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# Facilitation: A Sociological Analysis of a Team Building Workshop

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Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School

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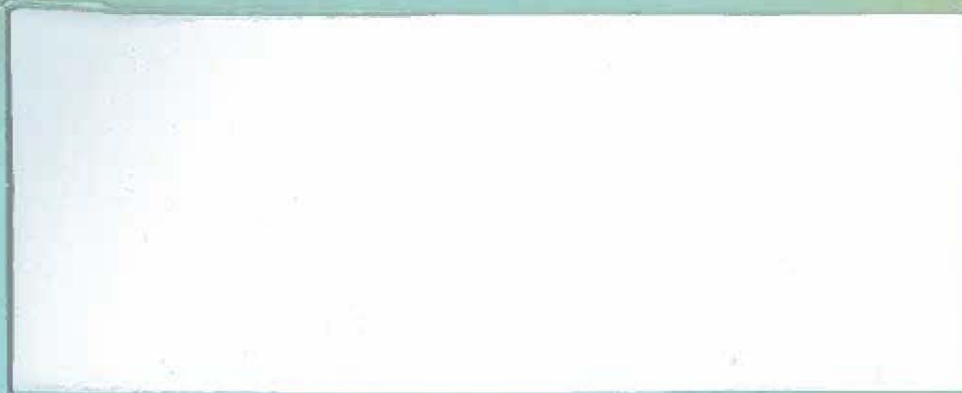


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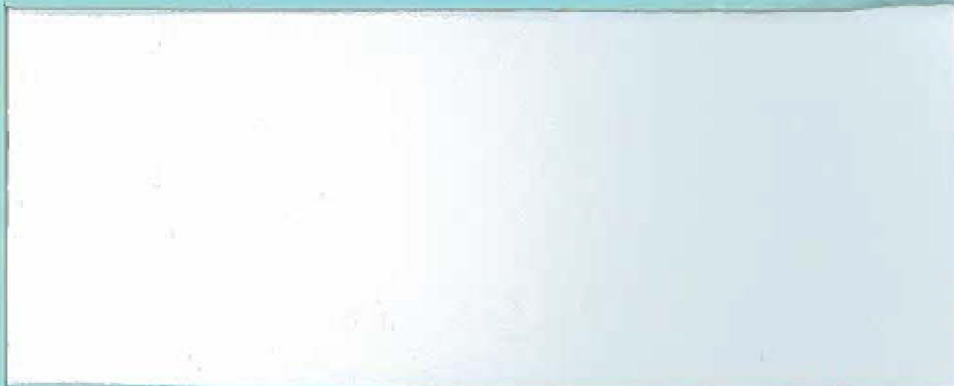


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FACILITATION: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS  
OF A TEAM BUILDING WORKSHOP

Phillip Butler

October 1980

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Facilitation: A Sociological Analysis  
of a Team Building Workshop

A. Introduction

Facilitation is a bread-and-butter concept for Organization Development consultants. It is so fundamental to the practice that most OD people would find it difficult to imagine their trade without facilitation. Even so, those same consultants would probably admit to a somewhat superficial understanding of "just what is happening when we facilitate." This paper seeks to shed some light on that question from a sociological viewpoint.

It is important to begin this discussion with an evolutionary description of "social facilitation" as a social and behavioral science concept. The historical development, though largely unknown to many consultants, has established a number of underlying assumptions for the practice of facilitation in the OD context. These assumptions, as we shall see, often carry through to present day workshops in disguised ways. At the same time, certain assumptions have given rise to varying schools of thought and practice and in efforts to use facilitation for different outcomes. An historical or evolutionary preface to the analysis will help us see the intentions behind the methods displayed by practitioners.

Next the discussion moves to a specific case of facilitation. An actual workshop (with title and names changed) is presented and described. The setting for this workshop is an internal organization development effort by the U.S. Navy. Navy consultants, referred to as "specialists," are trained and used under the aegis of the Navy's "Human Resource Management Program." The "HRM" system is currently the largest internal OD effort in the world, with a staff of more than 700 people. This particular workshop, "Team Building Workshop for Submarines X, Y, and Z and Submarine Base A" was developed and "facilitated" by Lieutenant Commander "Sam Smart" at an HRM Center (called "the Center") in mid-1978. The interactional processes between Sam and his "participants," and among the participants, were the subject of my furiously written field notes.

Following a description of the workshop the data are presented with concurrent analyses. Three sociological "features" are considered which bring three levels of analysis into view. The "structural features" of the workshop include the physical layout features and the normative features which appear to the observer and which we can see Sam manipulating in various ways. "Interactional features" are those which can be derived from paying closer attention to the language in use by facilitator and participants. "Phenomenological features" are those which

can be inferred from the intersubjective assumptions between facilitator, participants, and the observer. Each of the three features yield qualitative information about the processes involved, but from different levels of analysis. At the same time, the analyses illustrate interconnections between the three features.

#### B. Evolution of Facilitation

The study of the social facilitative phenomenon "is as old as experimental social psychology itself" (Geen and Gange 1977). In the first social psychological laboratory experiment, Triplett (1898) found that the speed of completing a simple motor task was greater among members of coacting pairs than among subjects performing alone.

The subject apparently aroused a great deal of interest during the early 1900s and up until the mid-1930s. Numerous experimenters used both people and animals to explore the phenomenon. They often found that motor tasks were inhibited as well as facilitated by interaction with others. They also found that the mere presence of a passive observer could yield "performance decrements" as well as "performance increments." But the reason for these opposite results was to remain unsolved throughout the period. Interest in social facilitation among experimental social psychologists began to wane in the 1930s. The notion was largely ignored until a recent revival by the psychologist Robert Zajonc (1965).



Zajonc's theory, called drive-theory, suggests that "the presence of conspecific organisms, as either coactors or a passive audience, produces an increment in general arousal, which in turn serves as a drive that energizes dominant responses at the expense of subordinate ones." In other words, the social facilitation effect tends to induce a multiplying effect on our strong drives and habits. It also has an inhibiting effect when present with weak habit or drive associated tasks. So, social facilitation facilitates simple tasks and inhibits complex tasks.

In the last fifteen years since Zajonc proposed his framework, social facilitation has been the focal point, once again, of many replicating experiments with very little in the way of new theoretical insights (Geen and Gange 1977). One variation has been produced by Cottrell (1972) who proposed the "evaluation-apprehension" hypothesis. This hypothesis is more cognitive than Zajonc's assumptions, stating that "the presence of others is a learned source of drive rather than a source of drive which is innate or 'wired into' the organism."

There have been few nondrive approaches to the explanation of social facilitation in the field of social psychology. Among the first to a fresh approach, Duval and Wicklund (1972) offer a theory based on objective= self awareness. Their work explains the phenomenon as being the result of the actor's inward focusing upon self. Such inward

focusing is most often the realization of a discrepancy between the ideal and the actual self. Thus the subject is likely to be motivated to improve performance by the presence of coactors. Liebling and Shaver (1973) found that the addition of high levels of ego involvement obviated the incremental effect and often produced a decremental effect.

Most recently some research has focused on the processes of coaction. Laughlin and Jaccard (1975) find evidence that contradicts the drive theory. The critical feature of this research is that a spirit of cooperation was engendered among the coacting participants, resulting in a facilitation of learning. This line of research was followed and successfully replicated by Seta, Paulus and Schkade (1976).

Sociologists have shown some interest in the social psychological mechanism of heightened awareness within a large population. Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1948) saw a facilitation effect from a political campaign amounting to 1) activation of unaware people to come out and vote commensurate with their socioeconomic status (SES), 2) reinforcement for those who intended to vote in line with their SES, religion, and residence, and 3) conversion of those who had previously intended to vote contrary to their SES, religion, and residence to switch their vote back in line. More recent studies (Blau 1960; Coleman 1961; Arnold

and Gold 1964) have also sought to correlate the facilitation effect of social environment and voting behavior.

An appropriate corollary to the sociological axiom about people acting in line with their perceived self interests could be: Whenever social and behavioral science produces the possibility of bringing about predictable behavior, someone will try to apply that knowledge in line with their own perceived self interests.

So we have a host of organized self interests that seek to apply social facilitation in hope of desired outcomes. Erving Goffman (1961) referred to some of them as the "tinkering trades." And since "Asylums" was written there has been an even greater proliferation. To name a few of the major extant disciplines, there are psychoanalysis, clinical psychology, social welfare work, counseling in a multitude of forms, encounter groups, personal awareness and growth seminars, training group development (T-groups), and the practice of organization development. Two of these groups that use facilitation for desired outcomes, T-groups and OD, form links in the evolutionary chain to Human Resource Management.

Chin and Benne's genealogy of theories (Bennis et al. 1969) shows the antecedents of the "data collection feedback" (organization development) and the "sensitivity T-group" disciplines as having been originally influenced by 1) Follet (scientific management), 2) Dewey (philosophical and



educational pragmatism, 3) Lewin (research training laboratories, and 4) Freud (psychoanalysis theory). T-groups and OD are categorized with other change theories under the rubric "normative-reeducative," as opposed to "rational-empirical" or "power-coercive" categorizations. Normative-reeducative theories assume that patterns of action are influenced by sociocultural norms and by commitments to those norms. These norms in turn are supported by attitude and value systems of individuals, their normative outlooks. In order to change actions or practices of individuals, it is necessary to change orientations to old norms and to develop commitments to new ones. Such changes necessitate "changes in attitudes, values, skills, and significant relationships, not just changes in knowledge, information, or intellectual rationales for action and practice."

Normative-reeducative approaches all share the idea of bringing direct intervention into the life of a client system. The system could be a person, a group, an organization or a community. In each case, the client's way of seeing himself must be brought into confrontation with the way the change agent sees. The difference in the ways of seeing is posited to be the problem. And the problem is normally seen as located in values, attitudes, norms, and folkways internal to the client system, rather than in some technological/rational component. The method of intervention is a collaboration between change agent and client in efforts



designed to bring the nonconscious elements impeding problem solution into consciousness for all concerned to see. The behavioral sciences are resources that change agent and client use selectively to confront and solve problems. These branches of the normative reeducative strategy all have the humanistic assumption that people technology is just as necessary as thing technology in working out desirable changes in human affairs.

The National Training Laboratories (NTL) were organized in 1947 from collaborations among Kurt Lewin, Ronald Lippitt, Leland Bradford, and Kenneth Benne. The laboratory was to allow these participants and other students to become both experimenters and subjects in a laboratory setting. The moral character of the organization was influenced by Dewey's work in education, Mary Follett's work in industry, and the cataclysmic events of World War II. The laboratory methods were therefore a synthesis of ideas from behavioral science, pragmatism, scientific management and democratic ideals.

Since the organization of NTL, practitioners have divided into the aforementioned two major groupings based on their preference for a level of analysis and practice. One group (T-group) focuses on helping members of a client system to become more aware of their individual sensitivities, attitudes, values, and latent feelings so they can better understand their interactions and relations with others. The

other (OD) set concentrates on the problem-solving processes and capabilities used by the client system, a functional group or organization. Both use facilitation as a technique for bringing about desired results, and the change agent is frequently called the "facilitator."

The basic split (there are subdivisions within each side) can be a value-laden issue that produces polarization among individual practitioners. Some facilitators focus on more individual oriented issues while others take the more organizational or "Company-Man" view. The former defines his client as the individual, the same way NTL began their human relations oriented experiments in 1947. The latter tends to define his client as the organizational system, e.g., the Navy, the command, or the client commanding officer (in whom resides the epitome of the mission oriented view).

The path to organization development uses of facilitation leads ultimately to the "Annual Handbooks for Group Facilitators" (Jones and Pfeiffer 1972-1980). These volumes list hundreds of prescriptive methods, actions, instruments, role play situations, games, and techniques for effectively facilitating group outcomes of one sort or another. Underlying these prescriptions is the assumption that the facilitator is knowledgeable and skillful in such techniques as "active listening," "effective listening," "reflective listening," "effective communication," "blocks and barriers to communication," "facilitating communication,"

"nonverbal communication," "types of people in groups," "phases in group development," "group behavior," and the list goes on.

The Navy's HRM School teaches: "An effective facilitator is highly skilled both as an information processor and as a behavior modifier." Figure 1 is a 1976 HRM School handout that illustrates how this can be done and gives some characteristics of an effective facilitator.

The preceding discussion is intended to give the reader some of the historical implications of social facilitation (the social psychological phenomenon) and facilitation, the information gathering behavioral modification technique. Some of the more salient assumptions and features of the concept, as used in OD and HRM, have been reviewed. The next step in our analysis is to display an actual team-building workshop from the Center.

### C. Team Building Workshop

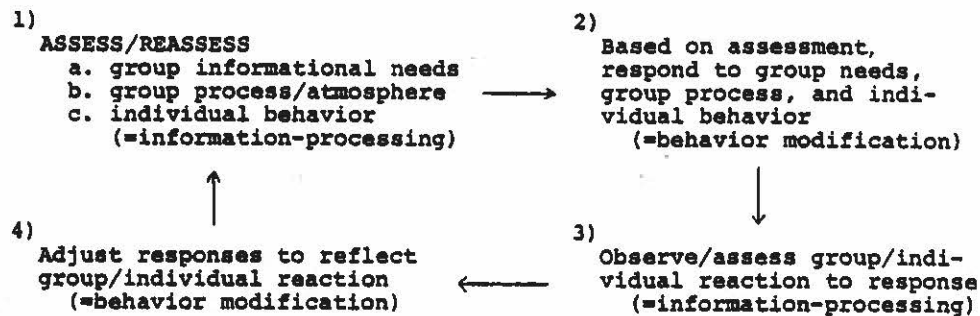
Sam's "Team Building Workshop" is a good example of what specialists call a "task oriented" workshop. In other words, it is designed to take the company point of view as described in the previous section. The format used lends itself to quick production and it is a simple guide for the facilitator to follow. Called an I.G. (instructor's guide),



(TITLE) FACILITATION

INTRODUCTION

An effective facilitator is highly skilled both as an information-processor and as a behavior modifier. He/she performs the information-processing and behavior modification functions simultaneously as part of the ongoing group process while maintaining the flexibility to adapt quickly and continuously to group needs. This has been called a "self-corrective, adaptive mode of functioning." Schematically, it can be depicted as follows:



The above diagram represents the ongoing process of facilitation -- a self-corrective, adaptive mode of employing both information-processing and behavior modification techniques aimed at enhancing group process and individual learning. There are a number of characteristics which are displayed by facilitators in group diagnosis and group- and self-monitoring. These are presented in the information section below.

Please read this section carefully, and be prepared to discuss the following questions:

- 1) What is facilitation?
- 2) How does facilitation differ from counseling?
- 3) When is the use of facilitation appropriate?
- 4) When is the use of facilitation inappropriate?

REFERENCES

1. Miles, Mathew B. Learning to work in groups pp. 204-222
2. Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, 1972, pp. 91-107
3. Wile, Daniel B. Group Leadership Questionnaire

Figure 1



## INFORMATION

Some of the characteristics of an effective facilitator are:

1. Openness to change. Because the trainer role is not simple, and requires "sensitive use of the self," as one trainer put it, the prospective trainer must be willing to look at himself, question things he does and has always taken for granted. The person whose views of himself are unchangeable will have considerable difficulty in working as a trainer.
2. Reasonable "comfortableness". To do a good job as a trainer, one must be secure enough to try out new things. Training-like teaching or any form of human interaction inevitable gets one off base, and into puzzling situations for which there are no ready-made answers. An effective trainer needs to like himself as a person, be comfortable with others, be reasonably able to cope with new situations without getting upset. "Reasonably" is the key word here.
3. Desire to help. The effective trainer needs to have genuine motivation for helping people learn. The person who tries out the trainer role only because it is "interesting", or because it gives him feelings of power over others, or because a superior told him to, is unlikely to get very far before things freeze up or the group becomes apathetic. The beginning trainer may wonder whether he is really aware of his motivation for wanting to help people. Psychotherapy is not being suggested -- only a thoughtful self-appraisal of one's reasons for wishing to try out the trainer role.
4. Being seen as helpful. The trainer must be seen by the members of the training group as being potentially (and actually) able to help them learn. This seems obvious, but is easily overlooked. Without acceptance of one's trainership by group members, little learning is possible. Most persons markedly lacking in the other characteristics listed here will also tend to be seen by potential members of the training group as being unable to provide training assistance. This boils down to: "Do people in the group think I am competent to help?"
5. Role flexibility. It helps if the trainer is a person who can do different kinds of things in group situations without too much difficulty. He need not be a super-member or an unusually skilled individual, but he ought to be able to handle himself with a minimum of strain in group situations. Tennis coaches need not, and probably should not, be Wimbledon finalists, but they do need to know how to play the game fairly well.

Figure 1 Continued

it can also be handed out to participants. Sam's I.G. is presented in Figure 2.

Sam began his workshop design with the objectives. Some specialists go so far as to say that the objectives for a workshop must be measurable. These objectives identify Sam as being philosophically middle of the road since he is willing to reach for "better understanding" and other such intangibles. In developing the workshop, the objectives serve as the goals around which all activities are designed.

Activities are typically divided between the "instructor" and the "participants." An outline of instruction is provided to give everyone some expectation of exactly what will be accomplished and how much time it will take. This is always necessary since the workshop takes place during working hours and everyone wants to know how far behind in their work they will be and how much to rearrange their schedule.

There are thirty participants in Sam's workshop, including 7 or 8 from each of the four commands. They are in each case a "vertical slice" of the command, thus representing different viewpoints in rank and hierarchy. Each command is represented by a CO, one department head, one or two division officers, the MCPOC (senior enlisted), a Chief Petty Officer, a First Class Petty Officer (lowest line supervisor, called a "leading petty officer"), and a lower

Team Building Workshop  
for "Base" and "Boats"

Workshop Objectives:

1. To develop a better understanding of each others missions and tasks
2. To identify areas where "Base" and "Boats" are dependent upon each other for mission accomplishment
3. To identify areas where improvements can be made in the working relationships between units
4. To plan for the implementation of changes in organizational and individual behavior that will improve mission effectiveness of all units

Figure 2

INSTRUCTION OUTLINE	INSTRUCTOR ACTIVITY	PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY
I Introductions (10 min.)	A. Staff introductions and COs' opening remarks	A. Introductions
II Objectives (5 min.)	A. Staff present objectives and outline of workshop	A. Discussion
III Feedback (10 min.)	A. Present rules for effective feedback	A. Discussion
IV Mission Identification (30 min.)	A. Split and task units to list their mission elements. - Those things they must accomplish on a continuing basis to carry out missions B. Task units to list other units' mission elements as they see them C. Lead report out: 1. Identify differences in viewpoints. 2. Identify areas where groups are interdependent.	A. Select recorder and reporter. List mission elements B. Same C. Report out and discussion. Provide clarification. Identify areas of interdependence.
V Identify areas for improvement (1hr&30 min.)	A. Split and task units to list: 1. Changes they would like to see other units make for improvements in interdependent ops.. 2. Changes they will make to improve interdependent ops.,	A. Select recorder and reporter. Make inputs specific (who, when, where)

Figure 2 Continued



## INSTRUCTION OUTLINE

VI Agreement  
(30 min.)

VII Summary  
(15 min.)

## INSTRUCTOR ACTIVITY

- A. Lead report out:
1. Areas where change is requested and agreed to (both lists)
  2. Areas where change is requested but not agreed to
  3. List changes each unit agrees to, for typist
- A. Lead discussion on the need for assessment. Get group consensus for reassembly and assessment date and time
- B. Unit COs make closing remarks and provide commitment for action

## PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY

- A. Report out
1. Discussion
  2. Discussion
- A. Discussion

Figure 2 Continued

enlisted grade technician. The workshop is scheduled to begin at 0830 (8:30 A.M.). People begin to arrive at 0800.

#### D. Sociological Analysis

##### 1. Structural Features

The workshop really begins as participants arrive. One of the first things they notice upon entering the seminar room are tables that have a command identification name card. Most command members go to their table first and choose a place to sit. There is normal conversation among people but most of it is intra-command. The tables serve initially to give them structural identity as separate commands.

There is at the same time a unifying or integrating significance to the arrangement of tables. Commands are seated two on each side of the room, facing each other in an open diamond. A smaller table, set apart from the rest, is at the head of the room with a card labeled "HRMC." The arrangement identifies them as similar and as unified by visible differentiation from the facilitator. Figure 3 is a diagram of the room.

Sam is acutely aware of the benefits to be derived from "setting the structure." He has intentionally forced the command members to "take ownership" for their own problems by making them face each other in the problem solving arena. He sets himself slightly apart in order to be able to back out of the interactional process whenever he

Seminar Room Arrangement  
Team Building Workshop

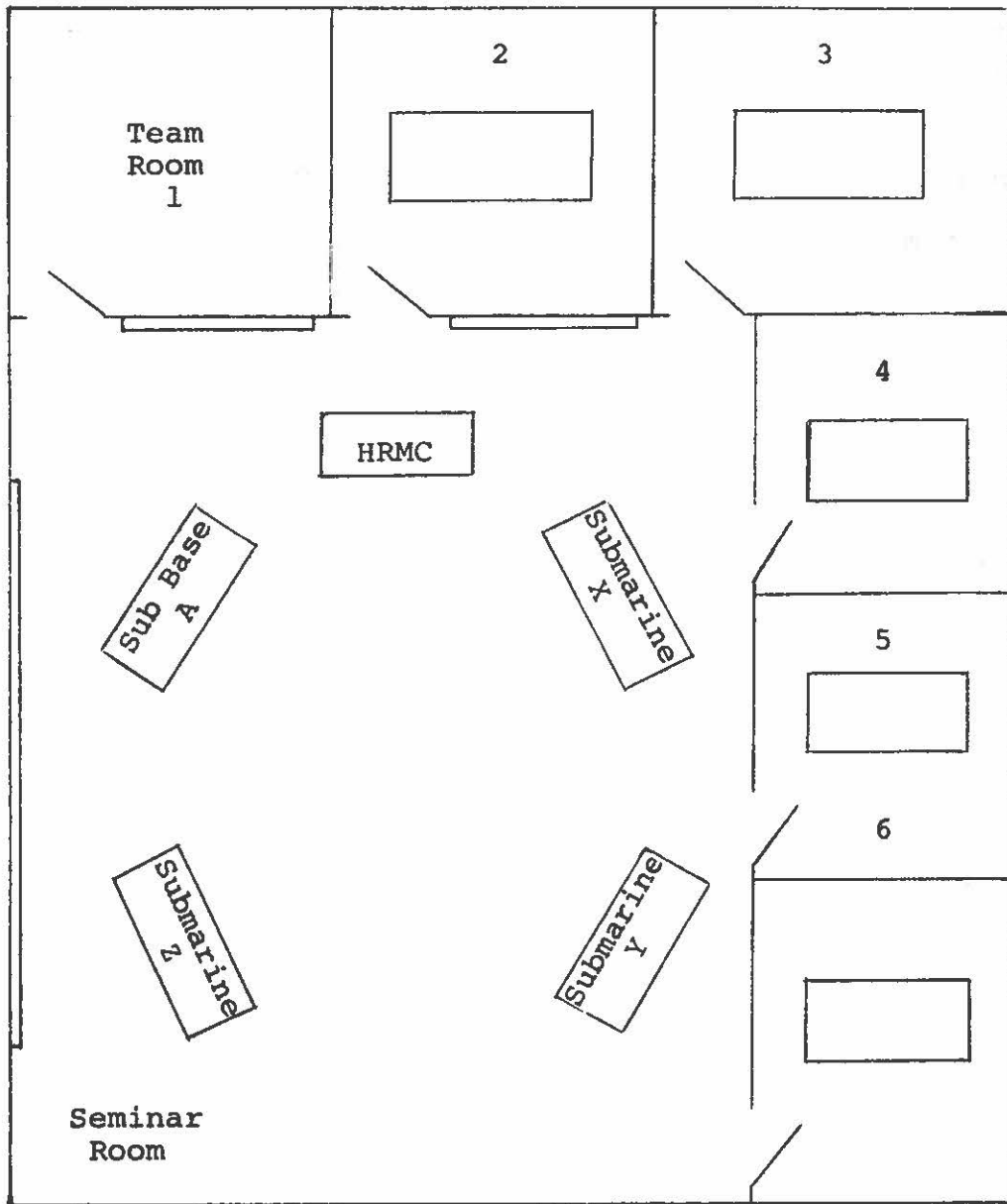


Figure 3

wishes. He can also walk into the center and direct or arbitrate whenever the situation appears to need such actions from the facilitator.

People continue to talk, to mill about, and to get coffee from the pot which is set up in the corner of the room. Sam begins to meet people and to "socialize" with them in order to create good first impressions and to informally reassure people. Some command members don't know what to expect, and the opposing tables look a little threatening. One enlisted member tells Sam that he hopes to "see something good come out of this." A senior officer says he "hopes Sam maintains control of this thing." In these and other cases Sam is really "facilitating" by reassuring people of his capability to maintain enough authority to keep things under control. Participants are already looking for norms and they are appearing slightly uncomfortable about what those norms will be in this strange place.

The presence of participants in certain structural patterns is the beginning of a mutually shared desire to solve problems. With a general problem solving expectation present, the job of facilitation is to manage interactions so as to bring about some common definitions of the problems. But the mutually shared desire to solve problems has deeper structural features that lie in the organizational values of mission accomplishment. The workshop is "task oriented,"



meaning it is designed to accomplish a task that will enhance the commands' ability to function more efficiently and effectively. Unless participants share these organizational values for improving effectiveness, it is assumed that the efforts of the workshop will fail.

Workshop failure more likely will not be evident during the workshop. Normative expectations of participants are to carry through with the task and to put on a good show at least. There is an added incentive to do this because competing commands (the three submarines) are working in each others' presence (the social facilitation phenomenon).

At 0830 Sam walks over to his place and announces "Well I guess we better get started." People take their places and he begins to talk. he introduces himself as "Lieutenant Commander Sam Smart," with both rank and first name. Rank indicates an official military structure and set of norms to follow. The first name is a friendly gesture, but not beyond the bounds of Navy military norms when accompanied with rank.

The introductions are structured by Sam. He tells who he is, welcomes participants to the Center, gives a few sentences about his Navy background and states the purpose of the workshop. Next he asks the Submarine Base CO (showing courtesy since he is the most senior officer present) to introduce himself and offer any remarks he might have.

Several days before the workshop Sam visited all the COs and gave them a copy of his proposed plans. He asked them to think about some opening remarks that would set a good climate for people to work as a team. Hopefully the payoff will be now.

The Base CO gives his support to the process and tells everyone how productive he thinks it will be. He asks everyone to be open about problems with no fears of sanction later on. The other COs follow suit but two of them appear reserved and show little enthusiasm. One mentions the "operational costs" of being here, hoping the results will be worth it.

When the COs have finished, Sam turns over a large "flip chart" to expose the "ground rules" for the workshop. Facilitators begin setting the scene for interactional manipulations by opening with ground rules. They appear desirable or innocuous to participants because they correspond to culturally held values and ideals. The list Sam shows is:

1. Be open and honest
2. Conversational courtesy
3. Stay on track
4. Not a bitch session
5. Call breaks
6. Speak for yourself, not for others
7. Military courtesy

8. Listen to others

9. No smoking in the seminar room

The ground rules set a normative structure for processes in the session from that point on. Violations can be "called" by anyone, but most likely they will be called by Sam. They serve as a convenient set of laws for him, and like laws they lend themselves to situational interpretations. For example, Sam can remind participants of the "open and honest" rule whenever it seems desirable to prompt them to air their "dirty laundry." But rule number 4, "not a bitch session," can be used for the opposite effect. Facilitators want enough laundry aired to provide grist for the mill, but not so much as to occlude a "positive" (organizationally effective) outcome.

Ground rules are established by the facilitator, thus establishing that role as a rule-setting role. Sam has other things available to him besides a contextual set of rules. He has power as the speaker or director and he has the power to write on the chalk board, to assert and to teach. "Tasking" is another power Sam has. It means he can divide people and order them to do certain things within specified (by him) time limits. These powers, like Max Weber (1972) and others since have perceived, are reciprocal as they are granted to Sam by the participants so long as he continues to be seen as legitimate. But legitimacy is not a taken for granted thing in this HRM workshop. It is problematic for



Sam. Another piece in the workshop process will begin to shed light on this issue.

The next step is to present the objectives of the workshop. Sam shows the participants how each event in the process they will go through applies to the overall objectives. He stresses that the workshop is oriented toward the business of submarines:

O.K. now, I want you guys to know at the start that this is a no-nonsense workshop. My job here is to keep you on task. The solutions will be yours cause you are the experts, not me...(pause)...I'm just a dumb ole Naval Aviator, what the hell do I know (laughter from the audience)?

Sam accomplishes several things in this little opening, some of which cannot be seen in a structural analysis. But structurally, Sam is intentionally doing something specialists refer to as "hooking in." Things like values, ideals, needs, biases, motives, and self interests are categories that specialists try to discern and to use to their own best advantage. "No-nonsense" workshop has an historical referent with an intentionally pejorative mode of expression. What Sam is saying in effect is that this workshop is not at all like an "UPWARD" (race relations awareness) seminar where people accuse, shout, and don't conform to military courtesies, with no objective outcomes related to organizational effectiveness. He is establishing his role as a normative "traffic cop" and he is asserting that the workshop norms will coincide with organizational norms. His reference to expertise is wise as it reduces the



perceived threat of externally imposed solutions on participants. In the final sentence there is a stamp of finality on the issue of rank structures, although it is very subtle. He recognizes their integrity as four commands of submariners, with their own hierarchy of authority and expertise, and with organizational norms and values that they are accustomed to and comfortable with; all of which he will seek to help maintain during the workshop.

Already in the act of facilitation we see the constraints exerted by the normative structures of the participants. It appears then that one structural feature of facilitation is that it must exist, as a process, within the constraints of the organizational, social, sexual, and historical-cultural norms of the participants. These normative structures function to legitimate facilitation as an act or process and they legitimate the facilitator as well. After all, the facilitator is a stranger, in the case of an HRM specialist with client people, and he or she must say: "We will play this game within your rules."

This is not to say that there are no other possibilities for the act facilitation. Certainly it can be shown that facilitation is at times a norm-changing process. My example here is one in which the intent is to conduct problem solving (team building) within organizational boundaries and for organizational ends. It is not a team group development, awareness raising, counseling,

psychoanalytic, or other such intervention at a deeper interpersonal level. The facilitation under analysis here is "task," not "process" oriented, as Center facilitators say.

There are some well defined lines of social stratification that Sam must be aware of and deal with in our workshop. I divide these into Weberian categories (Gerth and Mills 1946; Weber 1972).

Social class can be successfully argued as present or as not present in the U.S. Military. I disagree with Janowitz (1960) and Janowitz and Little (1974) who maintain it does not exist. It appears with the chasm between the officer and enlisted rank structures, but not as ownership of the means of production in the Marxist sense (Feuer, 1959). Entry to the officer rank structure is class biased in the classical sense but by no means is it totally restricted. The differential in economic rewards and opportunities are great and they appear to more consistently obtain than in the civilian white collar, blue collar context (Mills 1951; White 1956). In the Navy, officers control the means of bureaucratic power, are rewarded by money and status, and maintain their corps as a separate elite stratum. The strong differentiation is made readily visible with insignia on uniforms.

Social status is more subtle but distinctive among our workshop participants. One of the very few rewards for arduous sea duty is the status reward for being a front line

trooper. Staff functions are less honorific. And there are even divisions between classes of sea duty and classes of staff duty. Submariners have more prestige than "surface skimmers." Aviators and their enlisted counterparts, "airedales," both sometimes referred to as "brown shoes," have a special place in prestige above all nonwarfare specialties and above most surface warfare "black shoe" specialties. Operational staff functions like squadron, division, or air group staffs have more prestige than base staffs, who have more than training staffs, who often have more than HRM people. These differentiations can be recognized only by participation and observation over a period of time, but they are visible. Each category maintains certain traditions and language that set it apart from the others. And Navy people will readily tell you who belongs where on the ladder of prestige. Sam is pragmatic. He opts to defer with his self effacing humor, rather than compete with the submariners, in hope of winning the workshop outcomes.

Weberian concepts of authority as traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal (bureaucratic) are present among the workshop participants (Gerth and Mills 1946). One young enlisted electronics technician in the workshop draws rapt attention and agreeing nods whenever he speaks. Sam recognizes the presence of a charismatic person and begins to call on him occasionally, especially since the young man (as



Sam told me) was "helping the process." Had he been a "counterfacilitating influence" Sam would have tried to persuade him otherwise during the breaks. Two of the senior enlisted participants are the "COB" or Chief of the Boat, an honorific title accorded only on submarines. They have a traditional authority within their submarine service that in many instances would cause junior officers to tread carefully. But the main source of authority is visible and aural in the workshop. It is rank. Rank is hierarchy in the strictly military context and almost always in the job position context. There are some exceptions to the latter, but normally people in the Navy work for people who are senior to them in rank.

Facilitation in a Navy workshop has only marginal legitimacy as a social interactional process. Sam is careful to use the term "Instructor" on his I.G. and on other handouts. The term brings historic stereotypes of awareness seminars and it threatens existing normative structures as we have seen. Often HRM specialists see themselves as facilitating when their participants would not describe it as such. They would more likely call it "leadership," "good management principles," "management practices," "management skills," "advisory skills," and other more familiar and nonthreatening titles. Navy facilitators usually have to be



keenly aware of these constraints in order to avoid the pitfalls of being seen in nonlegitimated roles.

At this point we will shift perspectives in the analysis to make known other features. In the next section, the language uses by the facilitator and participants will give us a more dynamic and process oriented perspective.

## 2. Interactional Features

If we look at the language, verbal and nonverbal, that the workshop participants use, we can see things in a very different way. Yet, at the same time, we can see that our new observations have ties with the structural features noted in the previous section.

First of all we notice that Sam is a performer. He is on stage, as he presents himself in a way that he thinks will best accomplish his aims. He keeps his backstage self concealed in order to pass as a part of the participants' normative structures (Goffman 1959, 1971). He uses anecdotes:

O.K., did I ever tell you guys the sea story about the time I was flying my helicopter in West-Pac. I was coming up on a carrier when I looked down and saw I was being outrun by a snorkeling sub (laughter).

Chief (speaking to a Chief Petty Officer), we used to handle that in our PQS reporting (reference to his previous sea experience and the "personal qualification system" practices in his command).

He entertains with a wide variety of "in-house" jokes about the Navy and interwarfare specialty rivalries, or with pejorative humor directed at the Marines or the Air Force.

Sam is also an interpreter of applied behavioral science strategies. At one point in the workshop (Instructor Outline, Activity III), he teaches the participants how to give and to receive feedback. The nature of this team building workshop necessitates giving and receiving information which might arouse irritation or anger. Sam must therefore teach them how to avoid such "task derailing" misunderstandings and "ego involvements." Figure 4 is Sam's handout, on which he leads a discussion.

Another strategy Sam teaches from applied behavioral science is called "brainstorming." They need a way to get ideas for the various tasks in separate groups. The tendency is to let the most senior or the most vocal people submit all of the ideas. Brainstorming places constraints on the way ideas are submitted by requiring that no one make an evaluative comment on anyone else's ideas. Only questions of clarification can be asked. This allows each person to give creative or innovative suggestions without fear of sanction. Sam explains and then "tasks" the separating groups to brainstorm their lists in Activities IV and V of the workshop outline.

"Role playing" is a technique used by facilitators. Sam does it during the course of dropping in on one of the commands during their brainstorming of the "other commands' mission elements." A Chief Petty Officer asks him:

CPO: Commander, I think we ought to tell the Base  
CO that his XO is the biggest pain in the ass God

## CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

1. It is specific rather than general. To be told that one is "dominating" will probably not be as useful as to be told that "Just now you were not listening to what the others said, but I felt I had to agree with your arguments or face attack from you."
2. It is focused on behavior rather than on the person. It is important that we refer to what a person does rather than to what we think or imagine he is. Thus we might say that a person "talked more than anyone else in this meeting" rather than that he is "a loudmouth". The former allows for the possibility of changes; the latter implies a fixed personality trait.
3. It takes into account the needs of the receiver of the feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end. It should be given to help, not to hurt. We too often give feedback because it makes us feel better or gives us a psychological advantage.
4. It is directed toward behavior which the receiver can do something about. Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of some shortcomings over which he has no control or a physical characteristic which he can do nothing about.
5. It is solicited, rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver himself has formulated the kind of question which those observing him can answer or which he actively seeks feedback.
6. It involves sharing of information rather than giving advice. By sharing information, we leave a person free to decide for himself, in accordance with his own goals, needs, etc. When we give advice we tell him what to do, and to some degree take away his freedom to decide for himself.
7. It is well timed. In general immediate feedback is most useful (depending, of course, on the person's readiness to hear it, support available from others, etc.). The reception and use of feedback involves many possible emotional reactions. Excellent feedback presented at an inappropriate time may do more harm than good.
8. It involves the amount of information the receiver can use rather than the amount we would like to give. To overload a person with feedback is to reduce the possibility that he may be able to use what he received effectively. When we give more than can be used, we are more often than not satisfying some need of our own rather than helping the other person.
9. It concerns what is said or done, or how, not why. The "why" takes us from the observable to the inferred and involves assumptions regarding motive or intent. Telling a person what his motivations or intentions are more often than not tends to alienate the person, and contributes to a climate of resentment, suspicion, and distrust; it does not contribute to learning or development. It is dangerous to assume that we know why a person says or does something, or what he "really" means, or what he is "really" trying to accomplish. If we are uncertain of his motives or intent, this uncertainty itself is feedback, however, and should be revealed.
10. It is checked to insure clear communication. One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback he has received to see if it corresponds to what the sender had in mind. No matter what the intent, feedback is often threatening and thus subject to considerable distortion or misinterpretation.

Figure 4



ever created. These guys won't go along. What do you think about that?

Sam: Well, Chief, suppose you put that to me and I will pretend to be Captain Jones out there in the full workshop, O.K.?

CPO: O.K. Captain, the biggest block to working together is Commander Schultz. Every time we want anything done he is the stone in the way.

Sam: Well, in the first place, Chief, Commander Schultz is following my orders, so whatever policies he has are my policies. Is that clear? And in the second place you are out of order and out of line. (Sam glowers in mock irritation at the Chief Petty Officer's CO.)

CPO (laughing with the others): Yeh, I guess I get the drift, Commander. I wouldn't want to do that to you, either, Skipper (his CO), since that's not healthy for me, either.

Submarine CO: You catch on quick, Chief (laughter).

Role playing is a way of letting people gain empathy of another person's perceptions. It is really an intentional socialization technique. Mead talks about socialization in the way children develop their social self. One of the stages in this process he called the "game stage" (Strauss 1964). Mead was referring to the child's dress-up and act-out of grown up roles like Mommy, Daddy, policeman, soldier, etc. Role playing as a technique of facilitation can be seen in much the same way, only in the adult context for HRM specialists.

So as we have seen, Sam is a performer and an interpreter of applied behavioral science. But he performs and interprets within certain constraints. Words and phrases



he uses, and the ways participants respond to them, are keys for us to see how those constraints are present.

There are words and phrases from psychiatry, clinical psychology, gestalt therapy, transactional analysis and humanistic psychologists like Carl Rogers, etc., that Sam avoids. Terminologies from these areas have come to a commonplace understanding by lay people. Sam's participants don't like having someone "play with their heads." They want a task oriented workshop, not some "touchy-feely psych session." So Sam avoids saying things like:

Tell me more about that.

I understand you are angry about that.

You seem upset.

Go ahead and tell me all about that.

Do you want to say any more about what you mean by that?

M-hm, m-hm...

There are techniques Sam knows for getting people to open up more, or for getting them to focus on the problem. These have various names in the HRM trade. "Active listening," "reflective listening," "I-messages," and "effective confrontation methods" are a few. But Sam also knows from his experience with Navy client people that he had better tread carefully when using these techniques. He cannot be effective when he is perceived as having slipped outside the constraints of a task oriented workshop.

A structural analysis of facilitation is a still-life picture. It shows the social roads, pathways, edifices and trappings in a team building workshop. An interactional analysis shows how those structural features come into being, because society is only present within the medium of language. And even though society and social structures are more powerful than any individual, it still remains for individual lines of action to converge and to form those normative structures. These individual lines of action are symbolized and cognitively processed in language.

Some individuals are more effective than others in shaping perceptions and in revising or reshaping existing norms. An effective facilitator is one of those individuals. In this respect, the act of facilitation as an intentional act of "behavior modification" (the HRM School definition) is more than just that. It is an intentional manipulation of the symbolic environment. Behaviors are modified only after cognitive processes take place, and the facilitator provides some new symbols as we have seen. But we have also seen that for the most part he provides old familiar symbols in new and different ways.

Sam must stay in the participants' world and so he must use symbols which are familiar. He says: "You gotta identify with 'em or they won't pay any attention to what you say." Another way to express Sam's observations is to say: I have to make my words and acts familiar to their subjective

definitions of things." And he would agree that he has to understand their subjective world in order to do it. The process of such a complex act is the analytical focal point for the next section.

### 3. Phenomenological Features

Facilitation, in our team building workshop, is an intentional intersubjective phenomenon. This means several things at once. First it means that Sam has a subjective and unique interpretation of his world, and so of the workshop. His interpretation comes from his own life situation and background. He interprets all the social acts he senses and as a part of interpreting, he attaches meaning to those acts and intentions to the people who act. Second, each of the workshop participants is doing the same thing as Sam. They are all subjectively interpreting the goings on and ascribing intentions to others. Third, these subjective interpretations overlap to varying degrees, such that Sam and the workshop participants share some of their subjective interpretations and intentions. Finally, Sam is facilitating, which can be seen as an intentional act of bringing overlap to subjective interpretations.

In an earlier article (Butler 1977) I described the act of meaning ascription to messages tapped through a wall by prisoners of war. Our workshop assumes face-to-face interaction, the latter stages of a model illustrated in that article. Figure 5 is a modification of that concept for the

# Meaning Ascription Model

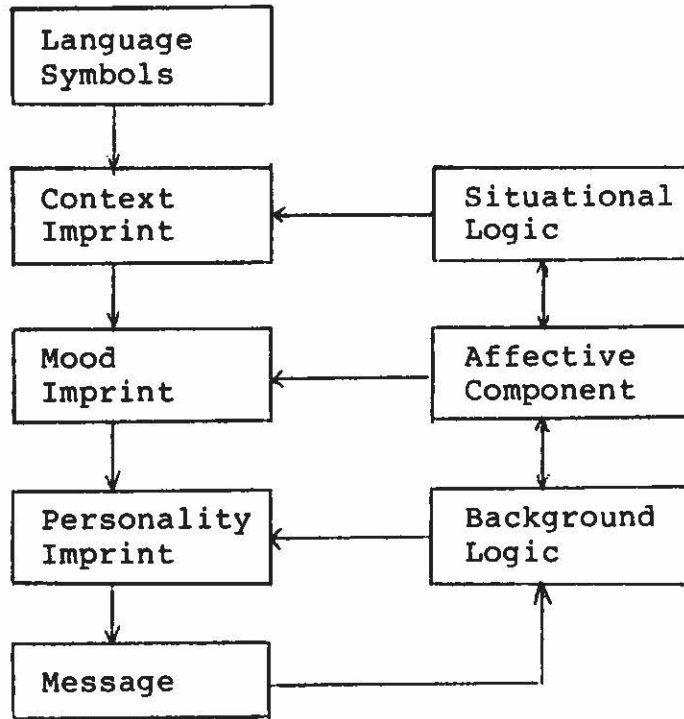


Figure 5



current situation. Facilitation, the intentional act of bringing overlap or sharing of subjective interpretations, can be visualized through the model in three stages. The first stage involves Sam's act of interpretation, ascribing meaning to what he hears and sees. To do this he uses a subjective rationality of "logic in use." The second stage is a process in which he attributes intentions, motives, and values to a participant or participants. The last stage is facilitation, an intentional act or acts designed to change their perceptions, motives, and values.

In the first stage, Sam's meaning ascription, the left column represents successive steps in the development of the meaning of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors Sam is observing. The right column represents components of consciousness Sam brings to his cognitive process. These "steps" are of course only functional illustrations of rapid, complex, and unordered cognitive processes.

A context is imprinted on the verbal and nonverbal stimuli by Sam's situational logic. It is a logic formulated for the here and now, based on the context he perceives himself to be in. A mood imprint is made according to his emotional state. Notice how that state will bias his assessment of the current situation and vice versa. Personality imprint is made on the message-to-be by his background logic. Components of background logic include things like culture, sex role, occupation, education,

ideology, social class and status. Here again there is reciprocation between background logic, affective state, and situational logic. Finally the message, as Sam understands it with the intentions he projects to the sender, is returned to memory to become part of Sam's new background of information.

One of the key features of Sam's understanding is the rationality he employs. Schutz (1967) describes it as a subjective rationality that is synonymous with reasonableness. It includes the ability to be innovative and not just to follow rules. Subjective rationality is deliberate. And deliberation includes anticipation of an end in the light of a present situation with all of its unique contextual features. As deliberation, it implies a rehearsal of acts in the imagination prior to acting. His acts are therefore planned and predictable to him and so he makes a choice between two or more means to the same end. Sam's subjective rationality is therefore logical to him within the boundaries of his own definition of what is logical. This kind of rationality is quite apart from a scientific logical means-ends or economic model of rationality.

In the second stage Sam attributes motives, intentions and values to the participant or participants whose language symbols he has received and interpreted. He can do this because he employs what Schutz calls "reciprocity of perspectives." It means that Sam assumes, in a subjective

way, that the participants are doing about the same thing he has just done, and in about the same way he has just done it. Furthermore he assumes that he shares experiences and interpretations of experiences with participants. In reciprocal ways, participants make those same assumptions about Sam because of the anecdotes he uses, the institutionally known language and slang he uses and because of his very appearance. He wears a uniform like theirs, with rank insignia denoting position in the order of hierarchy. He has ribbons representing campaigns and experiences that are mutually recognizable. And he has an emblem of warfare specialty giving visible proof of experience with the machinery of warfare on the open seas. Sam is careful to be groomed to fit Navy norms. His short hair, in setting him apart from nonmilitary people, helps to set him firmly in the intersubjective worlds of his participants. HRM specialists express these things they are taught about facilitation, these little tactics, not in the language of phenomenology because they are taught in another language. They say, like Sam, you have to "identify" with your participants, or that you have to "come-off" like you are a "member of the club." This is a key feature of facilitation, but it is an especially powerful tool for facilitators who are internal consultants. For they have "consociates" as Schutz says, not just "contemporaries," as clients. And this presents the



possibility of a much closer intersubjective relatedness or reciprocity of perspectives.

Another feature of Sam's cognitive process of attributing motives, intentions, and values to participants is called "typifications" by Schutz. These are the stereotypes Sam employs. They give him a set of typical assumptions to share with others in defining his situation. These typifications are what Sam uses to "take the role of the other," also called the act of empathetic understanding. With empathy, he can then concoct some line of action to change that other person's (participant's) projected action. HRM School has given Sam some of his typifications along with some recommendations for how to change or deal with those "types of behaviors." Figure 6 is taken from a student information sheet.

The last stage, Sam's actual actions of facilitation, are the intentional acts that are deliberately designed and produced to change participants' perceptions, motives, intentions, and values. These acts of facilitation are spontaneous variations of what Schutz calls his (Sam's) "stock of knowledge at hand." Some among his repertoire we have seen: feedback techniques, brainstorming, tasking, arranging of contextual features in the room, role playing, reflective listening, and other techniques borrowed from behavioral science, psychoanalytic theory and clinical psychology. There are also many techniques Sam pulls from



## Types of Behaviors

<u>TYPES OF BEHAVIOR</u>	<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>
1. The Dominator (know-it-all) the person who wants to impose their opinion on everyone else.	Encourage other members to comment on the dominator remarks freely. Let the rest of the group take care of this type of person.  Build up the confidence of the group in themselves so that they will not be imposed on by this type of member.
2. The Belitter (arguer). This type is always trying to cross up the leader. This person will quibble over the most trivial detail and loves to get the other person's goat.	The first rule in this type of situation is to keep cool. The leader should not lose his/her head nor allow other to do so. Use questions. Draw out the individual and turn him/her over to the group. Give the individual enough rope to make some absurd, foolish, or far fetched statements. Keep members from getting personal. Get the opinion of the majority.
3. The Talker (the one who wants to do all the talking).	Be very tactful but interrupt and ask others to comment. It may be necessary to ask him/her politely to refrain from talking and to give someone else a chance. It cannot be done without embarrassing the individual, a private talk would be advisable. <hr/> Fail to recognize the individual. <hr/> Don't look at this type of person when you are presenting a question. This makes it difficult for the person to get the floor. Deliberately turn to another conferee and ask for his/her opinion. Establish a rule that no member should speak too long on any question until someone else has a chance to talk.
4. The Distractor (the disinterested conferee).	Ask direct questions affecting the person's work. Ask for his/her advice pertaining to some features of the meetings. Quote tactfully some statement the person has made to you outside the meeting.  Pick out something the person has originated and hold it up as a good example. Carefully bring up things in which you know this person is interested.

Figure 6

5. The Superior Being (the obstinate individual who has no time for school doesn't believe in new ideas).	Can wreck a discussion if not handled properly. Make this person feel the group is interested in his/her opinions. Find some aspect of the problem that interests the person. Slant the subject to catch their attention. Hold up good points associated with the individual to illustrate points discussed.
6. The Blocker (the individual who thinks their idea is best and won't give up).	Let the person talk. Maybe his/her idea is good. If not, the individual will get enough attention and rope to hang. The person can then be ignored and the discussion can move on.
7. The Shy Individual.	Call on the person by name to give an opinion, and ask an easy question that the individual is sure to answer well, and then praise him/her. Find something for the individual to do to help you in the discussion; for example: act as recorder or hang up charts.
8. The Member with a Grievance.	Give this person a chance to air the grievance as soon as possible. Treat the individual with honest seriousness.
9. The Member who attempts to get your opinion instead of giving his/her own.	Refer the question back to the group and then back to the individual.
10. The Wisecracker - the group clown.	The degree of success of this person's antics is an indicator of boredom or aimlessness in the group. In a serious workminded group, the impatience of the other members of the group will end this activity. Keep the group interested and pointed toward the purpose for meeting.
11. The Member who thinks you are telling him/her how to do his/her job and resents it.	This person may feel they know the job better than anyone else. Get the individual to feel that this experience can be valuable to others; that the purpose of the discussion is to exchange ideas and to pool experiences.
12. The person who is wrong but whom others in the group, out of respect, refuse to correct.	Always avoid direct criticism, sarcasm, and ridicule. Use indirect methods. Analyze a similar case without reference to the individual personally.
	Talk to the person in private.

Figure 6 Continued

his "stock of knowledge at hand" that are more spontaneous and subtle. These kinds of intentional acts have great variance from facilitator to facilitator and they become a part of what other facilitators call one's "personal style." Here are a few I saw Sam using in the team building workshop:

Sam often quoted reliable (to the participants) authoritative sources in order to build his credibility.

"Navy Regs. specifies the duties of a department head..."

"According to Maslow and Herzberg, self actualization..."

"OPNAV Instruction 5300.6B directs all commands to..."

He used influential or charismatic participants in the workshop to his best advantage. "Commander Armstrong, we seem to be bogged down, can you summarize what's going on for us here?"... "Petty Officer James, tell us again your suggestion about who should be on the committee to organize that."

He shifts the focus of attention from himself to others for problem solving.

Participant: Commander, I don't see why you just don't give us the answers instead of making us go through all this. (Sam has answered this question before in the first part of the workshop.)

Sam (looks across the room to a friendly face): Chief Mason, do you think I should give answers to this problem?

(Chief Mason answers with the HRM party line about using your own expertise to solve problems in an organization so organizational members will take ownership in the solutions.)



He uses humor with a moral, to drive a point and to change the affective climate:

Sam: Wait a minute, you folks are getting too serious. (A lieutenant has just heatedly asked a petty officer to "sit down and shut up.") You know, the other day I saw this Ensign ask a sailor for a dollar's worth of change. The sailor said, "Yeh, I think I got it, just a minute, let me see." The Ensign sez, "Let's try that again, sailor, with 'sir' this time - now, you got a dollar's worth of change?" "No sir." (Much laughter with visible relaxing of tensions.)

From the phenomenological analysis of facilitation in the team building workshop, facilitation appears to us as an intentional intersubjective phenomenon. It is a complex cognitive act based on the facilitator's subjective definition of the situation and on his subjective definition of what participants are thinking and intending. As a way of interpreting facilitation, phenomenology adds a deeper dimension than our previous structural and interactional analyses. It gives us theoretical insight to the cognitive process and rationality that facilitators employ in the intentional act of bringing overlap to subjective interpretations.

#### E. Concluding Remarks

This paper has presented a sociological analysis of a qualitative applied knowledge set called facilitation. It began with an evolutionary description of social facilitation, the phenomenon discovered in laboratories of experimental social psychology. From laboratory phenomenon



we have seen social facilitation become facilitation, the applied organization development method used in the HRM System. The analysis of an actual workshop was based on three sociological paradigms, each of which presents different but interlocking viewpoints of the phenomenon facilitation.

Tracing the evolution of facilitation as a concept reveals some of the underlying reasons, objectives, and values. We see transitions from drive theory, a psychological paradigm based on inner basic drives and habits, to theories of objective self awareness, to theories of competition, and finally to sociological theories of heightened awareness in voting behaviors of large populations. Then a crossover was shown to occur in the intended use of the facilitation phenomenon as an applied behavioral science concept. Theories implying and opting for planned changes in organizations were described, with facilitation generally falling under Chin and Benne's "normative-reeducative" approach to client change. Values and reasons underlying several schools of that approach were described, one focusing on helping members of a client system to become more aware, and the other on helping with the problem solving capabilities of a client organizational system. The values and assumptions of each branch were given.

The perceptions of facilitator and participants were described in structural or normative terms in the first analytical sequence. The perceived normative structures were seen as constraining and shaping influences on the processes of facilitation. Some of these constraints are present as normative structures the specialist and participants bring to the workshop as members of various strata in the Navy organization with distinctive values, ideals, needs, biases, motives and self interests. Other constraints are intentionally presented and set up by the facilitator in order to take advantage of those values, etc.

In the second analytical sequence, the perceptions of facilitator and participants were described in terms of the language in use and the roles that are consequently ascribed during the workshop. Facilitator roles like "performer," "interpreter," "role-player," "insider," and "expert in the use of clinical and behavioral science techniques" became more apparent. The overall view of facilitation was given as manipulation of the symbolic environment, an intentional act of perception management.

In the final analytical sequence, the intersubjective features of facilitation are explored. Again facilitation is seen as an intentional act, this time of managing subjective interpretations. The intersubjective perceptual process of meaning ascription, interpretation, reciprocal perspective, role taking, typification, and the consequent intentional

facilitation of these features was described. Facilitation is thus shown to be a process of intentional manipulation of intersubjective perceptual phenomena.

The notion of facilitation has evolved through many forms since Triplett's original discovery. In recent years it has become an often used qualitative tool for accomplishing a variety of tasks. Each of these tasks assumes certain values and self interests on the part of facilitators. In fact, the act of facilitation can be seen as an intentional act of manipulation under several sociological lenses. Only when facilitation is studied from the standpoints of both its historical evolution and its interactional processes can these underlying values and self interests be brought to light.



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W. Howard Church	M.S.	U. Southern California	P
John W. Creighton	Ph.D.	U. Michigan	P
*Robert Cunningham	M.S.	Naval Postgraduate School	I
Leslie Darbyshire	Ph.D.	U. Washington	P
Phillip Ein-Dor	Ph.D.	Carnegie-Mellon	Adj
Richard Elster	Ph.D.	U. Minnesota	P
Carson Eoyang	Ph.D.	Stanford	AP
✓ Ken Euske	D.B.A.	Arizona State	aP
Roger Evered	Ph.D.	UCLA	AP
*Edwin Fincke	M.S.	Naval Postgraduate School	I
✓ James Fremgen	D.B.A.	Indiana	P
Reuben Harris	Ph.D.	Stanford	AP
Fenn Horton	Ph.D.	Claremont	AP
*Jerry Horton	M.S.	Naval Postgraduate School	I
Carl Jones, Chairman	Ph.D.	Claremont	P
Melvin Kline	Ph.D.	UCLA	P
David Lamm	D.B.A.	George Washington U.	aP
Shu Liao	Ph.D.	Illinois	AP
Meryl Louis	Ph.D.	UCLA	aP
Norman Lyons	Ph.D.	Carnegie-Mellon	AP
Richard McGonigal	Ph.D.	Michigan State	AP
Alan McMasters	Ph.D.	U. C. Berkeley	AP
Robert Nickerson	Ph.D.	Stanford	aP
*James O'Hare	M.S.	Naval Postgraduate School	I
Clair Peterson	Ph.D.	MIT	AP
Denise Rousseau	Ph.D.	U. C. Berkeley	aP
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*Walter Skierkowski	M.S.	U. Nebraska	I
George Thomas	Ph.D.	Purdue	Adj
✓ Roger Weissinger-Baylon	Ph.D.	Stanford	AP
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