determine their needs.

Learning: a change in people's feeling, thinking, and/or behaving (including functional and dysfunctional actions).

Learning Experiences: first step in a cycle of experiential learning; before reflection, integration, and continuation; where the experience provides a passive or active base from which lessons are learned and changes made.

Learning Styles: four different types of characteristic experiential learners: Accommodators (learn by doing what they intuitively feel is right), Assimilators (learn by analyzing), Convergers (learn by thinking and then doing), and Divergers (learn intuitively through reflection).

Managing Information: a technique that facilitators use to organize patterns of observed client behaviors into a variety of group dynamics and responsibility categories.

Metaphor: an idea, object or description of one item used to represent another and as a means to denote comparative likeness or analogy between the two.

Metaphoric Transfer: the third type of transfer, where metaphors are used to highlight the parallels between different work and learning environments. As a result, clients' perceptions of the environments become similar, the gap between environments appears to lessen, and the conversion of general learning back to work is enhanced.

Miracle Questions: a technique that asks clients to focus on and describe what success would look like for them before the learning experience begins.

Multiple Intelligences: at least seven different ways of learning and knowing that include verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, body/kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical/rhythmic, and visual/spatial.

Negotiation: setting program design limits with the client and deciding on allowable program depth.

Negotiation Technique: used for dealing with disagreeing problematic behavior. It involves discovering what clients really want by asking questions with their best interests in mind.

Non-specific Transfer: the second type of transfer, that focuses on converting generalized learning between the two different environments of the experience and work. This is associated with the processes of learning on the development side of "training and development."

Observations: a diagnostic (and delivery) technique for listening to and watching clients as they interact with one another in their work or learning experience.

Observing Behaviors: the methods used to gather critical client information from verbal and non-verbal clues.

Operating Principles: expectations created by the clients (with or without facilitated assistance) that represent the way they would like to treat one another.

Organizing Logistics: program design steps for preparing the venue, schedule, clients, staff, equipment, catering, accommodation, transportation, communications, finances, and contingency plans.

Paradox Technique: used for dealing with opposing (or consciously resistant) problematic behavior. It involves giving seemingly contradictory information that appears to oppose commonly accepted practice. It is a technique of "last resort" and should be used sparingly with great sincerity and honesty from the facilitator.

Paralysis By Analysis: resistant groups that wish to incessantly discuss or plan to the point that they are unable to act, or delay so long that their action opportunity expires and they no longer are required to act.

Problem-Focused Facilitation: a philosophy of facilitating that looks to solve problems by closely investigating their causes, determining as much as possible about why the problem occurs, and then works with clients to eliminate those problems.

Program: one or a collection of learning experiences arranged around a facilitated process of change.

Recreation Programs: a type of program where changes in feelings are the primary purpose.

Redirection Programs: a type of program where changes in dysfunctional behaviors are the primary purpose.

Reflection: second step in a cycle of experiential learning, after the experience, where learning and change are initially acquired. It involves looking back at the past experience, extracting lessons in the present, and preparing to transfer these as change in the future.

Refraction: a technique used to reshape a client's language to suit the situation, while still maintaining the theme (like a lens refracts and concentrates light).

Second Order Change: modifying specific personal behaviors while also adjusting the system that interacts with and sometimes supports those behaviors (e.g., organizational environment).

Solution-Focused Questioning: a debriefing (and delivery) technique that utilizes questions that suit the solution-focused facilitation philosophy.

Solution-Focused Facilitation: a philosophy of facilitating that strives to bring about client change by enhancing what they are currently doing well or helping them do something different when things aren't working.

Specific Transfer: the first type of transfer, that focuses on converting particular learning between two similar situations. This is associated with the products of learning on the training side of "training and development."

Transfer: occurs when learning or change acquired in one environment is maintained in another. When a skill obtained in an experience shows up at work, it is has transferred.

INDEX

Page numbers in **bold** represent glossary entries.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Simon Priest, Ph.D. is the leading researcher and writer in experiential training and development with corporations. He presently consults in facilitation training, leadership enhancement, and executive development for a handful of progressive companies interested in staying ahead of their global competition by focusing on the development and maintenance of human resource relationships. Now early retired, he maintains adjunct professorships at several universities and management institutes around the world.

Michael Gass, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Kinesiology in the School of Health and Human Services at the University of New Hampshire. Dr. Gass is a licensed marriage and family therapist. He is the creator and a Principal of The Browne Center, a program development and research center on action-based learning serving over 8,000 clients a year with educational, therapeutic, and corporate objectives. He presently consults for international companies and educational organizations to help train facilitators.

H. L. "Lee" Gillis, Jr., Ph.D. is a Professor of Psychology at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, Georgia. He teaches courses in interpersonal relations, group dynamics, group leadership, and the therapeutic use of adventure. Lee is a licensed psychologist providing psychotherapy, training and development, supervision, evaluation, and research for profit and not-for-profit educational, therapeutic, and corporate systems. He is currently involved in facilitating small groups and larger systems wishing to integrate web-based and experiential learning techniques for creating and maintaining change.

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