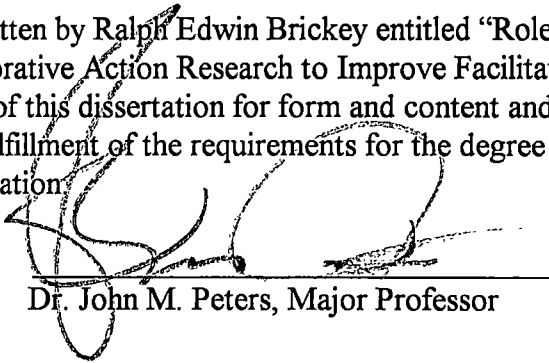


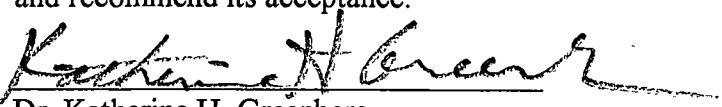
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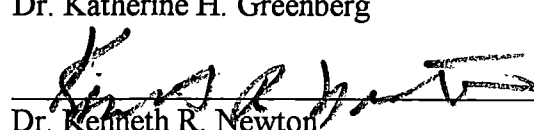
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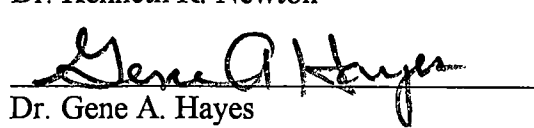


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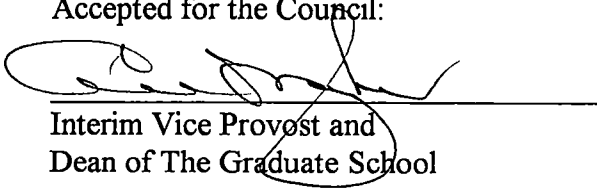


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ROLES, RELATIONSHIPS, AND THOUGHT:
USING COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH
TO IMPROVE FACILITATOR PRACTICE

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ralph Edwin Brickey
August 2001

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My wife, Janice, and our daughters, Sara Ruth and Rebecca

Who love and support me

My mother, Louella and my late father, Ralph G. Brickey

Who dared me to dream

And to the late Bro. Doug Westmoreland

Pastor, teacher, mentor, and friend

Who showed me the paths of life

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I am indebted to many friends who helped me in the course of this project with their contributions and support.

Dr. John Peters, my doctoral committee chair, was the professor of my first undergraduate class at The University of Tennessee in 1985. John's impact on my view of the world has been immeasurable and he is a trusted advisor, teacher, co-learner and friend. I would not have started, and certainly would not have finished, this project without his encouragement and immense support.

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Mike Mooney and Ernie Webb are masters of facilitation and mentors to myself and all the STAR 7 facilitators at TVA. I acknowledge and appreciate their friendship and willingness to share the secrets of their trade.

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I especially acknowledge and appreciate the support, encouragement and friendship of Bill Thompson, Senior Manager STAR 7 Program, TVA. Without his input in generating ideas, providing insights, supplying resources, managing my workload, and believing in me enough to give me the opportunity to be small part of the STAR 7 Program, I could not have completed this dissertation. Thanks for being there for me.

Finally, I acknowledge the love, encouragement, inspiration, and support of three very special friends, my wife, Janice, and my daughters, Sara Ruth and Rebecca. I missed many opportunities in the last four years when these dear friends needed my attention and support. Their patience and understanding made completion of this project possible. Thanks for your love. I love and appreciate you more than I can express in words.

Thanks friends, one and all, I appreciate all your support.

ABSTRACT

My purpose in conducting this research project was to engage in collaborative action research with a group of experiential learning facilitators in order to improve our practice. We used the DATA-DATAⁿ collaborative action research methodology to identify areas of needed improvement, examine personal assumptions, theorize about possible solutions, establish initial action plans, take action, collect data, reflect, analyze, theorize and act upon results. Reflections and results of individual action research cycles were continuously shared with the group to foster individual learning and group construction of knowledge. We concluded that changes in our practice did occur as a result of personal insights and growth experienced in action research.

The data analysis revealed three categories of themes. The Role of Facilitator category provided metaphors for facilitation. Clarification of this role provided boundaries within which we operated as facilitators and established criteria for skills needed to improve our practice. The Relationship to the Group category included themes dealing with the nature of relationships we established with the participants. The effectiveness of a facilitator is in part a function of rapport with the group. Demonstrating personal vulnerability, sharing personal stories and caring for the group are three means by which rapport is established. The Role of Thought category speaks to personal growth we experienced as an increased awareness of our moment-to-moment thinking, an awareness of the reality we create by that thinking, and the resultant behaviors demonstrated as we act into and out of that created reality. Changes in practice are presented in terms of these categories.

I discussed elements of the research design that enhanced collaborative learning and features of the research design that could have been more effective. I discussed my use of DATA-DATAⁿ action research model and cited implications for further research in terms of the utility of the current version of the model.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The teacher and learner journey together. The learner must trust the teacher's guidance. Through rapport, the teacher must earn the learner's trust, which is the foundation needed to move into new domains and territory.

Background

I am a STAR 7 Program Manager with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). STAR 7 is a cultural change initiative that began in 1997 to prepare TVA employees for participation in a rapidly changing business environment. STAR is an acronym for Strategic Teamwork for Achieving Results; the 7 represents the seven TVA core values (see Appendix A). One of the overall goals of this cultural change initiative is to build teamwork and community around the seven core values and a common set of behaviors (see Appendix B) associated with those values. Part of the initiative involves a three-day workshop in which participants have the opportunity to examine their thinking and the assumptions operating in their lives that may prevent them from establishing effective relationships and achieving results. Mezirow (1996) describes these assumptions as being two dimensional: Meaning Schemes, assumptions or points of view that are specific beliefs, feelings, attitudes and value judgments, and Meaning Perspectives, habits of the mind that are orienting predispositions. While Meaning Schemes may be easily and

quickly changed, Meaning Perspectives are more deeply embedded and require transformation.

The workshops are based on a learning format of facilitated experiential exercises designed to provide participants with the opportunity to examine and gain insight into their points of view and thinking habits. The facilitators for these workshops are not “professional” facilitators but rather managers, specialists, engineers, electricians, craftsmen, and administrative personnel from various organizations within TVA. According to Gall (1987) experiential learning facilitators need competency in many diverse areas; for example, corporate facilitators need solid backgrounds in organizational development, team building, organizational communication and dynamics, change management, leadership development and supervisor training. STAR 7 facilitators must complete an extensive training program in preparation for facilitating the workshops.

Meyer (1979) states that the single most important factor in experiential learning programs is the selection and training of staff. According to Meyer, ultimate success of the program depends to a large extent on the manner in which a program or activity is facilitated. However, because the facilitators in the STAR 7 program are adjunct staff with other full-time professional jobs, they need continuing facilitator development to ensure success of the initiative. Horwood (1989) suggests that experiential learning facilitators “need to be systematically and authentically involved in personal reflection” (p. 6) if they are to develop competence. Reflective practice is a method that involves personal reflection. According to Imel (1992), reflective practice involves critically

reflecting on one's actions in order to improve professional practice. Peters (1991) describes reflective practice as "identifying one's assumptions and feelings associated with practice, theorizing about how these assumptions and feelings are functionally or dysfunctional associated with practice and acting on the basis of the resulting theory or practice" (p. 89).

One way for facilitators to continually develop their reflective practice skills is through action research. According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), "action research is research into practice by practitioners" (p. 199). Action research is a process consisting of a series of cycles of inquiry, action and reflection which is intended to improve the situation being addressed and, at the same time, develop the skills and insights of the individuals doing the research (Bunning, 1995). Kurt Lewin described action research as a repeating spiral of steps, each of which is composed of core processes of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These core processes constitute one cycle of activity. An action research project continues through several cycles of these processes until either the problem is solved or the timeline decided on by the researchers is reached (Zuber-Skerritt, 1991; Kuhne & Quigley, 1997; Winter, 1996).

When action research is undertaken as a joint activity, the process can be understood as collaborative learning. Collaborative learning refers to the process of constructing knowledge collectively as people work, inquire and learn together based on a shared purpose. According to Bruffee (1993) collaborative learning is a process in which knowledge is socially constructed among members of a community of knowledgeable

peers. Peters & Armstrong (1998) define collaborative learning as a process that challenges assumptions and beliefs while building upon the knowledge of individual participants.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in conducting this research project was to engage in collaborative action research with a group of other STAR 7 facilitators in order to improve our practice. Reflective practice and collaborative learning provided a framework for inquiry into facilitating experiential learning. The need to continually improve our practice is vital to the success of the cultural transformation initiative within TVA and will ultimately effect cultural change in the organization.

Research Group

At TVA there were over sixty internal facilitators who conducted the STAR 7 Teambuilding Workshops. Each workshop was conducted by a pair of facilitators who used a co-facilitation delivery model for the three day workshop. Typically the facilitators alternated between facilitating and providing back-of-the-room support during the twenty modules of the workshop. Each facilitator conducted an average of eight to ten workshops per year. To form the action research group, I solicited volunteers who were interested in improving their practice. I was a full participant in this group, seeking to improve my own practice as a STAR 7 facilitator. I also collected all reflections and data,

scanned and modified the reflections as necessary to maintain confidentiality before forwarding to the action research group, analyzed the reflections for themes and informed the group of relevant background literature for the emergent themes.

I was joined by these co-researchers:

Joy Bull, Senior Metrology Technician, Central Laboratories, Fossil Power Group (FPG), TVA. Joy has an Associate of Science in Electrical Electronics from Chattanooga State Community College. She has fourteen years experience in metrology instrumentation and is the Lead Engraver for all TVA owned equipment and signage. Joy also serves as the Section President of the Chattanooga Section of the Engineering Association and represents 1,250 bargaining unit employees in negotiations with TVA.

Neil Carriker, Program Manager, Environmental Policy and Planning, River Systems Operations and Environment, TVA. Neil has a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Engineering Sciences from the University of Florida. He has twenty-six years' experience in water resource management, quality management and environmental policy. Neil developed TVA's Reservoir Vital Signs monitoring program and is currently the Associate Editor of the International Journal of Lake & Reservoir Management.

Sue Higginbotham, Maintenance Training Manager, Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, TVA. Sue has an Associate of Science in Electronic Engineering from Chattanooga State Community College and a Bachelor of Science in Technological and Adult Education from

the University of Tennessee. She has over twenty years' experience in instrumentation, nuclear plant maintenance and training. Sue has also been recognized by the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction as a Certified Technical Trainer.

Danny Rose, Performance Analyst, Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, TVA. Danny has a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering Technology from Bluefield State College. Danny has over twenty-eight years' of experience in design, construction and operation of nuclear power plants. Danny developed and coordinated the regulatory approvals of the TVA Nuclear Quality Assurance Plan and redesigned the TVA Nuclear Vendor Manual program.

Stephen R. Smith, Senior Chemist, Analysis and Evaluation Services, Central Laboratories and Field Testing Services, TVA. Steve has a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and a Master of Science in Engineering Management from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, twenty-five years' experience in combustion engineering and currently supervises the chemical analysis of coal samples from all TVA plants. He serves on the Advisory Board, Department of Chemistry, Western Kentucky University and as secretary of the Chickamauga Investment Club. Steve is also President of a bluegrass band called the Possum Hunters.

Minnie Troupe, Program Manager, Occupational Health, Corporate Human Resources, TVA. She has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Tennessee and has a Nurse Practitioner certification in primary care for adults from

Meharry Medical College in Nashville. Minnie has twenty-four years' experience in occupational health and has a primary interest in community health nursing. She received the "Bronze Honor Award" for the development and implementation of TVA's AIDS education program and the Outstanding Graduate in Nursing Award from the University of Tennessee in 1995. Minnie served as a Hospital Corpsman with the U.S. Navy and reached the rank of Captain in the U.S. Army Reserves. She is also an adjunct faculty member at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Dale Whitcomb, Accounting Manager, Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, TVA. Dale has a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Management of Technology from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Dale has eighteen years' experience in managing accounting, cost and scheduling, and reinvestment. He led the Property Asset Record completion for both Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Plant, Maryland, and Grand Gulf Nuclear Plant, Mississippi. At TVA Dale has rolled out two new computerized payroll programs for Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. Dale has served as President of the National Management Association, President of Toastmasters, and Chairman of the United Way.

Methodology

I used the DATA-DATAⁿ framework of action research methodology described by Peters (1999; 2000). This framework is a model that emphasizes the actions of the researcher as well as the action research process. Each letter of the framework stands for a specific research activity. The first DATA stands for Describe, Analyze, Theorize and

Act. The second DATAⁿ stands for Design, Analyze, Theorize and Act. The superscript ⁿ signifies repeating cycles of research activities that may be necessary to complete the project. Each new cycle of activity is informed by the results of the previous cycle both in terms of the strategy to be used and the issues to be addressed in the new cycle.

The following is a description of the stages of the DATA-DATAⁿ model:

DATA I

- **Describe** - Provide a description of the practice on which the practitioner hopes to improve and the practitioner's role in it
- **Analyze** - Identify 1) underlying assumptions and resultant strategies which have contributed to the present area of concern and 2) reasons for current interest
- **Theorize** - Derive a practical theory for addressing issues of interest and examine these issues in light of the formal theories behind the practice, the practical theories guiding what actually is done, and the questions that guide inquiry into action
- **Act** - Turn informed practical theories into actions

DATA II

- **Design** - Establish a guiding methodology and procedures for collecting information
- **Analyze** - critically reflect on and analyze collected information
- **Theorize** - Refine the practical theory
- **Act** - Initiate the findings into the practice based on the results of the inquiry, reject the findings or modify the design to continue the research (Peters, 1999)

I used the following step by step approach to introduce the co-researchers to the model and work with each co-researcher through the first cycle of action research.

DATA I: Describe - To begin the project I met with each co-researcher individually either in person or by phone. During the first meeting I introduced collaborative learning, reflective practice, and action research and gave an overview of the research project. I also provided copies of articles by Bunning (1995), "Professional development using action research," Peters (1991), "Strategies for reflective practice," and Imel (1992), "Reflective practice in adult education." As a practical example of the DATA-DATAⁿ action research model, I used my personal experience outlined in Appendix C. In this example I listed each activity in the model, a brief description of the activity and the actions I planned to take as a researcher.

After describing the project and the DATA-DATAⁿ model, I followed Peters's (1990) Action-Reason-Thematic Technique (ARTT) to help each co-researcher identify problem areas and assumptions. ARTT is an interview-analyze-interview cycle that helps uncover and describe the "structure of and composition of the person's beliefs, wants, norms, and factual knowledge that comprise the person's underlying network of assumptions" (Peters, 1990, p. 314) driving that person's behavior. ARTT involves:

1. Identification of the interviewee's problem
2. Establishment of the time frame of the problem
3. Identification and description of specific actions taken to solve the problem
4. Identification and description of reasons for each action taken
5. Reduction of actions and reasons to argument themes (Peters, 1990, p. 318)

I started each interview by asking the co-researcher the open-ended question: "What area do you want to improve as a facilitator?" Following a procedure cited by Brookfield (1990c), I also asked the co-researcher to describe a significant incident from their facilitating experience. This began the process of describing the problem from the individual perspective of the co-researcher.

DATA I: Analyze - I next asked the open ended question "Why?" to begin the analyze step of DATA-DATA". Each co-researcher provided a description of the reasons for each action taken in the problem area. I also asked other follow-up questions to help each co-researcher explore personal assumptions and beliefs concerning their practice as facilitators and how these assumptions contributed to the problem or area of targeted improvement.

DATA I: Theorize - One of the major concepts used by facilitators in the STAR 7 workshops is called a "Results Cone." The concept explains how results are determined by our behaviors which are in turn guided by our beliefs or practical theories. The workshop is designed to provide experiences from which we can obtain insights about those beliefs through reflection. The insights into our beliefs help provide an awareness and basis for change. I used this model during the theorize step to help each co-researcher examine his or her assumptions and beliefs. The co-researcher developed his or her practical theory of how to approach the problem or area for improvement by theorizing about what would happen if a certain action were taken and considering assumptions about expected outcomes.

DATA I: Act - Based on the previous steps, the co-researcher then decided on which actions to take during the next workshop.

DATA II: Design - Based on his or her needs, each co-researcher designed an action plan for the next workshop. The action plan focused on an area targeted for improvement and included various actions the facilitator planned to take as well as methods for collecting any necessary data. Examples of data collection included observing workshop participants' reactions, recording responses and asking participants for feedback.

DATA II: Analyze - Each co-researcher implemented the designed action plan during the facilitation of their next workshop, noting results of each planned action. After the workshop, each analyzed the results and wrote a reflection that was forwarded to the other co-researchers. Reflections also included any insights gained during the workshop. In some cases, the co-researcher also shared a critical incident from the workshop. In this context a critical incident is a brief description of an experience considered to be significant or memorable (Preskill, 1996; Brookfield, 1990c). These critical incidents and the reflections on these experiences were the focus of the analyze step.

DATA II: Theorize - After I received the reflection from the co-researcher, we met in person or discussed the reflection on the phone to theorize about results of the action. I shared with the co-researcher any insights I had in regard to formal theories from the literature base that could help build on our understanding and interpretation of the problem or data.

DATA II: Act - The final step of this second DATA cycle involved a decision to either incorporate the findings into the practice based on the results of the inquiry, reject the findings or modify the design to continue the research.

After completing the first cycle of the DATA-DATAⁿ action research model with my assistance, the co-researchers repeated an action research cycle a minimum of three more times in the course of the research project.

Data Collection

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), many different types of evidence count as data in action research. The data for this research project consisted of notes I took during discussions with individual co-researchers, the co-researcher's written reflections, the transcription of the mid-project meeting tapes, and notes I took during a final meeting six months after the conclusion of the research project. I also kept a personal journal in which I recorded brief notes from each meeting, my reflections on the learning I experienced in my practice and my reflections on the action research process.

Data collection began with the notes I took during the initial interviews with each co-researcher starting in July 1999. The second source of data was the reflections each co-researcher wrote and sent to me after facilitating a workshop. Because the action research group was spread throughout the TVA region, we used the TVA e-mail system for the transfer of reflections. I copied each reflection and pasted it into an individual file I maintained for each co-researcher. I also reviewed the reflection, removed any

information that would compromise the co-researcher's anonymity and sent the reflection to the research group. I then added the reflections to a cumulative document containing all the reflections. This document became my primary working data document. Individual data collection for the purpose of this dissertation project stopped in November, 1999.

On September 9, 1999, the entire action research group gathered at Guntersville State Park in Guntersville, Alabama for a mid-project meeting. At this point all the action research group members had completed at least one cycle of research. At that meeting we collectively reflected on our experiences as co-researchers, discussed changes in our practice as a result of the research and summarized group learning themes. I tape recorded this mid-project meeting for transcription and analysis.

On June 6, 2000, almost six months after the conclusion of the formal action research project, the action research group met in Nashville to discuss changes in our facilitation practice as a result of the action research. At this meeting I presented the initial themes from the analysis and the action research group concurred with my analysis. I also took notes during this meeting for use in the presentation of the results of the research.

Analysis

To begin the analysis I followed Boyatzis's (1998) thematic analysis method of inductively developing a code by reading and repeatedly reviewing the action plans. I reduced the raw information of the action plans to repetitive phrases and words (Preskill,

1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The themes then emerged from the data as repetitive phrases and words within each subsample, consisting of action plans and reflections from each individual co-researcher. I compared the themes across the subsamples in the action plans and reflections to create a code consisting of thematic categories.

As a student in the Collaborative Learning Program in the College of Education, I was a member of a dissertation research group which provided support during this analysis stage of the research. During the spring of 2000, this research group consisted of Dr. Kathy Greenberg, Dotty Roberts, Gail Collins, and Stewart Chason. I took the results of the coding exercise to the dissertation research group for review, where we evaluated the themes and determined that the code was based on repetitive themes apparent in the data. I then applied the code to both the transcript of the group meeting and individual reflections. I applied the code by reading through the data and looking for phrases and words that corresponded to the code developed from the action plans. As I read through the data I also highlighted other repetitive phrases and words that supported these themes. I then repeated the process by taking these findings to my dissertation research group, who worked with me in grouping the sub-themes into three main categories.

At this point in the analysis I decided to have another group perform a separate thematic analysis of the data to see if there were any themes that I might have missed in my analysis. I formed a validation analysis group of four individuals, who were employees of TVA and understood the culture in which the research was taking place as well as basic research practices.

This group included:

- Sue Higginbotham, Maintenance Training Manager, STAR 7 Facilitator and member of the action research group
- Linda Bayles, Bachelor of Science, Administrative Assistant and STAR 7 Facilitator
- Jim Pruitt, Master of Science, Maintenance Training Instructor and doctoral student in the Collaborative Learning Program
- David Sapp, Master of Science, Senior Instrument Mechanic and doctoral student in the Adult Education program

I provided each member of this group with a document containing all the reflections and the transcript of the mid-project meeting. I asked each person to read the data several times, look for recurring phrases, ideas, and concepts and then to group these into themes in what ever manner they preferred. On June 29, 2000, we met as a group to discuss their analysis. All but one of the themes noted were themes that I had earlier identified and included in my analysis. One additional theme that emerged from this group's analysis was around the "shadow of management." My code development started with the initial action plans about improving practice and I had not identified this as a recurring theme. The validation group concluded that "shadow of management" was a theme of the reflections and I therefore included it as a theme in my analysis.

The analysis of data revealed the following ten themes:

- 1) facilitate versus teach
- 2) control issues
- 3) focus on group needs
- 4) shadow of management
- 5) rapport with the group
- 6) facilitator vulnerability
- 7) personal stories of the facilitator
- 8) facilitator care for the group
- 9) awareness of thought
- 10) being in the moment.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. In this chapter I describe the background, purpose, methodology, and analysis of the study. In Chapters Two, Three, and Four I report the results of my analysis. Each of these chapters develops one category in terms of the themes and reviews the applicable literature data base for that category. These next three chapters tell the story of a group of co-researchers involved in action research into our own practice. I use quotes from our reflections to develop themes that emerged from the research. This is not one researcher's story but the story of many. This includes not only the action research group but also our co-facilitators and the story of the

larger group of over sixty certified STAR 7 facilitators. As a facilitator and co-researcher, I tell this story from the perspective of the facilitators in my action research group. My co-researchers have read the description of the themes, provided input and agree that it is written from our collective perspective. In Chapter Five I reflect on the results of the study in terms of the changed practices of myself and my co-researchers and insights gained as a result of the project and research.

To maintain the confidentiality agreement of the research, I use fictitious names for my co-researchers when referencing their quotes or reflections.

CHAPTER 2

ROLE OF FACILITATOR

Introduction

“It’s like we have planted a seed and we have to go out and fertilize it and we have to hoe it and whatever else it takes to get it to grow, and that’s what we need to do as facilitators.” (from co-researcher Joseph)

In the STAR 7 program, people who have teaching or training experience are generally not selected as facilitators because there is a critical difference in the skill set required for facilitators. Since many of the skills seem to be similar, it would appear that teachers and trainers would make the best facilitators; however, Mike Mooney and Ernie Webb, Senn-Delaney consultants who made the final selections of facilitators for the program, explained that from their experience in developing facilitators, it is harder for experienced teachers and trainers to make the switch from a pedagogical paradigm to an adult-oriented experiential approach than it is for non-teaching or non-training professionals to learn the facilitator skill set. The STAR 7 program utilizes a learning model in which experiential exercises are the central point of most modules; the facilitator’s role is to lead the group through these experiences in order for the individuals to obtain insights about the subject, not to teach the subject. This is different from teacher-centered teaching in which a teacher tells or transfers knowledge to the group

about a particular topic. The goal of the facilitator in the experiential model is not to impart knowledge but to allow the participants to experience the subject, reflect on that experience and gain insights from that reflection. The focus of facilitation is to draw out of the participants knowledge or understanding present in the group. The skill set for facilitators is therefore different from the skill set needed for a pedagogical approach.

The initial training for all facilitators selected for the STAR 7 program emphasized this difference between teaching and facilitating. My co-researchers offered several reflections about the role of facilitator and the set of skills necessary for successful facilitation. Four themes characterized these reflections. I defined the category of **Role of Facilitator** in terms of these themes: (1) facilitate versus teach, (2) control issues, (3) focus on the needs of the group and (4) shadow of management. The following sections explore each of these themes.

Theme: Facilitate versus Teach

Mary discussed the difference between teaching and facilitating in this action plan.

"I have a problem facilitating in that I tend to teach, tell and talk instead of facilitate. I am going to work on responding to participants from where they are at so I can draw them out to talk instead of me talking. I need to develop better thought-out questions. I feel it dampens responses when I sound so authoritative. I want to be more conversational."

The paradigm presented in facilitator certification training for STAR 7 facilitators was that facilitators focus on engaging the participants in meaningful dialogue.

Participants come to the workshop with life experiences and ideas that are different from but just as valid as the facilitator's. The prevailing educational perspective is that adults learn from each other as well as from an "authority" such as a teacher. One critical aspect of facilitation is allowing participants to voice their ideas, thoughts and experiences, thus both honoring and respecting the participants. Questioning is one tool a facilitator uses to encourage discussion and to help draw out participants. The right question, strategically timed, will invite response from the participants. Open ended, non-judgmental questions that take the individual and group to a deeper understanding of the subject are powerful facilitation tools. Mary also mentioned a frequently experienced barrier to discussion within a group: if the facilitator comes across as authoritarian, the group is silenced. From the group's perspective, there is nothing to share because the final authoritarian answer has been given.

Mary also described another aspect of a facilitator's role that conflicts with the conventional role of teaching.

"During the last follow-up workshop I was doing the gratitude module and trying to get one individual to be appreciative. I kept trying to hammer it into his head that he should be thankful. Instead of us just talking about it, I was trying to convince the participants. I just couldn't go beyond that point with the group. My co-facilitator helped me out and focused on the group, accommodated the group's needs by getting the group to talk about problems, etc. So I have a problem trying to fit a participant's views, ideas, etc. into a module where it doesn't seem to fit. Does my tendency to teach vs. Facilitate come from my culture?"

This module of the STAR 7 workshop presents a model for viewing life from a perspective of gratitude. Because there is no experiential component but rather a subject, it is tempting for the facilitator to try to “get” people to see or buy-in to this concept. Mary used the words, “*hammer it into his head*,” “*he should be*,” and “*trying to convince*” in her description of the struggle to convince this particular participant. When she could not fit a participant’s conflicting views into the concept she was teaching, she attempted to change the participant’s mind instead of accepting his views. This example points out the conflict when the facilitator tries to convince or tell and facilitate.

I mentioned intent in terms of my role as facilitator.

“There were a couple times when the group really wanted to go off on a tangent and talk about unrelated things. I would bring them back and cut off the conversation....One thing I am thinking about is my intent as a facilitator. I do know that I felt a certain responsibility towards getting through the modules and materials.....Questions I have are, what is my role as facilitator, especially in regards to starting and stopping on time, keeping the flow moving during the breaks, etc.? Is that really my role or could I have turned it over to the group?”

This observation speaks directly to three themes: facilitate vs. teach, control issues and focus on group needs. One goal of facilitators is to stimulate discussion in the group. Many times, when the group really takes off in discussions, the topic shifts from the subject the facilitator is focusing on to a subject the group is interested in. Facilitators must determine how to manage the discussion. Sometimes only one or two individuals are

interested in the new subject. In those cases, facilitators can easily steer the group back to the subject because we have the support of the other participants. At other times the whole group gets into a discussion that is off the topic. When that happens, as facilitators, we have to decide whether the discussion is necessary for group growth. Some groups have issues that need to be addressed, and this particular discussion may be exactly what the group needs to move beyond the conflict and be receptive to the workshop message. In those times, the focus shifts from facilitating a discussion around a planned topic to facilitating a discussion about group issues and helping the group take the discussion deeper.

However, this off-topic discussion creates other challenges for the facilitator. Certain modules set-up other modules and need to be done in sequence. If the group gets into a long discussion, significantly longer than is planned, the time available for the co-facilitator's next module and other modules later in the day may be impacted. At this point an experienced facilitator should ask: "Is the workshop about the facilitators and how well we facilitate the modules or is it about the group? Which is more important for the overall objective: cover all the material or address the group's needs?" My question in my reflection about the role of facilitators in terms of both managing time and keeping flow moving during breaks suggested that STAR 7 facilitators have a complex task in managing time, facilitating structured discussion, and recognizing and responding to group needs.

Lee commented on a similar aspect of facilitation in this reflection about a sharing module.

“One of the lessons I've learned from sharing is that the insights that I get during the workshop are of less interest to the group, than other member's insights. I guess this is because my comments or stories are linked to the script by the group but not so for the other participants. Therefore, the best sharing workshops, for me at least, seem to be when the group is engaged in what each member is saying and the conversation flows from one member to the next. Or to put it another way, if I as a facilitator would not have to be present, but that the conversation would continue answering the questions, “What did I learn about myself and as a result, what actions am I going to take.” When this free form flow of ideas happens, then there are no long silent voids that have to be punctuated with “who's next?” Instead everyone is on the edge of their chair interested to hear what the other members learned about themselves.”

In the sharing module that starts out both the second and third days of the workshop, participants first review the topics from the previous day and are then given an opportunity to journal and reflect on insights they had about themselves the previous day. Participants pair off to share their insights and any action steps they plan to take as a result of those insights. The group then forms a circle, and everybody is invited to share their insights with the larger group. The facilitator has the role of modeling what the group is being asked to do, in this case, write in their journals, reflect on insights, and share those insights and action steps with a partner and with the group.

Lee observed that, in groups where there is good flow and discussion, the facilitator's insights are not as effective as those of other members in the group. He surmised that the group's perception of the facilitator's insights are somehow linked to the script. Consequently, the spontaneous insights shared by other members are more powerful in producing new insights and shared learning. The goal of this module is to help individuals and the group go deeper in their insights. The best way to do this is simply to stay out of the way. An ineffective way to facilitate this module is to ask for somebody to share, then, as a facilitator, talk about something brought to mind by their insight, then ask for another response and make comments and so forth, keeping the focus and dialogue between one participant and the facilitator. Lee observed that the best sharing modules seemed to be when the facilitator was totally out of the way and the free flow of ideas was among the participants or from one participant to the next.

This theme, facilitate versus teach, was a topic of reflection because the action research group was trying to improve their collective understanding of what it means to be a facilitator. A working understanding of the facilitator role provided a basis for further actions and decisions. Most of the research group members came into the role of facilitator from a culture where the predominant paradigm for teaching and learning is "grounded in a worldview that supports the teacher as authority, knowledge as a commodity, and the learner as an empty or nearly empty vessel" (Peters & Armstrong, 1998, p. 79). Peters and Armstrong suggest that adults are familiar with this type of

teaching and learning because it is what they have been schooled and trained in for most of their lives.

Freire (1981) suggests that education suffers from this type of teaching and learning and calls it "narration sickness":

Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into 'containers,' into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher. The more completely he fills the receptacles, the better teacher he is. Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. This is the 'banking' concept of education (p. 58).

The action research group was faced with the problem of transforming this common world view of teaching in which they had been immersed into a world view of facilitating learning. The STAR 7 workshops focused on encouraging individuals to choose between alternate futures (Senn-Delaney, 1997). The facilitator training prepared us to facilitate workshops in a manner that showed participants "what is and what could be" (p. 13) and ultimately gave the participants an opportunity to choose what they would take from the workshop. Beder (1989), speaking from a humanist paradigm, says that the goal of adult education is "to assist learners in exercising the quality that separates humans from other - the ability to choose" (p. 43). Given this goal, Beder describes adult education as highly learner centered and the adult educator primarily as a facilitator. Many of the reflections of the research group were concerned with struggling to reconcile their world view of "teaching" with their new roles as facilitators.

Even though teachers of all ages are becoming increasingly more learner centered, Brookfield (1990b) describes the historical basis of the research group's struggle with the concept of facilitation in these terms:

The concept of the facilitator of learning now exercises something of a conceptual stranglehold on our notions of correct educational practice, and to talk of the role of teacher, or of teaching as a function, is unfashionable and distasteful to some educators of adults. Such talk calls to mind authoritarian classrooms, heavily didactic procedures, and overly directive instructors. Teaching is an activity inevitably associated by many with the world of elementary and secondary schooling; it conjures up images of an individual standing at the head of rows of desks and talking to a captive audience. Because educators and trainers of adults are usually at pains to contrast the emotionally congenial aspect of their practice with what they regard as the rigid and conformist nature of schooling, they frequently avoid using the term teacher. This is partly why the terms facilitator and resource person are in such favor (p.123).

Peters & Armstrong (1998) present a model in which the distinction is on the type of teaching and learning as opposed to distinguishing between the term "facilitator" or "teacher." According to Peters & Armstrong, "Teaching-learning settings in adult education vary greatly, but they can be understood in part by the types of relationships between teachers and learners involved in those settings" (p. 78). Type One is defined as teaching by transmission and learning by reception. The role of the teacher is to select and transmit information to the students. In this type of teaching-learning setting, relationships are primarily between the teacher and the students, the direction of communication is from

the teacher to the students, and the principal mode of delivery is the lecture. The focus of Type One teaching and learning is individual learning. Type One is the dominant model of teaching-learning in schooling, training and higher education.

Type Two teaching and learning is defined as teaching by transmission and learning by sharing. The role of the teacher is to transmit information and to enable students to then transmit information to one another and sometimes to the teacher. The relationships established are between the teacher and students and among students; the direction of communication is both from the teacher and between the students. The mode of teaching and learning commonly associated with Type Two is lecture or experiential activities followed by discussion. Type Two accommodates a greater range of content domains than Type One and provides an opportunity for students to share personal experiences and interpretations of subject matter brought to the setting by the teacher. The focus of Type Two is also individual learning.

Type Three teaching and learning defines collaborative learning and is distinguished by a focus on joint construction of knowledge, the designation of the teacher as a member of the group of learners, and by the role of the group in the learning experience. The teacher can have special knowledge of the content, but not necessarily greater than that of the other learners in the group. The teacher will typically use group facilitation skills to foster group interaction. The relationships are from learner to learner, learner to group, and group to learner. Dialogue is the principal mode of discourse, although other modes are also present. For example, a teacher presentation or student

sharing of information during a dialogue means that information is both transmitted and received by participants in the collaborative process. The primary aim of interactions is the construction of new knowledge. The focus is both individual and group learning.

The three types of teaching and learning provide different roles for teachers. Type One is traditional teaching by telling, Type Two is more along the lines of managing experiences and facilitating discussions, and Type Three is participating as a member of a learning group and facilitating a process. In the STAR 7 workshops the facilitators have an opportunity to operate in all three types. Because the STAR 7 workshop is based on the experiential learning model, most of the time the facilitators are facilitating individual and group exercises, facilitating discussions and reflections. These activities are clearly part of the Type Two teaching-learning setting. There are times, however, in several modules where the facilitator must transmit information and knowledge. In the second module of the workshop, Introduction II, there are occasions when the facilitator must present new knowledge about different filters and concepts that will be explored later in the workshop. In this situation the facilitator is functioning in the Type One teaching-learning setting. In the sharing modules which start both the second and third day of the workshop, the facilitator has an opportunity to operate in the Type Three teaching-learning setting. In this module the facilitator both participates as a member of the group and facilitates the group in a type of dialogue about the previous day's experiences and learnings.

Jarvis (1985) also outlines three broad approaches to instruction. He called these "didactic, socratic, and facilitative" (p. 94). Hiemstra and Sisco (1990) outline these approaches with the different roles for facilitators and learners in each approach. Peters and Armstrong's (1998) Type One corresponds to the didactic approach in which the teacher controls most of the direction and content. In the socratic approach the teacher or facilitator uses questions to lead the learner into and through the content of the subject. In the facilitative approach the facilitator creates an educational environment through experiential learning exercises or self directed learning activities. Both of these approaches fit into Type Two teaching and learning because the focus is on individual learning. However, in Type Three teaching and learning the focus is both individual and group learning. Group experiential learning activities can also contain a Type Three component when the focus is on group learning and dialogue is used in the reflective and debrief portions of the learning activities. As Peters and Armstrong (1998) note, "Type Three teaching and learning is a way of learning that doesn't work by the same rules as the other two types, precisely because it is a different way of learning, with different concepts: people laboring together to construct new knowledge, group knowledge and individual knowledge" (p. 80).

Peters and Armstrong present this group construction of knowledge in terms of a concept they call "X." The "X" is a developing group knowledge that is a result of the dialogue and sharing in the group. The "X" is out among a group and somewhere between the group members in collaborative learning situations. Many of the descriptions

of collaborative learning take place in circles (Peters & Armstrong, 1998; Palmer, 1993) where the interactions and relationships are easily seen and the "X" can easily be grasped. Peters and Armstrong describe participants speaking into and from "X" and in terms of "X". Isaacs (1999) refers to speaking into and from the center of the common pool of meaning being developed by the group in dialogue. Palmer (1998) provides additional insight into the discussion of "X" in describing it as the subject in a community of truth. The subject is in the center of the group and relationships are established between the participants and the subject. The key is that the subject or "X" is between the participants and each develops a relationship with the "X" as well as with each other.

This concept of "X" is also similar to the concept of suspension in dialogue where members of the dialogue suspend their assumptions and certainties to make them available for examination and to enable new understanding to be constructed by the group (Bohm, 1996; Isaacs, 1999). Bohm describes dialogue as people thinking together on a common content where everybody involved has suspended all assumptions and are seeking to understand what it all means. When the group reaches what Bohm calls a "participatory consciousness" (p. 26), then the created meaning flows between both the collective mind and the individuals. Bohm suggests that when this happens the meaning flow is produced by an appreciation of the meanings into new and creative understandings.

Theme: Control Issues

In some of the reflections I have already discussed, the role of the facilitator as a helper or enabler highlights the need to balance exercising control with relinquishing control to the group when facilitating experiential learning.

Anne related one of the aspects of this theme in her reflection,

"I need to work on control issues. I have a tendency to challenge and take on the group. I come across as controlling. I need to consider what kind of impact my controlling style has on the group and think about my intent as a facilitator."

One module in the STAR 7 workshops focuses on behavioral styles, one of which is called controlling. A key message of the module is the value of style flexing. An assumption is that everybody has a home style in which they are more comfortable and tend to fall back on when stressed. Style flexing is recognizing both your style and the style of others when communicating and flexing your style to match others for more effective communication. Many of the characteristics of the controlling style are necessary for successful facilitation of experiential-based learning activities. Crowd control is a vital component when facilitating a group of people through an exercise; one of the roles of the facilitator is to exercise that control. Lee commented on this need for group management.

"When conducting a TVA STAR 7 Workshop, crowd control is a key element to a successful presentation.....Crowd control is crucial when moving 30 plus participants from a horseshoe semi-circle to dyads or smaller work groups of 5 or 6."

A facilitator who is comfortable functioning in the controlling style is generally very good at running such exercises. Other facilitators who have different home styles must flex to the controlling style at times. However, Lee reflected on the ineffectiveness of operating in the controlling style in other parts of the workshop. For instance, someone operating in the controlling style does not typically seek or invite input from others. Their tendency to be short and to the point can make it hard to start and sustain discussions in the group. They also tend to neglect relationships. The significance of relationships will be discussed in the next chapter, but here I need to point out that relationship building is one area of potential growth for a facilitator operating in the controlling style.

Another challenge for facilitators operating in the controlling style is that they may be uncomfortable with relinquishing control to the group. If the role of facilitator is to involve the group in discussions and help move the group to a place of ownership, obviously the facilitator must eventually relinquish control of both content and direction to the group. Roger discussed the results of inappropriate control by not allowing the group to take ownership of the workshop.

"I felt time pressures because of my partner's sessions running long. Consequently, I consciously tried to rush things, while still covering everything in the module. I probably gave the impression that I was more interested in covering the material than in relating the material to them and giving them ownership of the session."

Roger received lower evaluations than normal after this particular workshop. Some of the comments were around not letting the group get into some discussions and

cutting off other discussions. His co-facilitator was rated very high on the post workshop feedback evaluations, and Roger attributed the higher ratings to the fact that the co-facilitator let the group get into long discussions which exceeded the scheduled time frame. Roger tried to make up for his co-facilitator's style by operating more in the controlling style to keep things on time. This resulted in the group sensing that Roger did not care about the group and was more interested in covering the material than helping them. Consequently, during his modules the group tended to shut down and did not engage to a full extent.

Lee mentioned another benefit of flexing control.

"I think the tendency is to steer the group if they stray from the script. However, sometimes a little straying brings out someone who would not normally contribute."

Facilitators use a script as a guide for each module in preparation for the workshops. The script provides expected or anticipated responses from the participants. Lee reflected on his tendency to control the group by steering the group toward the answers in the script. Inexperienced facilitators seem to have a greater tendency to attempt to steer the group in this manner because of their greater focus on the script. As facilitators grow in facilitation skills and become more comfortable in their own role as a facilitator, they focus more on the group and place less emphasis on trying to force the group to mold to the script.

I responded to Lee's reflection by asking,

"What does "steering the group" mean to you? You have me thinking about this and "the group straying from the script." I'm thinking, can a group stray from the script or is the script for the facilitator?"

Lee responded with this explanation of steering the group,

"What I meant by "steering the group" was that they are only supposed to be discussing what they learned about themselves the previous day and what action they plan to take as a result. However, sometimes the discussion starts somewhere else but ends up with what they need to improve upon. By steering the group, I often jump into the conversation and say, "yes, but what did you learn about yourself yesterday." Sometimes some preliminary rambling is acceptable if it leads into a discussion of what is the needed improvement. Some people need to begin talking around the subject first and then get into the exact idea. And again, by straying from the script I mean talking about things other than what they learned about themselves yesterday and as a result what action steps they plan on taking."

Lee clarified his position by explaining that control was a matter of being focused on the outcome of the module. It was not just a matter of looking for a particular answer from the participants but rather having the goal of the module in mind and facilitating the group toward that goal and purpose. While the sharing module is one in which the facilitator is helping the group obtain a deepening of individual insights as they share with each other, there is also a very definite goal of getting the participants to begin making commitments to action. For Lee, steering the group means to provide direction toward a goal. So control in this instance is not to restrict the group as much as to help channel the group and individual discussion toward a specific goal of commitment to action.

This issue of control was one which required balance on the part of facilitators. On one hand the facilitators had an institutional responsibility to meet certain standards and requirements in the workshop; on the other hand, the facilitators had an obligation to meet the learning needs of the participants. Peters & Armstrong (1998) speak to this dilemma, "One of the outcomes of institutionalization of Type One teaching and learning is the teacher's concern with 'covering content'" (p. 81). Peters & Armstrong then challenge facilitators to move toward a more collaborative learning experience. In regards to the struggle that facilitators face in the area of giving up control in the Type Three situation, they write, "Given the choice, for Type One teacher this nearly always starts with the teacher needing to have the courage to 'let go of the reins'" (p. 81).

The research group also identified issues around sticking to the script and needing to be flexible. Brookfield (1989) provides the following rationale for the value of being flexible in regards to the script:

Facilitators must be alert to those teachable moments when learners' attentions are engaged in some unanticipated way and, being alert to these moments, facilitators should build on them. They should recognize the charge and excitement of such occasions and be ready to depart from the script of their planned activities. They should value spontaneity and should encourage risk-taking - both for themselves and for their learners. According to the pre-determined-objectives model of facilitation, such behavior is likely to be labeled unprofessional, yet it is precisely this readiness of facilitators to risk departing from the lesson script that can be so conducive to learning.... Sticking rigidly to a pre-planned format because it is prescribed as the official syllabus can be inimical to learning. It may be the safest

and most institutionally approved mode of facilitation, but it may inhibit rather than enhance adults' learning (p. 203).

Hart (1990) suggests that the issue of control is really an issue of power, and that the problem is in the structure of the group. According to Hart, in an institutionalized educational setting with a designated facilitator or teacher, it is a combination of the intent of the facilitator and the intent of the institution or program that the facilitator represents which governs the learning process and structure of each learning situation and not the intent of the group. Hart asserts, "The privilege to be able to surrender special authority is not shared equally by all participants but remains a privilege of the leader" (p. 63).

Slusarski (1994) suggests techniques for sharing control with the participants in the instructional process but falls very short of suggesting that facilitators should actually ever give up control in any form.

In Type One and Type Two teaching and learning situations this is familiar and common advice. Even when the opportunities exist to move into Type Three teaching and learning situations, facilitators may be reluctant for various reasons. Palmer (1993) addresses this issue:

The critics have come closer to the answer by suggesting that this style of teaching persists because it gives teachers power. With power comes security: the security of controlling the classroom agenda, of avoiding serious challenges to one's authority, of evading the embarrassment of getting lost in territory where one does not know the way home. Teachers are unlikely to relinquish such power even in the face of students who hunger for another way to learn (p. 39).

Encouraging facilitators to consider moving closer to a collaborative learning model where people labor together to construct knowledge, Caffarella & Barnett (1994) address the challenges and the value to be gained in such a move.

Again it must be stressed that instructors who teach from the constructivist perspective must be willing to meet learners where they are in the learning process and be willing to journey with them to make meaning from their prior knowledge and experiences, whether that journey is pleasant, uncomfortable, or extremely painful. This calls for instructors to accept that sometimes, if not often, in the instructional process, the learners rather than the instructor will be in control of the process. Where learners want to venture with the process may be very different from where the instructor originally thought they should go. This can be quite disconcerting to both instructors and learners who carry with them expectations that the road to knowing should be carefully planned and executed, especially in formal learning settings (p. 38).

Theme: Focus on Group Needs

Kate mentioned that maintaining a focus on the goal or purpose of the module is a role of the facilitator. Focusing on the needs of the group is another area that helps describe this role. In a reflection Kate stated that she would work on focusing on the group needs as opposed to her own performance in facilitating.

"I struggle with issues of performance. I have questions about how I am doing instead of asking where is the group at? I will be aware of process and notice whether I am focused on the group or myself. I will focus on the group and groups needs as opposed to my own performance."

Roger also set focusing on the group needs as one of his goals.

"I will focus on group needs and not be so concerned about my goals for the group. Some groups are just not in a healthy place and the timing just doesn't seem right for some things when a group is unhealthy. I am working on learning how to read the group."

From these two reflections we see that their understanding of the role of facilitator is not one of performance as much as it is of helping others to perform. Both these facilitators were looking to the needs of the group and means for helping the group. Learning to read groups is a skill that facilitators need to maintain the focus. If the facilitator senses that the group is not ready for a particular exercise, other optional exercises may be included which are more in line with current group needs. On the other hand, if a group is ready for more challenging exercises, a facilitator can meet that need by interjecting advanced exercises. Reading the group to discern the current group needs is a skill that takes time to develop. These researchers made a commitment to have an awareness of group needs as a step in their growth as facilitators.

I reflected on my experience with focusing on group needs and some techniques I used to maintain a presence with the group.

"In this last workshop my primary goal was to provide as much support and encouragement as possible to my co-facilitator. We had worked together before so we were comfortable with each other's styles and needs. This familiarity with my co-facilitator helped me focus instead on the group rather than trying to figure out my partner. I have a belief around my facilitation responsibility that the group needs to be the primary focus. When my attention is elsewhere,

such as on myself or my partners performance, I am not focusing on the group needs. Constantly asking the question, "where is the group in relation to the subject at hand?" seems to help me focus on the group rather than on my performance as a "facilitator". Does this mean I think that it is better to have two facilitators who are used to working together? I don't think so, but I do think it is better to have two facilitators who are thinking about the group and are focused on the group needs as opposed to having two who are only thinking about their individual performances. It seems like the best is whatever it takes to get other distractions out of the way. Then the end result could be better facilitation."

The importance of focusing on the group is clear. I commented that the primary focus of the facilitator needs to be on the group and not on facilitator performance. In the co-facilitator model we use for the workshops, having two facilitators who are focused on the group helps ensure that the group needs are met. One way to achieve this focus on the group is to remove other distractions. In my case, I mentioned familiarity with the co-facilitator. When a facilitator is working with a co-facilitator for the first time, much of the focus is necessarily on the co-facilitator, especially when you are the secondary or support facilitator for the module. The primary facilitator is called "the facilitator" and the support facilitator is referred to as "the co-facilitator" for any module; during one module a facilitator may be the primary and for the next the co-facilitator. The co-facilitator's primary focus must be on supporting and assisting the facilitator. This frees primary facilitators from worry or thought about administrative duties in the module and allows them to focus on the group and the group needs. However, the co-facilitator has

an additional responsibility of monitoring the group and providing the facilitator with information needed to help read the group.

Lee connected focusing on the group needs and the aspect of control in this reflection.

"By keeping an open mind going in, I was able to stay focused on where the group was and not trying to cut off where they might be headed."

I made this observation in response to Lee's reflection.

"You mentioned the facilitator getting out of the way. You think maybe the Senn-Delaney facilitators are experienced enough to get out of the way? Maybe that's what facilitating is all about, getting out of the way and letting the group go?"

I referred to experienced facilitators who were the lead facilitators and master coaches during the initial training for all facilitators. As a group they seemed less concerned about getting through modules and more focused on the group's needs. I observed that the Senn-Delaney facilitators more easily relinquished control of the workshop to participants, which suggests that "getting out the way" and letting the group go is a function of the role of facilitator.

Anne's reflection summed up her ideas of the relationship between the script and the needs of the group.

"I learned several things from this exchange. One thing was that though the script is important it is not the most important thing. What is the most important thing is to focus on what the employees have to say (not just one but the group). It is the employee's workshop and when the script is not meeting

their needs you need to be prepared to go where they lead you. Flexibility is extremely important when conducting these workshops (hard but necessary)."

Brookfield (1989) challenges the concept of just getting out of the way and letting the group go. He describes facilitating adult learning as a highly complex mixture of personalities, learning styles, divergent experiences and expectations, institutional requirements, and political climates and the resulting ambiguity to be expected as an outcome of this mixture. He addresses the struggles that facilitators potentially face if they expect that they will be able to meet all the needs of the learners. He also provides a warning to facilitators who judge their success in meeting participants' needs by the good feelings of participants at the conclusion of the learning activity. These facilitators may fall into the trap of not challenging the learners by asking them to face uncomfortable learning situations. According to Brookfield (1990b), "It is all too easy to see the job of the facilitator as one concerned solely with assisting adults to meet those educational needs that they themselves perceive and express as meaningful and important" (p.123). He encourages facilitators to look beyond assisting learners in their innate drive to achieve self-actualization and challenge the learners to analyze assumptions, challenge previously accepted and internalized beliefs and values, and consider the validity of alternative behaviors. Brookfield considers facilitating to also involve "presenting alternatives, questioning givens, and scrutinizing the self" (p. 125). This aspect of facilitation involves developing a critical consciousness or self-reflection by challenging learners with

alternative ways of interpreting their experience (Beber, 1989; Brookfield, 1990b; Mezirow, 1990; Welton, 1993; Sgroi, 1998).

The needs of the group from the facilitator's viewpoint are dependent upon the stance or role the facilitator takes in relation to the group. The literature review of the concept of facilitation revealed a wide variety of definitions of the role of facilitator.

The following is a sampling of metaphors or terms used to describe this role:

actor (Pineau, 1994); **artist** (Eisner, 1979; Hostler, 1982; Lenz, 1982; Schon, 1983; Rubin, 1985; Schon, 1987; Apps, 1989; Brockett, 1991; Barrell, 1991; Pineau, 1994; Panicucci, 1999); **bucket filler** (Apps, 1989); **co-learner** (Slusarski, 1994); **collaborator** (Peters & Armstrong, 1998); **counselor** (Brockett, 1983); **craftsman** (Apps, 1989); **empathic provocateur** (Mezirow, 1990); **factory supervisor** (Apps, 1989); **gardener** (Apps, 1989); **helper** (Draves, 1984; Brookfield, 1989); **jazz musician** (Greenberg, 2000); **lamplighter** (Apps, 1989); **learning manager** (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990); **midwife** (Tisdell, 1993); **muscle builder** (Apps, 1989); **psychological demolition expert** (Brookfield, 1987); **resource person** (Brookfield, 1989; Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990); **teacher-student** (Freire, 1981); **travel guide** (Apps, 1989; Brookfield, 1990a; Sgroi, 1998; Panicucci, 1999); and **weaver of connections** (Palmer, 1998).

These metaphors come from mental models concerning facilitation. Mental models (Senge, 1990; Senge, et al, 1994), paradigms (Kuhn, 1962), assumptions (Brookfield, 1990c), and meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1990a) are all related terms and ideas for the images and mental maps we have to help us interpret every aspect of the world. They are basic assumptions that cause us to see and act in the world in a certain way without

any conscious awareness. Similarly, McNamee and Gergen (1999) suggest that, “A theory is simply a language resource that permits particular forms of action and suppresses others (p. 5). Nadler and Luckner (1992) describe these mental models as beliefs and guidelines that produce boundaries to “keep us on a safe and secure trail within our comfort zone” (p. 67).

These concepts are similar to Argyris (1982) and Schon’s (1987) concepts of espoused theories and theories-in-use. Espoused theories are theories that we usually articulate either to justify past actions or to explain what actions we would take in the future. Theories-in-use are the unexamined mental models, beliefs, assumptions, meaning perspectives and paradigms that govern our spontaneous actions. The particular metaphor of facilitation an individual chooses depends on his or her mental model of the intent or purpose of the activity and provides the facilitator a framework and boundaries to operate within.

Theme: Shadow of Management

This theme speaks to the relationship of the facilitators to the managers participating in the workshops. I included it as a theme in this category because defining one’s role as a facilitator results in a positioning of oneself in relationship to the power structure within the culture, system or organization. Instead of providing direct quotes attributable to specific co-researchers, I listed the following sampling of typical comments about the shadow of management:

- *“Managers participated fully in the workshop.”*
- *“Managers did not participate in workshop.”*
- *“Managers presented a ‘this stuff is for others, not for me’ attitude.”*
- *“Managers controlled the session and participants.”*
- *“Managers distracted others by handling business during the session.”*
- *“Managers were fully attentive and a great model during session.”*
- *“Impressed by way managers handled problem participants.”*

The reflections deal with the relationship we have with the system and other representatives of the system, in this case, TVA managers attending the workshops. In the organizational change workshops we facilitate, we face the accumulated cynicism and mistrust from participants who have memories of managers and supervisors who have mistreated them in ways contrary to the values and concepts we present in the workshop (Brookfield, 1990a). When managers participate in the workshops and demonstrate behaviors contrary to the new culture, facilitators are acutely aware of the shadow being presented by the managers. As facilitators, we are also representatives of the system and, in the minds of some of the participants, representatives of a system or institution that signifies oppression (Hart, 1990).

In my workshops, I dealt with the participants' expressions of cynicism and hurt by acknowledging the validity of the feeling and shared how I personally have been changed by the concepts. I discussed how the concepts can make a positive difference in the participants' lives regardless of the changes that may or may not take place in the culture

or system. This discussion usually seemed to help with rapport and trust building but it did not resolve my dilemma of promoting personal change when some representatives of the organization did not seem to have embraced that change. As facilitators we were conscious of the impact both our shadow and management's shadow had on the group. Since both managers and facilitators are representatives of the system, we struggled with the inconsistency of modeling presented to the participants in some instances. The reflections in this theme also demonstrated the tendency we had to be critical of others, such as management, who may not be as aware of their shadow of influence.

In this chapter I defined the category, **Role of Facilitator**, in terms of the themes facilitate versus teach, control issues, focus on group needs and shadow of management. I described the themes in terms used by the action research group. The reflections speak of the struggle the co-researchers had with the identity of being a facilitator and their search for a metaphor to locate their individual thinking and practice.

CHAPTER 3

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GROUP

Introduction

Other themes that emerged from analysis of the research group reflections centered on the relationship between facilitators and participants. Establishing this relationship seemed to be a major concern of the facilitators. I believe the desire for a good relationship stemmed from the role of facilitator discussed in the previous chapter. A Type One facilitator may be more interested in imparting knowledge or facts to a student than in developing a relationship. In Type Two and Type Three learning, the relationship between the facilitator and students takes on far greater importance because collaborative learning is not just from teacher to students but is between both teacher and students and between students. Peters & Armstrong (1998) consider this relationship among collaborators to be “vital to the process of collaborative learning” (p.83). Apps (1996) suggests that the “critical relationship for teachers is with learners” (p.74). He describes the need for a relationship with learners that is constantly changing and which requires close attention and hard work to maintain. Pratt (1993), in an analysis of Knowles’ writings on adult learners, describes a consistent and significant message about relationships. According to Pratt, “The essence of facilitation lies not in one’s approach as much as in the relationship that exists between the learner and facilitator” (p. 19).

Mackeracher (1996) defines a meaning of relationship to be “the learner’s need to establish a sense of belonging within the social aspects of the learning environment by developing connections to other learners and to the facilitator, and using these as a basis for further learning” (p. 257). In my analysis, I defined the category of **Relationship with the group** in terms of these themes: (1) rapport with the group, (2) facilitator vulnerability, (3) personal stories of the facilitator, and (4) facilitator care for the group.

Theme: Rapport with the Group

I discussed the difficulty I was having in establishing rapport with a group in one of my reflections.

“I just feel like I never really connected with the group. In my introduction, I mentioned that one of the things I personally wanted to work on was building rapport with the group. I shared with them that this was something I had to work on and asked them to help me out. So was I successful in building rapport? I don’t think so. The co-facilitator had much better rapport with the group and the group liked the co-facilitator much better. That hurt, especially when my goal for this workshop was to build rapport better.”

My goal for this workshop was to build rapport and yet after this particular workshop I did not feel connected to the group. Rapport seems to be linked to the feeling of connection that exists in relationships. Another aspect of this reflection is my assumption that rapport must be “built,” and it was something I was going to “work on.” This implies that rapport is not automatic or already existing, but rather something that

must be achieved or gained. In the beginning of the workshop, I told the group that building rapport was an area I needed to work on to be more effective. This may have set up a negative expectation for the participants, who could have magnified or verified this expectation when comparing me to the co-facilitator who was very friendly, relationship oriented and at ease with the group.

Kate also mentioned this feeling of a lack of connection and rapport in this reflection after a workshop.

"I am still trying to figure out the last workshop I did. I was truly looking forward to doing a workshop with my co-facilitator and with this particular group. I thought the workshop was going well all three days but there was something missing. No real feeling or connection with the group. I do not know what was happening. The evaluations were average. I had one evaluation, "Did I model the STAR 7 values" and this person disagreed. I am struggling with how I did not model the STAR 7 values. I read some of the other reflections about building rapport with the group. I will work on building rapport with the next group."

Anne also sensed a lack of feeling or connection with the group. Her action plan for making this connection was also to work on building rapport with the group in the next workshop by spending time listening to the group during breaks.

"I really haven't been working on rapport. I tend to get involved in administration during the breaks. During my next workshop I am going to spend time with the group to listen and feel out the issues of the group. I am going to build rapport and personal relationships."

In this reflection, Anne related facilitator behaviors that possibly hindered the building of rapport. Administration includes hanging posters, preparing for the next module, taking care of logistics and practical matters as opposed to focusing on group needs. According to the rapport model of coaching/facilitation presented during the Senn-Delaney Train-the-Facilitator training, building rapport begins with listening. Senn-Delaney (1998) defines rapport as achieving harmonious alignment through deep listening. Nadler & Luckner (1992) suggest that using attending skills such as being both physically and emotionally present in deep listening with individuals and the group assists in both establishing and maintaining rapport with a group.

Anne was using this model as a plan for establishing rapport with the group and establishing personal relationships with the group. The steps to building a relationship through rapport are: listen for understanding, check for rapport, ask for permission, and provide coaching/facilitation. According to this model, effective coaching/facilitation can only take place after rapport is built by listening and permission to coach or facilitate is granted out of rapport. If at any step, or during any step, the permission is withdrawn, the coach or facilitator must return to the first step of listening for understanding. The rapport model continually returns the relationship to the beginning step of listening. Apps (1996) describes this process of maintaining the relationship as also requiring constant exploration, examination, nourishment, and celebration. He asserts that one cannot establish the teacher/learner relationship and assume that it will continue because it

requires constant attention.

I shared this reflection on the results of my action plan to establish rapport with a group.

"During this follow-up, I made an extra effort to establish rapport with the group. I arrived very early and had things set-up so that I was able to spend almost all the time before the workshop, eating, drinking coffee and talking to the group. I especially concentrated on just listening to hear where the group was at and if there were any special problems. By the end of the day, I couldn't get the group to stop talking. It is beginning to sink in that establishing rapport by listening is vital in the facilitator/participant relationship. If I look at facilitating as establishing relationships with the group, then based on our Coercion vs. Relationship model, rapport building takes on great significance. Basically, I felt I ended the workshop with a whole lot of friends. I really felt like we jelled into a learning group that learned and explored some concepts together as opposed to me being the "facilitator" with an intent to teach them something."

Notice the specific actions I did to establish rapport. I took care of all administrative tasks beforehand and focused completely on the group by simply being present and spending time eating, drinking and talking with the group. Apps (1996) refers to the importance of breaks as an opportunity for group members to get to know each other and build relationships for learning. I also listened to the group with the intent to learn from the group. I believe my deep listening in turn released the group to talk and share freely. My insight from this experience is that facilitation is about building

relationships. Establishing and building rapport resulted in the group collaboratively learning and exploring concepts together.

Joseph described practical steps he took to build rapport early in the workshop experience by arriving at the workshop room early and greeting participants as they arrived.

"I build rapport in the first day by being there when they come in the door, and by shaking everybody's hand and I talk to them, and I start real early trying to establish rapport with the group. And I start by being there at the door greeting them and shaking their hands and say "I am glad you could be here!" It's as simple as that."

Most adult educators and writers use the term "relationship" in expressing what the researcher group called "rapport." For example, Draves (1984) provides a list of recommended steps for the first class or session. To help establish a relationship with the participants, he recommends welcoming the participants at the door, spending pre-class time talking to the participants and establishing relationships by sharing personally with the students. According to Draves, adult participants want to know that you are competent to teach and yet they want to know that you are a peer in every other way.

Sisco (1991) agrees that establishing a positive learning environment in the initial meeting with learners is important in the relationships learners and the facilitator and between members of the class. He suggests that the facilitator warmly greet participants as they arrive. According to Sisco, handshakes and self-introductions help set an informal

tone and are appreciated by adult learners. Sisco stresses the need to develop three types of relationships: "(1) relationships with other class members, many of whom become valuable resources, support givers, and close friends, (2) relationships with the instructor, built on mutual trust, respect, and credibility, and (3) relationships with the content, material, and resources of the course or workshop" (p. 46).

Mitten (1995) suggests it is the leader's ability to engage in healthy relationships with group members that determines the group's ability to establish relationships, develop positive group cohesion, and increase self-esteem. She describes healthy relationships as connections based on mutual respect, trust, and experience with one another. This emphasizes the importance of the facilitator in developing these relationships through rapport with the participants.

Sgroi (1998) describes this relationship between teacher and learner as one built on trust. She asserts that trust is the first element that must be established between the teacher and learner because it is the bedrock in most human relationships. Her metaphor for the teaching experience is that the teacher and learner are on a journey and the learner must trust in the teacher as a guide. A relationship of trust and rapport must be established between the teacher and every learner as a foundation to move forward into new domains and territory.

Brookfield (1990a) also agrees on the importance of trust in the relationship between teachers and students and considers the element of trust to underlie all significant

learning. He calls this trust between teachers and students “the affective glue binding educational relationships together” (p. 163). According to Brookfield, trust is not a given and it must therefore be earned and built with each new group of students. This process of building trust is neither quick nor easy because with each new group, the teacher is dealing with accumulated educational histories and memories of all the cynical and arrogant teachers the students may have experienced in the past. Brookfield suggests two components to building trust with students: teacher credibility, which deals with the teacher’s “breadth of knowledge, depth of insight, and length of experience that far exceeds the students’ own” (p. 164), and teacher authenticity. Brookfield suggests that teacher authenticity consists of four behaviors. These are (1) exhibiting a congruency of words and actions, (2) admitting to error and acknowledging fallibility, (3) sharing aspects of life outside the role of teacher, and (4) respecting learners by listening carefully to concerns and being open to changing their practice in response to the student’s concerns. Admitting to error, acknowledging fallibility, and sharing aspects of life outside the role of teacher are components of the theme of “vulnerability” identified in the analysis.

Theme: Facilitator Vulnerability

According to Palmer (1998), “teaching is a daily exercise in vulnerability” (p. 17). One aspect of facilitating the STAR 7 workshops is the demonstration of vulnerability throughout the workshop by the facilitator’s sharing personal stories about a time when he

or she failed in regard to the topic being considered. The first week of facilitator training is spent developing and perfecting several of these personal stories. In addition to the personal stories that demonstrate vulnerability, each facilitator is encouraged to share other personal stories that are relevant to other topics or modules. Many of the reflections and action plans pertained to the vulnerability aspect of these stories.

In responding to a question about the development of trust in the workshops, I suggested that the vulnerability demonstrated by the facilitators helps develop trust because the facilitators first model trust in the group by sharing about personal failures. I also mentioned confidentiality as an element in developing trust. In the beginning of each workshop, team commitments are developed by each workshop group. Confidentiality is one of the terms included in each team agreement. By sharing a personal story that demonstrates vulnerability, the facilitator demonstrates trust that the group will maintain that confidentiality.

"Maybe the vulnerability we demonstrate as facilitators is one of the factors in helping develop trust in the group because as facilitators we have to just go ahead and demonstrate trust in the group without them proving it except to commit to a team agreement that involves confidentiality."

Lee mentioned the carry-over effect of demonstrating vulnerability back at work after the workshops because of the relationships established during the workshop. Lee also connected vulnerability to listening. People respond to others who have made mistakes and are willing to admit those mistakes. Sharing with somebody who has been

through a particular situation could provide hope for empathy.

"I told my boss today that I feel like hanging a sign on my door. People come in to talk to me all the time. This vulnerability that we show, that's why they come in and talk, they know we listen."

Brookfield (1990a) states that authentic teachers are "those whom students see as real flesh-and-blood human beings with passions, frailties, and emotions" (p. 164). Draves (1984) discusses how personal stories by the facilitator help establish relationships with the participants by showing the humanness of the facilitator. Draves also quotes Malcolm Knowles describing the opening session in his workshops:

The opening session...is the single most critical time of the whole period in which I engage learners. It is during this time that we become acquainted with each other. It is during this time we survey the resources the students are bringing to class. It is during this time we build collaborative rather than a competitive relationship among students in the group. We build an atmosphere of mutual trust, mutual respect, supportiveness, and I present myself as a human being (p. 44).

Palmer (1993) describes vulnerability on the part of the teacher as an opportunity to open the teaching space for feelings. Palmer states that feelings have an important place in learning because feelings are part of the whole person and may be more important in learning because, while our minds tend to analyze and divide things, our feelings bring us into a relationship with the subject. Palmer encourages teachers to lead the way in introducing feelings through vulnerability. Palmer states,

The teacher must make the first move in opening the space for feelings simply because the teacher has the power to do so. In whatever way seems natural, the

teacher needs to convey something like this to the students: "This is the place where it is safe for your feelings to emerge. I have feelings too, and I will make myself vulnerable by telling you some of them. Teaching and learning are human enterprises, and we must use human emotions in the learning process rather than letting them use us. I will take the lead in this so that you will feel encouraged to follow. I will try to respond to your feelings with an understanding that comes from knowing my own (p. 84-85).

The Georgia Power Company Instructor Training Program stresses self-disclosure on the part of instructors in technical training programs. Instructors are encouraged to share inner feelings, thoughts and reactions with participants to encourage the same quality of openness in the participants. This openness between instructors and participants leads to a comfortable classroom setting (Johnson & Russel, 1986).

Theme: Personal Stories of the Facilitator

The third theme of this category was the sharing of personal stories by the facilitators. In this reflection, I shared how I had been focusing on my stories to the neglect of hearing the participants and allowing the participants to share their stories. One of the purposes of showing vulnerability in the stories of the facilitator is to help the group go deeper into the topic and begin to share their own experiences.

"At my next workshop I am going to really focus on facilitating the group's sharing as opposed to focusing on my stories, in other words, limit my stories to those that really model the vulnerability and take the group deeper as opposed to all those I can think of that I tell to tell my story. I will listen at a deeper

level with a quiet mind and seek to facilitate by example rather than with words."

Anne reflected on her desire to improve in her storytelling. She was comfortable and skilled in the personal stories developed in the facilitator training but felt she needed greater diversity in her lighthearted stories. The stories facilitators develop deal with insights from personal experiences. By nature, many of these stories are thought provoking and non-humorous; yet Anne was challenged by her co-facilitator's stories which were from the heart and were also told with humor. She also mentioned the effect the stories have on the mood of the group. Her stories seemed to bring the group down. If the goal of a story is to help the group get to a reflective state, then Anne's stories could have been effective. Anne was concerned that stories that provoke deep thought could silence the group and hinder discussion.

"My co-facilitator's stories were straight from the heart and told with such humor. I realize more and more that I am not as good a story teller as many of the other facilitators. I tell every one with a heart for the group, but many of my stories are really heavy and bring the group down. I need to rethink some of the modules and look at grounding on the ones I am struggling with. I need some lighthearted stories to help in the transitions."

Anne also reflected on bringing in stories that deal directly with her personal experience. In addition, she reflected on spontaneity in relation to telling her stories.

"I am continuing to learn how to be spontaneous and work on my stories, telling them from an experiential point of view."

In an action plan, Lee addressed his determination to use personal stories and expand his comfort level in bringing in personal stories. His goal was to use more personal stories as they relate to the subject at hand.

“One thing I have found as I facilitate more and more workshops is that I am more comfortable bringing in my experiences and stories. I will continue to look for places where I can use stories to make the point, especially if they are more personal.”

Mary described her belief in why stories are important in making the material real by linking the material to real experiences.

“I believe the stories made the material real.”

Personal stories can be used by facilitators of collaborative learning to help establish an environment conducive to learning and characterized by trust, acceptance, and openness in a group. Palmer (1993) describes the learning environment as a space created by teachers when they 1) listen as well as speak, 2) ask questions and welcome insights as well as give answers, 3) provide information and theories that open doors to new theories instead of closing doors and 4) encourage students to learn from each other. Palmer suggests that this space includes three aspects of personal storytelling: openness, boundaries, and hospitality.

Openness refers to the space created when physical, mental, and psychological barriers to learning are removed. Therefore, creating a learning space includes resisting the tendency by participants to clutter the consciousness with thoughts such as the fear of

appearing ignorant to others. This is similar to what Brookfield (1990a) calls the “impostor syndrome” (p. 44). Brookfield suggests that facilitators help students deal with this barrier by acknowledge their own experience with this syndrome. Facilitators’ personal stories can create space for participants by emphasizing the commonality of these barriers.

This concept of creating space for the participants through facilitator stories basically describes the dynamic in Senn-Delaney Leadership Consulting Group (1997) organizational transformation workshops. Facilitators share personal stories in which they demonstrate vulnerability, thereby creating space within the workshops for the participants to explore their own vulnerability. These true stories of the facilitator are designed to personalize the transformation process, add an emotional element to create more impact, show the group that the facilitator is willing to gain new insights, and more importantly, model the vulnerability asked of the participants. In these workshops, the most effective storytellers have a wide range of personal situations, stories, and metaphors which they share to create the space for the participants.

The concept of personal disclosure by the facilitator through stories has its roots in counseling and group psychotherapy. For instance, adventure-based counseling uses outdoor experiences to provide structured psychological experiences, creating a multitude of opportunities for personal challenge and growth within a caring group community. The focus of adventured-based counseling is always group-centered but in a sense, it is also

leader-centered because the leader's presence is always felt (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). According to Yalom (1985), "Self disclosure is absolutely essential in the group therapeutic process. Patients will not benefit from group therapy unless they disclose and do so fully." (p. 127). The sharing of personal stories through disclosure is based on interpersonal relationships and is more important than what is shared. However, it is not the unburdening of deep secrets that is the key to success in the therapeutic process but that the story is shared in the context of relationships with others. The sharing then "results in deeper, richer and more complex relationships with others" (Yalom, p. 129).

Research on effects of the leader's sharing personal stories and demonstrating vulnerability is contradictory and in therapy groups controversial. Positive benefits include the perception that the leader is likeable, friendly, helpful, and trustworthy. However in therapy groups, demonstrating vulnerability can be perceived as being less mentally healthy (Patterson, 1985). In encounter groups and other collaborative settings where the group sees the leader more as an equal, self-disclosure by the leader is more accepted than in therapy groups where the leader is attributed with special healing powers, and therefore almost never presents personal problems within the group (Yalom, 1985). Nevertheless, the leader's role in adventure-based counseling and all group counseling situations is to role model the appropriate level of self-disclosure. The openness and space created by the leader's personal self-disclosure stories gives permission to the group to self-disclose.

Lazurus (1981) includes the concept of story-telling in defining the qualities of a successful therapist. He notes, "They seem to have an endless store of relevant anecdotes and narratives. They are good role models (they practice what they preach), and they are authentic, congruent, and willing to self-disclose" (p. 156).

Boundaries are the second aspect of leadership in collaborative learning situations, providing focus and keeping group issues within the group (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988; Palmer, 1993). Boundaries of the open space created in the group provide a measure of protection, structure, and stability for the learner. Palmer discusses boundaries from the aspect of preventing the learners' fleeing the space when things get uncomfortable. These boundaries are very similar to the concept of the container in dialogue (Isaacs, 1993, 1999; Schein, 1993). This container is the sum of the group's collective assumptions, shared intentions, and beliefs, manifested as the collective atmosphere or climate of the group. Facilitators help establish this boundary through the personal stories shared about their own assumptions and the critical stance taken by the facilitators or teachers in regards to their own teaching practice (Brookfield, 1987).

In dialogue, the container itself can be unstable when people are both holding on to their own assumptions and judging the other participants' assumptions though agreement or disagreement with their own. Once participants in dialogue are willing to accept the diversity of views, another form of instability occurs that Isaacs (1993) calls "instability in the container" (p.35). At this point in the dialogue, the container acts as a boundary for

the instability or crisis of collective suspension that results from the participants being disoriented and beginning to hold on to polarized views. It is at this crisis point in dialogue that the group either proceeds to a new level of inquiry or collapses. In a similar fashion, Palmer (1993) suggests that the temptation to flee a learning space comes just at the point where true knowing begins and that good teachers know that discomfort and pain are often signs that learning is taking place. Therefore, a goal of both facilitators and participants is maintaining the psychological safety of the group (Apps, 1996).

In a case method study on the influence of dialogue on decision making Tisue (1999) describes the importance of creating a container conducive to dialogue with the characteristics of trust and respect. She states the participants viewed her role as "first and foremost as providing a container in which they felt comfortable and safe to share honestly and openly with each other" (p. 52). According to Tisue, a safe container is necessary for the participants to be vulnerable and take risks in expressing ideas to the group.

In many other collaborative learning situations participants at times may be uncomfortable when their assumptions and beliefs are challenged. Assumptions are defined by Brookfield (1987, 1990c) as those taken-for-granted values, common sense ideas and self-evident rules of thumb that become our habitual ways of thinking. When these assumptions are challenged, facilitators are responsible for maintaining an environment that encourages trust, acceptance, and open sharing. Apps (1996) suggests

that playfulness within the group contributes to both psychological safety and deeper learning. Apps believes that storytelling is one method we can use to promote playfulness and psychological safety. Playfulness is needed because it provides an opportunity to participants to lighten up and relax. Pike (1992) advocates natural humor that comes from stories of the facilitator's own life experiences. Humorous stories help relieve tension, make relevant points, and stimulate attention and imagination (Farrah, 1990).

Hospitality is the third concept Palmer (1993) uses to describe the other aspect of space that deals with relationships. One of his metaphors for teaching is friendship. It consists of the teacher having a relationship with the subject and with the students. The hospitality of the teacher invites the students into the relationship with the subject as full partners so that the students can gain the same benefits of the fruitful friendship with the subject as the teacher. To do this, the teacher must establish a relationship with the students. Apps (1996) says that the "critical relationship for the teachers is with learners" (p. 74). It is through this relationship that trust is developed. In collaborative learning, teachers and students are co-learners and therefore, the establishment and maintenance of this friendship relationship can be a critical factor in enhancing a safe learning environment.

The importance of the friendship relationship is also stressed by many therapists. An important study by Fiedler in 1950 yielded one common factor called the goodness of therapeutic relationships (Patterson, 1985). According to Patterson, since this study, it

has been generally accepted that the conditions of empathic understanding, a factor which is necessary in therapy groups, are basically the same as those conditions necessary for all good interpersonal relationships. Patterson submits that counseling or psychotherapy could simply be an ideal friendship and essentially a means of providing a good human relationship. In this context, the value of establishing good rapport or friendship in collaborative learning situations cannot be understated.

Peoples (1992) suggests that a powerful by-product of teachers telling stories on themselves is that it enhances the listeners' positive perception of the speaker. This in turn helps build the positive relationship. Storytelling also draws listeners into the discovery process as teachers describe their own journey in their relationship with the subject. If the teacher "can provide for the learners a sense that you are discovering some basic truths and insights for the first time, they can enjoy the experience with you" (Farrah, 1990). This builds a relationship as the teacher and student experience the subject together. As the students identify with the triumphs and the mistakes of the teacher, a common ground of personal rapport and relationship is established. Personal stories of how the teacher has applied the content or subject to their own life helps establish that the students will be able to do the same, especially when both triumphs and failures are shared (Pike, 1992).

Theme: Facilitator Care for the Group

Mary described care in terms of connecting with the group. To Mary, care includes being empathetic and understanding the participants.

"I believe that one of the most important aspects of my job as a facilitator is to connect with the group. I also believe that it is important of the group to understand that I care for them as individuals and that I am empathetic and will attempt to understand them wherever they are in this difficult process of change."

In another reflection, Mary described how she planned to demonstrate her care for the participants by respecting their feelings and ideas. Mary struggled with her intention of trying to get the participants to a particular point of view. Her insight in this instance was that her care for individuals could be shown by being more concerned about the relationship with the group than concerned about sticking to the script of the lesson plan and trying to convince others to see things her way.

"When I do this module again, I will be less concerned about getting through the prescribed text but remember my objective. I will be more concerned with the participants' feelings. I will remove some of my filters and allow the workshop participants to be where they are. I will refrain from lecturing about all the things they have to be grateful for. It is only when I am willing to do this that I show true respect for the individuals' feelings and communicate that I care for them."

Mary related the reasons for her concern about the group knowing that she cares. She even went so far as to state that caring for the participants was her most important

task as a facilitator.

"When I think about the workshop, when I first go in there, is that I need to go in there and reach out and touch those people and they need to be very aware that I care, I think that is my most important job as facilitator. Even though I know that the material is important and I know that content is important, and I know all that but I don't think any of that will work if in the beginning I don't make it real clear, in the very beginning that I am not judgmental and that I am there for them and I care about them. When I go into a workshop I remind myself that that is my job, and so I go to extra lengths to make sure they know I care."

Mary linked both empathy and respect for the participants with her concept of caring for the participants. References to these concepts are found more frequently than references to care in adult education and adult learning literature. Brookfield (1990a) discusses empathy in terms of a teacher's personal struggles in learning. He suggests that teachers who have struggled with anxieties and obstacles to learning are better equipped to display sensitivity and empathy with students who are struggling with their own learning.

Draves (1984) describes the ideal teacher as "people-centered, more interested in people than things" (p. 17); yet, his three requirements for teaching adults are a love for the subject, a desire to share it, and a basic competence in the subject. Most of the literature leans heavily toward what we call in STAR 7 workshops the "objective" attributes and mechanics of facilitation and very little toward the "subjective" or more

human aspects of facilitation.

Mackeracher (1996) does suggest that “learners like to know that their facilitators (or teachers, instructors, trainers, counselors, advisors, and the like) feel enthusiasm and passion for them, for the content to be learned, and for the learning processes and activities to be used” (p. 259). This reference to passion for the student is the only reference she makes concerning care for the students. In presenting his three “Rs” of the classroom experience, Sisco (1991) discussed the need for relationship with the facilitator to be one of mutual trust, respect and credibility. He admonishes that the relationships with other students and with the facilitator receive little attention compared to the emphasis on the relationship to the content or material.

Palmer (1998) describes teaching as weaving connections between facilitator, students, and subject. He examines the concept of community and the importance of a healthy climate characterized by a love for learning and a love for the learners. According to Palmer, the bonds of affection developed between teacher/student/subject are a requirement for learning but not to the extent that intimacy becomes the norm. According to Palmer (1993), the goal of a teacher is to bring the students into community with the teacher and each other. The goal is not just for the warm feelings the state of community brings but to enable the community to experience the critical rigor that teaching and learning requires.

Apps (1996) included this concept of caring for the learner in his discussion on "teaching from the heart." He described the first teacher he knew who taught from the heart: "Miss Piechowski was a strict disciplinarian with a loving heart. She cared about each of us, and she cared about our families and our small, isolated rural community" (p. 5). He described teaching from the heart as striving to touch the heart of the learner to form a connection with the learner.

The themes in this chapter deal with the relationships we had with the students or group. The themes reflect the desire on our part as facilitators to make connections with the group from the heart. The themes "rapport with the group" and "facilitator care for the group" are results of these connections. The themes "facilitator vulnerability" and "personal stories of the facilitator" deal with techniques or methods of establishing those connections.

CHAPTER 4

ROLE OF THOUGHT

Introduction

I grouped two related themes into a category I call **Role of Thought**. Much of the content of the STAR 7 workshop is focused on becoming aware of thinking habits or filters and how these thinking habits affect behavior and results. This category focused on how the content of the workshop was being worked out in the lives of the facilitators. I defined this category in terms of the themes (1) awareness of thought and (2) being in the moment.

Theme: Awareness Of Thought

Awareness of thought is a topic of the workshop in several different ways. A basic premise of the workshop is that we tend to view the world through a set of individual filters that cause each of us to see the world differently. The filters are such a part of our reality that we are normally unaware of the presence of the filters and the impact the filters have on our thinking. Bohm (1996) calls these filters “blocks” and described the blocks as “a kind of insensitivity or anesthesia about one’s own contradictions”(p.4). He suggests that it is crucial to be aware of the nature of these blocks. In discussing this concept of awareness of thought, Isaacs (1999) notes that frequently we are unaware of the extent to which these filters affect our assumptions. Isaacs describes awareness of thought as

“learning to watch how our thoughts dictate to us much of our personal and collective experience” (p. 93). Much of the STAR 7 workshop is about becoming aware of various filters and experiencing the impact of these filters on our thinking and resultant behaviors.

Lee reflected on how a continual awareness of the concepts of the workshop draws attention to the operation of the concepts in his daily activities. According to Lee, this awareness also helps the facilitator know what to do when he or she falls back into an ineffective thinking habit. He described awareness as taking a thought from the back of the mind and bringing it out to a place where it can be attended to.

“One of the things that strikes me and I have heard it said several times is that “As facilitators these concepts work on us all the time.” ...we find ourselves being bitten by the “fs”, and not assuming innocence and all the litany ourselves. Maybe we need to get this point across in the workshops. Just because you are taking these things from back there in our minds and bringing it out to awareness out here, doesn’t mean that you are not going to fall back. Not when we as facilitators keep falling back but that added awareness helps you get right back up there and know what you need to do to be more effective.”

Kate discussed how the action research activities of reflecting and reading other researchers’ reflections helped maintain awareness. Awareness, which she defined as thinking about things, in turn helped her monitor her own thoughts and behavior.

“I have found that the reflecting and our collaborative e-mails are helping me stay on track with things and keep my awareness up.....they are keeping me aware and thinking about these things.”

Krishnamurti (1999) defines this awareness as a sensitivity to both the movement of thought and the whole environment in which the thought exists. Bohm (1990, 1992, 1998) stresses the importance of having a continual awareness of thought because he believes that thought produces and shapes our perception of reality. According to Bohm, thought not only thinks about the reality but thought is actually a part of the reality.

Bohm (1998) states:

Thought also produces and shapes our perception of reality. We see reality according to our thought. Therefore, thought is constantly participating both in giving shape and form and figuration to ourselves, and to the whole of reality. Now thought doesn't know this. Thought is thinking that it isn't doing anything. I think this is really where the difficulty is. We have got to see that thought is part of this reality and that we are not merely thinking about it, but that we are thinking it (p. 115).

Without a consciousness or awareness of our thoughts and our thinking process, we think our thoughts are just a representation of the reality as opposed to Bohm's idea that our thoughts are actually creating the reality we perceive. Pransky (1998) defines this thought recognition as "the ability to see thought in the moment as the source of sensory data and the source of one's personal experiential reality" (p. 27). He suggests that living in thought recognition produces a sense of well being, emotional buoyancy, and stability because seeing thoughts as the source of our experience provides a means of improving the quality of thinking by changing the thinking. According to Pransky, simply

recognizing the role of thought is all that is necessary for people to effortlessly change their thinking.

Carlson and Bailey (1997) define this thought awareness or recognition as the capacity to “see that thought is not an absolute reality but merely our experience of reality in the moment” (p. 10). They suggest that thought recognition is the most powerful tool we have for living in healthy psychological functioning because it provides us with choices in regard to our thinking and the opportunity to change our experience of the moment through our thinking. Thought recognition entails “seeing ourselves as the thinker of our own thoughts and the creator of our moment to moment experience” (p.24). Recognizing that our thoughts are creating our moment-to-moment reality gives us the option of acting or not acting on a particular thought. We can recognize the thought as “just a thought” (Carlson, 1997, p. 15) and make the choice of whether to respond to the reality that thought is producing.

Mary discussed a practical application of awareness of thought in relation to a concept presented in the workshop called the “mood elevator.” Moods are presented in the workshop as one of the filters that affect our thinking. According to Pransky (1992, 1998), Mills (1995), and Carlson (1997), moods are basically constant changes in our moment-to-moment state of mind that distort our perception and alter our thinking. The “mood elevator” is a term coined by Pransky (1992) to describe the infinite range of moods from high to low in terms of floors visited by an elevator. High-mood states bring a higher awareness of our thinking and a broader perspective of reality. On the other

hand, low-mood states produce a narrow perspective of reality: life seems to be all about the individual, events are taken personally, and the actions of others are misinterpreted.

Mary discussed the effect that awareness of thinking has on her moods. Moods are an indication of the quality of our thinking, and awareness of the thoughts causing the moods helps us not to take our thinking too seriously when we're in low moods (Pransky, 1998). Mary suggested that she can turn her thinking around simply by being aware of her own thinking and moods. This awareness of thoughts releases the individual from the grip of the reality that mood is creating in the moment (Pransky, 1992, 1998; Carlson, 1997).

"One of the blessings of the STAR 7 Workshops is a phrase I heard one of the Senn Delaney facilitators say, 'stinking thinking causes sinking.' I frequently share this phrase with the workshop participants because it helped me so much. I often pulled myself down to bottom rungs of the mood elevator with my 'stinking thinking.' What a gift to know that I can do something about the 'stinking thinking.' I can sometimes now catch myself and turn my thinking around just by being aware of my 'stinking thinking'."

Lee related an insight he had concerning his moods and the effect of moods on decisions. He suggested that being aware of moods can help in decision making. Because lower moods reflect a lower quality of thinking and higher moods indicate a higher quality, he suggested that decisions should be made in higher-mood states.

"During last week's meeting, I passed along an insight regarding the mood elevator. If we always consider where we are on the mood elevator, then we will have a better feel for the quality of our decisions. And if we find that a low

mood has clouded our decision, we can go back and change our minds after our thinking becomes more pristine.”

Carlson (1997) suggests that most problems in relationships are caused by individuals taking their own and others' thoughts too seriously when in a low mood. According to Pransky (1998), each mood creates a different reality of the same situation. If you are not aware of the impact of moods on your current reality, you can act on the reality created by the lower mood when the external reality did not change, just your own perspective about that reality. Awareness of one's thoughts and moods helps one be more resilient to changes in the inevitable changing moods. Carlson (1997) and Pransky (1998) suggest that we learn to be grateful for high moods and graceful in low moods and that just being aware of the mood often changes the mood without any further effort on our part.

Theme: Being in the Moment

A concept closely associated with awareness of thought is living in the moment. Senn-Delaney (1994) calls this concept “Be Here Now” and defines it as the ability to focus and concentrate on the present with a quiet mind. This concept involves being totally aware of the moment which includes a sensitivity to the elements of the environment, nature, thoughts, reactions, color, etc. (Krishnamurti, 1978, 1993, 1996). The quiet mind aspect of being fully in the present includes being aware of the thought process that enables us to not be distracted from the moment by a multitude of thoughts.

According to Senn-Delaney (1998), areas of thought that produce distractions include memories from the past, thoughts of the future, ego, and culture. Therefore, living in the moment is not a matter of being aware of all of our thoughts and trying to control these thoughts but rather having a quiet mind and not being preoccupied with our thoughts and busy mind (Carlson, 1997; Krishnamurti, 1969). Living in the moment is therefore characterized as having a quiet, calm, undistracted state of mind that is totally available to respond to whatever is being experienced in the current moment.

Bob discussed this concept of living in the moment as a goal in his facilitation. In one of his action plans he said,

"I will slow down, go with flow, and try not to miss the experience of the moment that is right in front of me."

Wittgenstein (as cited in Shotter, 1995, 1996) described a similar desire in that he was concerned with trying to understand those things that were already in plain view but which we do not see because they are already always before our eyes.

Carlson and Bailey (1997) suggest two different modes of thought. The processing/analytical mode is an active thinking mode where data is taken in, processed, and decisions are made based on the analytical process of thinking. According to Carlson and Bailey, this mode is an intellectual form of thinking that is highly prized in our Western culture and is used primarily for solving problems and accomplishing tasks where all the variables are known. Carlson and Bailey describe the other mode of thinking as a flow of thoughts in the moment. Some of these flowing thoughts come from memory and

other thoughts come from a creative source. In the flow mode, thinking seems effortless and is able to respond to whatever is happening or needed in the moment. In the flow mode, awareness of the moment is heightened and creativity peaks. This increased awareness is the enabler Bob was looking for to help him experience the moment.

I described my experience of living in the moment and the consequences of having a quiet mind.

“When I am living in the moment and being here now with somebody, I am not passing judgment. It lowers my anxiety level and releases me from striving.”

I reflected on how a quiet mind affects my relationships with others. I experience less anxiety and strife. A quiet mind allows me to just accept whatever others are saying without judgmental thoughts that come from memory. In times when the mind is not quiet, thoughts are being produced that are a combination of the sensory experience of the moment and our memories of past experience (Bohm and Edwards, 1990; Bohm, 1980, 1992, Krishnamurti, 1993). According to Bohm (1990), in this memory type of thinking, a person is just reacting automatically as a reflex action. Thought from memory in turn provides us with a representation of reality as it is ordered in our mind, not as it may actually be occurring. Thought is always trying to claim that it knows everything and that the thought is correct. Bohm (1990) and Krishnamurti (1999) both believe that we must see the overall process of thought because thought deceives by presenting a picture of reality and then denying that it had anything to do with creating that reality when it actually determined the reality to present.

Bohm (1990) described the need for quieting our mind and slowing down our thoughts by using the analogy of our thought as being like a net. The fineness of the net is based on our memory and the net limits our ability to be in the moment. According to Bohm, thought responds to new input by inventing more and finer nets but it is always limited in its grasp of what is going on right now in the moment because of the process of thought. A busy mind is full of thoughts and responding to all sensory input from a place of memory. Bohm likens this to a stream that is stirred up and cloudy. The sediment prevents us from seeing a clear picture of what is happening in the moment. The thought from memory clouds our perception because the thought process takes the sensory data from the moment, retrieves a thought from memory, and brings it forth as a true picture of the current moment. In fact, the picture is actually the reality which has been created in our thought by our memory and filters. Slowing down our thought process by quieting our mind and being aware of the process is like allowing the sediment to settle in a stream. We are then able to have a clear perception of the present without our memory thoughts interfering.

Bohm suggests that a quiet mind leads us to a state of perception that he describes as the ability to see that things are not coherent. It is from this state of perception that new ideas and insight apart from memory can take place. In this state, the brain and the whole thought system are acting beyond dependence on memory. It is a state of awareness in which there is a great energy and sensitivity to the present. Bohm likens it to a state of watchfulness in which one observes and takes in the moment without judgment

and thought. Krishnamurti (1969) likens this awareness to living with a deadly snake in the room. In this case, you would be very sensitive to changes in the snake, every movement would be watched and every sound would be listened to. You would have great energy directed to the present moment. Accordingly, the key to awareness is not to control our thoughts but rather to be aware of the thought process and the impact that thought has in shaping our personal reality (Bohm, 1990; Isaacs, 1999; Krishnamurti, 1978, 1993, 1996).

Shotter (2000) describes an awareness of a third kind of collective life created at the point of contact between two or more persons. Shotter brings attention to a world created by relationship with others that we live within. Because we live within this world, most of the time we are unaware of its existence in the background of our consciousness. The themes "awareness of thought" and "being in the moment" speak to this unawareness of the socially created background. Whorf (1956) describes the relationship that words and language have in recognizing this background. He provides this example:

For instance if a race of people had the physiological defect of being able to see only the color blue, they would hardly be able to formulate the rule that they saw only blue. The term blue would convey no meaning to them, their language would lack color terms, and their words denoting their various sensations of blue would answer to, and translate, our words "light, dark, white, black, " and so on, not our word "blue." In order to formulate the rule or norm of seeing only blue, they would need exceptional moments in which they saw other colors (p. 209).

Shotter (1995, 1996, 2000) refers to Wittgenstein's ideas of attending to features in the background which our ordinary forms of language make us overlook.

Wittgenstein's idea is not to produce new facts but rather seek to see that which is already in plain view and before our eyes. Whorf (1956) and Shotter (2000) suggest it is the out of the ordinary exceptional moments that draw our attention and awareness to the background.

Anne described her understanding of this concept in this reflection.

"What does Be Here Now mean to me? Taking full responsibility for the moment. Focusing in enough to enjoy the smallest of incidences. Really responding to the body language and unspoken requests. Resting enough to have a full open mind to accept the subtle moments."

Anne's referred to her ownership of her thought process in this description of being fully present and in the moment. She also related the importance of being in the moment with her relationship to others. When she was in the moment she felt that she was able to respond to others with perhaps a deeper level of attention by responding to body language and unspoken requests. This is an example of the awareness Bohm (1990) and Krishnamurti (1983) describe.

Anne also linked this awareness to listening in another reflection.

"Listening with the heart while someone is speaking from the heart. I am working on this also."

Listening is one area where the impact of a busy mind is readily seen. If we are not in the moment and aware of the thought process when listening, we respond out of our

memory and can miss the richness and deepness of the words the other is speaking. Isaacs (1999) suggests that listening is a key to the principle of participation. He explains language from a holographic perspective. When a physical hologram is broken up, each piece of the hologram still contains all of the information contained in the whole hologram. The density of the information in the broken piece is less than the whole and therefore more diffuse and dim. In the same manner, Isaacs suggests that language is holographic. He states, "Each word contains not only the wider context of paragraph and sentence but the deeper context of our lives" (p. 89). Listening from a quiet mind allows us to gather in the information from the words, the feelings and all the other sensory input from the other in the moment. This allows us to hear beyond the words and focus the image into an understanding of the world and reality of the other in the conversation.

Isaacs suggests that we need to learn to listen and that learning begins with an awareness of both how we are listening and of how our listening is related to our own heart and feelings. Isaacs (p. 92-102) suggests five areas of focus in learning to listen.

- Be aware of thought - realize how much of our listening and reaction to others comes from our memory and the "net of our thought" that we bring into the interaction.
- Stick to the facts - be aware of our filters and the extent to which we assume what we see is actually what is there. We tend to create inferences about our experience and others without an awareness that we are projecting our inferences.

- Follow the disturbance - when we hear certain trigger words we have a tendency to bring our memories into the conversation and listen only for evidence that confirms our reaction. We only listen for evidence that we are right or wrong. In other words, we only listen to agree or to disagree. Isaacs suggests that we be aware of this tendency and listen for evidence that disconfirms or challenges our thoughts. Our listening then becomes reflective and we begin to see how others are experiencing the world.
- Listen without resistance - recognize the way in which we project our opinions and distortions on others and let go of the resistance and reactions we generate.
- Stand still - quiet the inner chatter of our minds and learn from the silence within ourselves. This allows us to listen with a quiet mind.

In the STAR 7 workshops we also present a model of the Levels of Listening (Senn-Delaney, 1996) which connects one's thinking and listening. Each of the levels correspond to a different level of thinking activity in the mind. The levels of listening and the relationship to thinking include:

- Nonlistening - a busy, preoccupied mind blocks listening completely.
- To Tell My Story - the mind is operating from memory, listening is just enough to hear the topic and then begin formulating an answer, waiting for the right moment to speak.

- To Agree/Disagree - the mind is preoccupied with memory, judging and comparing everything based on the past; listening is just enough to find a point of agreement/disagreement while formulating an answer or response.
- For Application - the mind is beginning to settle down to a higher state of listening where the thinking is linear and logical but mind is still active comparing information with past or future events.
- For Implication - the mind has slowed down enough to be curious and start seeing the greater perspective.
- For Understanding - a quiet mind is able to hear the entire message, even beyond the words, listening to all the message without being provoked into judgment, application, or implication with no thinking of the past or future.

The **Role of Thought** category speaks to the growth in the relationship we had to the subject we facilitated. The role of thought is the foundational basis of the STAR 7 workshops. The themes reflect the personal growth we experienced as an increased awareness of our moment-to-moment thinking, an awareness of the reality we create by that thinking, and the resultant behaviors demonstrated as we act into and out of that created reality. In the last three chapters, I described the themes that emerged from the analysis of our reflections and discussions. I also attempted to mix our voices with the voices of authors who speak to these themes. In the next chapter I relate the results of the research into our practice.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS

Overview

My purpose in conducting this research project was to engage in collaborative action research with a group of experiential learning facilitators in order to improve our practice. We used the DATA-DATAⁿ collaborative action research methodology to identify areas of needed improvement, examine personal assumptions, theorize possible solutions, design plans, take action, collect data, reflect, analyze, theorize and act upon results. We individually repeated this action research cycle from three to five times during the course of this project. Reflections and results of individual action research cycles were continuously shared with the group to foster individual learning and group construction of knowledge. We concluded that changes in our practice did occur as a result of personal insights and growth experienced in the action research. Most of the changes align with the categories of themes identified in the analysis.

The analysis of data revealed ten themes in three categories: The themes were: (1) facilitate versus teach, (2) control issues, (3) focus on the needs of the group, (4) shadow of management, (5) rapport with the group, (6) facilitator vulnerability, (7) personal stories of the facilitator, (8) facilitator care for the group, (9) awareness of thought, and (10) being in the moment. The three categories were: (1) role of the facilitator, (2) relationship with the group, and (3) role of thought.

Role of Facilitator: Changes in Practice

The **Role of Facilitator** category provided metaphors for facilitation. Clarification of this role provided boundaries within which we operated as facilitators and established criteria for skills needed to improve our practice. Facilitating learning in Type Two and Type Three teaching and learning situations requires a different approach and skill set than traditional Type One teaching. Control issues are especially important in experiential learning situations, and focusing on group needs is necessary to function effectively as a facilitator of adult learning. Defining the role of facilitator also established a relationship to the organizational system in which we operate, a relationship I refer to in the shadow of management theme.

We clarified our understanding of the role of facilitator and the difference between facilitating and teaching. For example, Roger and Anne reported that before the project they focused on covering all the material and adhering to the facilitator script. As a result of the project, they began to focus on the intent of the module and the needs of the group. Roger reported the most important change in his practice was not having to give answers in response to questions. He now returns questions back to the group and allows the group to construct their own answers.

We were also struck with the incredible diversity of thought around the role of facilitator and how we made sense of it through the use of metaphors. Joseph's understanding of facilitation as being like "*planting a seed, fertilizing it, hoeing and doing whatever it takes to get it grow*" is an example of this diversity. I have a new

awareness of the impact of various metaphors on my own approach to the task of facilitation, particularly in setting boundaries on my behavior. In terms of the “results cone” concept we use in the STAR 7 workshops, my thinking determines my behavior which in turn produces my results. In effect, my mental models prompt me to act in a certain way and limit my behavior by setting boundaries beyond which I do not go.

When I facilitate from a particular metaphor, I act into that role based on my concept of that role. For example, one of my metaphors is that of learning as journey into the unknown. In facilitating I act as a guide to the participants in the adventure. I watch for hidden dangers and hazards that the less experienced may not see. I point out certain features in the territory or seek to involve the group in interesting aspects of the territory. These actions are based on my assumptions about how an adventure guide would relate to the group. Davies and Harre (2000) use the term “positioning” to describe this concept of acting in terms of a metaphor. According to Davies and Harre, “Once having taken up a particular position as one’s own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned” (p. 3).

My positioning sets guidelines for my actions which in turn positions the group to act in a certain way toward me. Understanding the concept of positioning has given me an awareness of the conflict that is present when either the group as a whole, or more likely, individual members of the group position themselves differently than I have positioned

them. For example, there are times when some of the participants see the role of guide as protector. This perception conflicts with my ideas of exposing them to the uncertainties and unknowns of the adventure, helping them learn to feed themselves and take accountability for their own learning. Understanding this conflict allows me to either reposition myself by changing my metaphor to meet the needs of the group or to negotiate with the group concerning their position and then arrive at a common understanding. If I am to be relationally responsible (McNamee & Gergen, 1999) to the group, I may need to position myself in many different facilitator roles to sustain learning and growth within the group.

Another change in my practice is an awareness and focus on the "X" or the subject that is hypothetically situated in the center of the group. In Type Three teaching and learning the focus is on the social construction of knowledge by the group. Katz and Shotter (1996b) refer to this knowledge developed in the space between participants. I am aware of the relationship I have with the "X" which is created between myself and the group. My responsibility as facilitator is to grow in my own relationship with the "X" while also facilitating the group's relationship with the same. Focusing on our relationship with the "X" makes it easier for me to invite others into the conversation and establishes me as a co-learner with other members of the group. The key for me is that the "X" is among all the participants, and each participant develops a relationship with the "X" as well as with one other.

Relationship with the Group: Changes in Practice

Themes in the **Relationship with the Group** category deal with the nature of relationships we established with the participants. The effectiveness of a facilitator is in part a function of the rapport he or she has with the group. Demonstrating personal vulnerability, sharing personal stories and caring for the group are three means by which rapport is established.

All of us changed our practice in terms of building rapport with our groups. This change began in the research group when one facilitator reflected on the difficulty she was having in building rapport with the group. When all the other facilitators identified this same problem in our practices, we decided to include building rapport with the group as part of our action plans. Changes in practice around building rapport included such simple things as having the room set up early so we could greet and welcome the participants to the workshop. We also focused on the relationship with the group by spending time at breaks with the group instead of being caught up in facilitator duties. One of my roles as a facilitator is to be a catalyst for others who would critically examine their assumptions and beliefs. I believe that building and maintaining a strong rapport with the other is necessary to accomplish this task

Role of Thought: Changes in Practice

The role of thought category speaks to personal growth we experienced as an increased awareness of our moment-to-moment thinking, an awareness of the reality we

create by that thinking, and the resultant behaviors demonstrated as we act into and out of that created reality.

I discussed the relationship between thought and the different levels of listening previously in this dissertation. Bob, Anne, Kate and Roger began listening to the group at deeper levels of listening. For example, Anne described how she listened to the group at a shallow "listening to tell" level. When she heard a response called for in the facilitator script, she would immediately cut off any further conversation in the group and continue to the next point. Now she has a quieter mind as she facilitates and listens in order to understand the comments of group members. She allows participants to talk without feeling a need to provide her comment or move the group along. Roger changed his intent from listening in order to give an answer to listening in order to understand. He now works on asking open-ended questions and then listening with a quiet mind as he seeks to understand. He now finds questions that invite conversation just seem to appear. Bob related that he has learned to slow down, step back and observe his thinking, actions which have led to an increase in listening for understanding.

I also now have an awareness during facilitation which enables me to notice subtle aspects of the moment. These are what Katz & Shotter (1996a) call striking moments. These striking moments usually draw attention to aspects that are present but otherwise hidden in the background of the subject. I now point out or draw the attention of the participants to these normally overlooked details and features, providing the participants with new ways of thinking.

In-the-moment awareness has led me to experiment with my facilitation, and as a result, my facilitation seems much more fluid and alive. My attitude toward facilitation has become playful since I now take myself and my facilitation much less seriously. Changes in my practice can be summed up as an increased awareness of my thinking in the moment, an awareness of the reality I am creating by that thinking and the resultant behaviors I am demonstrating as I act into and out of that reality.

Research Processes: Changes in Practice

In addition to changes in our practice related to each of the three categories of themes, other changes in practice resulted from the processes of collaborative learning and action research. Reading our shared reflections helped us identify similar issues in our individual practices. Many of the changes in practice reported by the group included techniques and ideas from other facilitators. Reading and discussing the different issues going on in other workshops also helped direct our attention away from our performance as facilitators and to those things we could do to improve the group's response to the content. One of the more experienced facilitators in the group reported that even though she had already facilitated ten workshops, she learned to apply many basic concepts as a direct result of the collaborative learning process. Recognizing the commonality of our experiences also provided an optimism that changes in practice of others would also work in our practices.

Another major change in our practice is a continuing reflection on our practice as facilitators. We informally repeat the action research cycle in areas where problem solving and change is desired. This continuing reflection is a result of participating in the discipline of the structured action research project. Since the end of the project, when something unusual or out of the ordinary arises, we treat the situation as a learning opportunity by enjoying the experience, reflecting on the situation, theorizing on results and assumptions, making informal plans and acting into the situation differently next time in order to observe what happens. The action research project also gave us self-confidence in our ability to improve on our performances or handle whatever situation confronts us. Developing action plans and then acting upon the plans instilled a sense of control. This self-confidence is manifested in being able to go with the flow and respond to unscripted situations with a sense of curiosity.

Reflections on the Process

In addition to being a full participant of the collaborative action research group, I was also the researcher for this dissertation. From the perspective of research design, I have several observations about the process I used. In this project we focused on both individual and group learning. We researched our individual practice and we learned collectively as we shared our individual learning and insights with the group. We focused on joint construction of knowledge in that we shared and learned from and with each other. I was the coordinator of the reflections and a source of information to the group in

terms of the theory and literature, but I did not have any special knowledge of the subject. The insights and reflections from our individual practices combined to form the subject. These are characteristics of collaborative learning.

The design of this project contained four elements that enhanced collaborative learning. They were the interpersonal relationships between the researchers, the facilitation skills already present within the group, the commitment each researcher had to improving his or her practice, and the information systems infrastructure that existed within the organization.

The first element that enhanced collaborative learning was the make-up of the group. The action research group consisted of eight individuals who had different positions within TVA but were linked together by the common experience of being certified STAR 7 facilitators. Certification requires facilitators to participate in three weeks of training with a group of ten or more facilitators and co-facilitate three or more workshops under the guidance of a certified coach. The training was designed to develop facilitation skills and ground facilitators in demonstrating vulnerability, trust, respect and openness in a group. These personal growth experiences resulted in the development of interpersonal relationships within each team and within the greater STAR 7 facilitator community of over sixty facilitators. Because these interpersonal relationships were already present within the group, we did not struggle with developing trust and respect. Other studies on collaborative learning have identified trust as an issue in the initial stages of their groups' learning experiences (Armstrong, 1999; Tisue, 1999; Crosse, 2000;

Alderton, 2000). Armstrong, Crosse and Alderton's studies involved groups of students who had to initially work through group development issues. Even though the participants in Tissue's study on facilitating dialogue in a family owned business knew each other, they still initially had to work through issues of trust and respect in terms of participating in collaborative learning.

The second element that enhanced collaborative learning was the facilitators' previous experience in facilitating group processes. I initially modeled specific behaviors such as asking others to say more about their reflections and inviting others to respond in the group meetings. Others followed my lead and contributed to the collaborative learning process by inviting dialogue within the group.

The third element that enhanced collaborative learning was each facilitator's desire to improve his or her practice. The majority of the members of the research group completed certification just prior to the beginning of this project. Their enthusiasm for the facilitator training carried over to this project which they saw as an opportunity for even deeper personal and professional growth.

The final element of this project that enhanced collaborative learning was the information systems infrastructure at TVA. Although we worked in five different locations, we had a standardized e-mail and word processing system. Reflections were e-mailed to me as the principle researcher. I copied each reflection into a separate document which contained all that individual researcher's reflections, removed personal references that might compromise confidentiality and copied back into e-mail for transmission to the

group. All of this was seamlessly accomplished with no technical problems and allowed for a quick turn around of the reflections, keeping "X" as close to the moment as possible.

However, I believe there were two features of the design that did not enhance collaborative learning. The first feature related to the informed consent signed by each facilitator at the beginning of the project required me to maintain the confidentiality of their written reflections. This seemed to de-personalize the process, as I had to eliminate any personal references that might reveal their identity. Given the interpersonal relationships that already existed among the facilitators, I believe the collaborative learning process would have been more effective if I had written the consent form to require confidentiality only when sharing the information outside the group. In a collaborative learning group everyone knows and identifies the speakers in dialogue. The conversation is open between members and the group. But in our written reflections, the questions and interactions went to the group through me. I think the dialogue would have been more effective on line if everyone had shared his or her reflection with the group online. I think this would have resulted in even more "member to member" dialogue in addition to mainly "member to group" dialogue.

The second feature was the widely dispersed locations of the participants. I recognized this issue before the project began and included only two group meetings in my design. One meeting was mid-term in the project and the other six months after the conclusion of the research cycles. We used these meetings as opportunities to reflect on changes in our practices as a result of the research. Both of these meetings were

scheduled in conjunction with other STAR 7 facilitator meetings. Several of the facilitators expressed interest in meeting more often and felt that the meetings we did have were exceptionally rich in terms of collaborative learning. Involving participants who are located closer together would have made it possible to meet more frequently, thereby increasing the collaborative learning aspects of the project.

Recommendations for Further Research

I experienced difficulty explaining the DATA-DATAⁿ research model. In my initial meetings with the facilitators I used the information contained in Appendix C which is an example of how the DATA-DATAⁿ model is applied to studying one's practice. I also provided the co-researchers with my dissertation prospectus as an overview for the project. In the prospectus I referred to literature on action research (e.g., Kuhne & Quigley, 1997) that basically describes action research as a repeating spiral of steps consisting of core processes of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Because of the grounding of the facilitators in various Total Quality Management methods, most of the researchers immediately saw action research as an alternative version of a spiraling Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle (Deming, 1986; Walton, 1986). When I presented the DATA-DATAⁿ model as the methodology I was using in this research, I experienced difficulty explaining the finer points of the model and its correlation to other models. To most of the facilitators the DATA-DATAⁿ model was a more complex version of the other models of action research I had presented in initially explaining action research. I believe

the difficulty in understanding DATA-DATAⁿ was an example of a “first learned experience” blocking out a new construct of meaning. In our workshops we use the expression “lock-in/lock-out” to describe this filter. The facilitators had “locked-in” to the initially described action research models and connected it to the formerly learned PDCA cycle. They effectively “locked-out” my explanation of DATA-DATAⁿ. I dealt with this problem by helping each facilitator construct a practical understanding of the DATA-DATAⁿ model in terms of their own research. Researchers planning to use the DATA-DATAⁿ model for collaborative action research may need to pay special attention to their collaborators’ grounding in other models as well as their own grounding in order to help others connect to the model.

Another potential area of further study relates to the DATA-DATAⁿ model. This study was not about the DATA-DATAⁿ model but was designed to investigate whether action research in a facilitator’s practice would change that practice. The study concluded that changes in practice did occur, but it did not answer the question of whether the version of DATA-DATAⁿ model used is the most effective model in a corporate setting. For example, the “T” step in the first DATA requires the researcher to derive a practical theory in light of the formal theories of the practice. Because I was a doctoral student with access to materials and grounded in many of the concepts, I was able to bring relevant literature and formal theories into the research. Researchers without this access may have difficulty with this version of the model. The model may need to be modified for use outside academic settings.

This study was not designed to determine if the changes in practice were effective in terms of the participants' experiences. A study could be designed to determine the effectiveness of the changes in terms of participant ratings at the conclusion of the workshop and changes in the participants' thinking, behavior and results back at work. The changes in practice were also attributed to the research without taking into account the experience level of the researchers. Five of the researchers had just completed facilitator certification and were relatively inexperienced in facilitating workshops. Three others had been facilitating workshops for more than a year. The themes/results could be compared with themes/results from a different mix of experience, such as, more experienced versus less experienced facilitators.

Closing Reflection

This study helped me clarify my understanding of my own role as a facilitator and a teacher. I agree with Brookfield (1990b) that many learning/teaching situations can be considered transactional dialogues between all the participants (including the facilitator) who bring to the dialogue an incredible diversity of experiences, attitudes, points of view, and mental models about their personal, professional, political, spiritual, and recreational worlds. In addition, they also have a multitude of purposes, positions, paradigms, and expectations of the outcome. I see my facilitator function as being a multidimensional role that includes becoming a co-learner with the participants, building and establishing rapport and trust in the group, providing a space for the respectful sharing of the diversity of

thinking, and challenging the group with alternative ways of viewing the world through the critical examination of thought, assumptions, behaviors and experience.

Collaborative action research provided a means for other STAR 7 facilitators and myself to inquire into our practices as experiential learning facilitators and to make changes in our practice based on that inquiry. An insight I gained is to slow down my thinking in order to identify striking moments in my practice. In terms of my metaphor of exploration, these striking moments and use of words are like doors that open into unexplored passages and offer the unlimited possibility of adventure, insight and growth. I had many such striking moments in the course of this project, most of them in conversation with my co-researchers about their reflections. Others were in conversations I had in my mind with authors of the books and articles I read. A peculiar feature of these striking moments is that the words stick with me, and I am aware of what McNamee and Gergen (1999) refer to as "the voices of the internal others" (p. 31). I hear their voices drawing me and calling forth action in response to their calling.

This study helped clarify my internal assumptions and mental model maps of how I interpret and interact with the world. I found that it is easy for me to be excited about the insights, the discoveries, and the certainty that "now I have it!" I remember the caution of Senge (1994) that "we quickly confuse our maps for the territory. We develop a level of certainty that robs us of our capacity for wonder" (p. 27). My desire is that I can stay in that place of wonder by suspending my grip on certainty in learning and enjoying the discoveries in this adventure of life.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TVA VALUES

To achieve a position of leadership, TVA relies on leaders at all levels who continuously strive to exceed the Goals, energetically communicate the Vision, and live (or model) the following seven Values aimed at Strategic Teamwork for Action and Results:

Integrity

We cast positive shadows as individuals and as a company. Our actions and our words are consistent, honest and ethical. We are committed to serving the public good.

Respect for the Individual

We recognize that everyone—and everyone's work—is important. We treat others with dignity and respect. We appreciate and support each other. We are here for each other.

Accountability

We take responsibility for TVA's success and our own success. We take ownership of our work. We acknowledge and correct mistakes. We ask, "What more can I do to get results?"

Teamwork

We work together to be the best we can be. We accomplish more by working together. We support, trust and appreciate each other as members of the bigger TVA team.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

We are always improving so TVA can lead in a competitive market. We continually learn. We seek and offer coaching and feedback.

Honest Communication

We talk to each other openly. We listen with courtesy and respect to hear the entire message. We freely share ideas and information. We ask for others' points of view. We respect confidences.

Flexibility

We are open to change. We focus on finding solutions. We act quickly to improve performance and customer service.

APPENDIX B

TVA Winning Behaviors

How we treat each other

- Offer appreciative feedback regularly.
- Listen at a higher level—for understanding.
- Be here now.
- Offer, ask for, and be open to constructive feedback.
- Cast a positive shadow of influence.
- Offer and ask for support.
- Interact through rapport vs. coercion.
- Respond to new ideas and change as a participant/supporter/coach.
- Be flexible in working with people of other behavioral styles.
- Assume innocence—give people the benefit of the doubt.
- Be aware of your mood elevator.

How we approach our work

- Play on the bigger TVA team—get out of the silos.
- Be accountable by owning it, finding solutions and getting on with it.
- Think outside the nine dots.
- Look for win-win in all situations
- Expand our zone of comfort.
- Focus on the blue chips.
- Act quickly to improve performance.
- Seek to improve work processes.
- Accept gravity issues.

APPENDIX C

DATA-DATA^N Action Research Model

Model Step	Step Description	Researcher Activity
D Describe	Describe problem or area of improvement. (with co-researcher)	<i>The first module of the workshop includes an introduction of each participant. As a facilitator I model the introduction which includes a statement of a specific need or area of improvement that the individual would like to work on during the workshop. I record these responses. I have noticed that when I mention a specific need during my modeling of the introduction, many of the participants state the same need or area of improvement to work on during the workshop.</i>
A Analyze	Analyze assumptions. (with co-researcher)	<i>I am curious about my influence on the participants at this point in the workshop and wonder whether the participants have the same needs. I feel like maybe they haven't thought about their personal growth needs before being asked and are just following my lead in their answers. One of my assumptions at this point is that they are just copying me because they can't think of anything else on the spot.</i>
T Theorize	Theorize about what would happen if a certain action were taken and also reflect on own assumptions about expected outcome. (with co-researcher)	<i>To test this theory out, during the next workshop I plan on stating something totally off the wall during my modeling of the introduction or I may share something really intimate. Either way, it would be outside what I would consider to be the norm for the participants to follow my exact example. I will then see if they follow my lead.</i>
A Act	Decide to take action and begin design.	<i>I will focus on the introductions in my next workshop to see what kind of results I get.</i>

APPENDIX C (continued)

DATA-DATA^N Action Research Model

D Design	Design action plan, determine data to be collected and implement design.	<i>I will implement this action during the introduction model by saying that I want to work on my listening skills. I will then observe the participants' reactions and record their responses. I will collect these responses as data. I will also observe the actions of the participants during the workshop to see if they are working on improving their listening skills. I will also ask the participants at the end of the workshop to identify those things they worked on. After the workshop I will write a reflection summarizing my learning and sharing any insights I received from the workshop.</i>
A Analyze	Analyze to understand the data collected. (with co-researcher)	<i>During the post workshop meeting with the co-researcher we will consider the responses and actions of the participants from the collected data. Did the participants respond as I had theorized? Were there any surprises? We will also consider my reflections and insights to determine any possible future learning and compare these to themes identified by my other co-researchers.</i>
T Theorize	Theorize on the results of the data by also bringing in related formal theories to the analysis.	<i>Is there any related research to inform the results of the action? For instance in this case there may be some relevant group process literature that would help build on our understanding and interpretation of the data.</i>
A^N Act	Take action based on inquiry and/or repeat the cycle which leads into the next Design step.	<i>In this case, I may decide to try something different in the introductions. For the next workshop I decide to state that I want to work on my appreciation of individual differences among the workshop participants. This is something I have never heard from a participant during the introductions so it seems to be something that may work for the purposes of my inquiry. In my action plan for the next workshop I also decide the data to be collected and other aspects of the research as described in the first Design step.</i>

VITA

Ralph Edwin (Reb) Brickey graduated from Roane County High School in 1968. He then served in the United States Air Force as a Nuclear Missile Guidance and Control Specialist. After an honorable discharge from the military in 1972, Reb and his wife Janice moved to Beaumont, Texas where he was discipled in the Christian faith by Doug Westmoreland. Reb fulfilled his dream of flying by obtaining his Private and Commercial Pilot's licenses and served as a pilot for Earl Kellum a missionary in Mexico. Reb and Janice also led missionary teams and lived in Belize, Central America. In 1976, Reb and Janice returned to Tennessee where he started work for TVA as a laborer at Kingston Steam Plant. After completing the Instrument Mechanic Apprentice Program, Reb began evening school at Roane State Community College and graduated in 1985 with an Associate Degree in Electrical and Electronic Technology. He then entered evening school at The University of Tennessee and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Technological and Adult Education in 1988. In 1994 Reb returned to The University of Tennessee and received a Master of Science in Adult Education in 1996. He was accepted into the Collaborative Learning Program in the College of Education and earned a Doctor of Education in 2001.

Reb is a senior consultant in the STAR 7 Program with TVA and lives in Kingston, Tennessee with his wife, Janice, and daughters, Sara Ruth and Rebecca.