

Facilitation Essentials

Inspiring Teams and Engaging Leadership



Life is not a script

In Izzy Gesell's "Playing Along – 37 Group Learning Activities Borrowed from Improvisational Theatre" he says:

"The skills of improvisers can help us all be more successful."

In the same way – we believe that the skills of facilitators can also make us better managers, leaders and even colleagues. These 'facilitation essentials' hold the key to inspiring teams and engaging leadership.

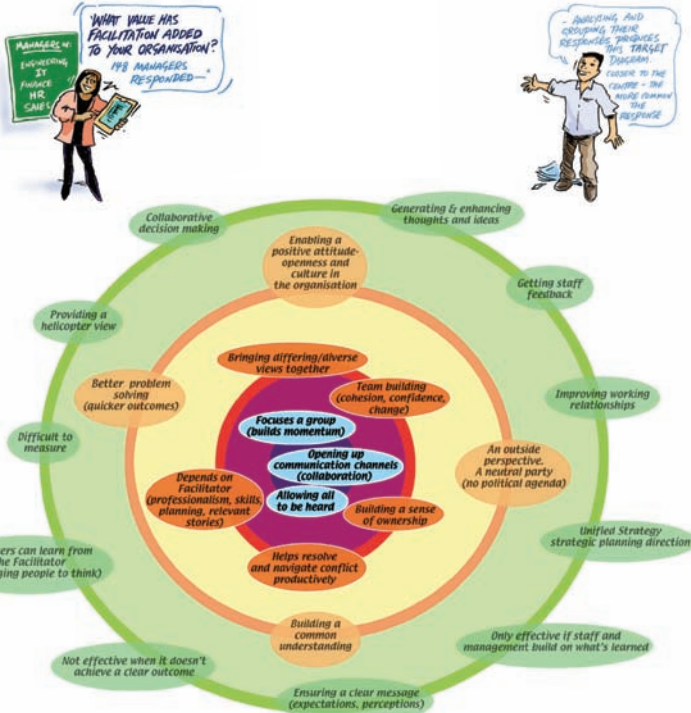
With some of the principles of Improvisational Theatre being: Take care of your partner, Be Average, Accept all offers and Say Yes! It's not by chance that we've drawn a parallel between learning the skills of facilitation and those played out in Improvisational Theatre.

But what exactly is a facilitator?

The Role of the Facilitator

Learning about Facilitation

The Value of Facilitation



Appearing in Stephen Hawking's 1988 book "A Brief History of Time" there is a story:

"A well-known scientist (some say it was Bertrand Russell) once gave a public lecture on astronomy. He described how the earth orbits around the sun and how the sun, in turn, orbits around the center of a vast collection of stars called our galaxy. At the end of the lecture, a little old lady at the back of the room got up and said: "What you have told us is rubbish. The world is really a flat plate supported on the back of a giant tortoise." The scientist gave a superior smile before replying, "What is the tortoise standing on?" "You're very clever, young man, very clever," said the old lady. "But it's turtles all the way down!"

Similarly, the common solar system model for learning the skills of facilitation is that there are skills, which are informed by theories which are impacted in-the-moment by the values that you as a facilitator have. In a somewhat counter view we believe that there are skills and models which inform the learning, doing and being of facilitation and that these skills and models go all the way down....

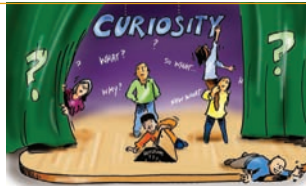


* In a survey with 233 responding managers across Melbourne, Australia, with work areas ranging from engineering, IT, finance to HR and sales, 148 managers responded to the question: 'What value has facilitation added to your organisation?'

The 3 Stages

Our person-centred approach to helping people learn sees the essentials of facilitation playing out on three stages.

The stage of Curiosity



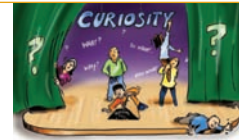
The stage of Spontaneity



The stage of Choice



Curiosity



What does curiosity mean to you?

What qualities go along with you being curious?

When are you most curious?

When least?

Are there areas where you are more curious than others?

One key feature of curiosity is asking questions.

- As a facilitator, asking questions is one of the key tools you have. One example from Dorothy Strachan's book "Making Questions Work" is the "What - So What - Now What" framework for moving a group into action .
- Improvisational Theatre has a game called "Questions Only!"
- What did you learn from this game? What's your natural response to questions?

¹ For more on questions and language, see our paper "Exploring the language of facilitation" published in the Journal of Group Facilitation 2007. Downloadable from <http://www.babelfishgroup.com>

Spontaneity



Improvisational Theatre has some key principles of: Take care of your partner, Be Average, Accept all offers and Say Yes!

These principles provide some insight into the paradoxical way of how you can practice your spontaneity. Yes, you can actually learn to become more spontaneous!

What are the benefits of being able to be spontaneous whilst working with groups?

If we can assume that a group meeting will see a certain level of spontaneity playing out, a key skill of a facilitator then is how to get, maintain and give focus away within a group interaction.

Choice



The final stage of Choice sees the play-out relating to Ownership. They say "You buy - you own". Or as Benjamin Franklin has said:

*"Tell me and I forget
Teach me and I remember
Involve me and I learn"*

- Why is ownership at the participant level important?
- As a facilitator, what can you own?
- How do you garner ownership within a group interaction?
- What strategies do you have?

As a facilitator, ownership relates to the personal qualities of control and letting go.

- What is your natural response to control?
- How controlling are you?
- How able to 'let go' are you?
- How do you know the difference?

Facilitator Archetypes

Drawing on the work of Carl Jung, Angeles Arrien, a cultural anthropologist, surveyed the worlds' culture and myth and identified four common archetypes².

It may be no coincidence that Angeles Arrien's four-fold model of the roles Warrior, Healer, Teacher and Visionary can be compared and contrasted across a common set of behavioural patterns identified in many temperament theories³.

Warrior



Healer



Visionary



Teacher



	Temperament 1	Temperament 2	Temperament 3	Temperament 4
Hippocrates (450 BC)	Phlegmatic (Phlegm)	Choleric (Yellow Bile)	Melancholic (Black Bile)	Sanguine (Blood)
Carl Jung Archetypes (1900s)	Feeling directed	Intellect directed	Body directed	Intuition directed
Myers-Briggs Type indicator (MBTI) (1950s)	ENFJ, INFJ, ENFP, INFP (NF)	ENTJ, INTJ, ENTP, INTP (NT)	ESTJ, ISTJ, ESTJ, ISFJ (SJ)	ESFP, ISFP, ESTP, ISTP (SP)
DISC	Inducement (I)	Conscientious (C)	Steadiness (S)	Dominance (D)

² See "The Four Fold Way – Angeles Arrien"

³ See "Manager as Facilitator - Judy Whichard and Nathalie L. Kees"

Facilitator Archetypes – Which is your preference?

In 2006 we invited facilitators around the world to reflect on the roles that they see themselves playing within groups. With 440 facilitators responding world-wide we were able to see a clear gender difference.

Warrior

Men – 15.6%
Women – 9.7%



Healer

Men – 25.7%
Women – 26.1%



Visionary

Men – 6.4%
Women – 19.4%



Teacher

Men – 33.9%
Women – 20.9%



Which role would you be most comfortable playing? Which would you be the least comfortable with? What accounts for the difference between the two?

Facilitator Shadows Model⁴

Shadows of the Warrior

Rebellion
Authority issues
Patterns of invisibility:
"riding on the coattails of others"

Questions to reflect on:

1. In what parts of my facilitation practice have I experienced being a victim?
2. When have I been a rebel?
3. In what parts of my facilitation practice have I experienced authority issues?
4. In what parts of my facilitation practice have I experienced patterns of invisibility?



Shadows of the Visionary

Self denial
Self abandonment
Projection: "a disowned part of ourselves on the way home"

Questions to reflect on:

1. When during my facilitation experiences have I felt that I have in some way abandoned myself?
2. Have there been times during my facilitation practice when I have noticed myself projecting my fears, failings, optimism or achievements onto others?



Shadows of the Healer

The four addictions:

1. Addiction to intensity
2. Addiction to perfection
3. Addiction to need to know
4. Addiction to being fixated on what's not working

Questions to reflect on:

1. Of the four addictions, which of these do I often find myself attracted to?
2. Of the four addictions, has there been any one in particular in which I am already aware of the need to balance my energies drawing me towards this addiction?



Shadows of the Teacher

- Positionality
- Judgement
- Control

Questions to reflect on:

1. When I am at my best, do I feel like I have the elements of flexibility, trust and objectivity and discernment in balance? At my worst, do I feel I have become aligned and possibly unbalanced around positionality, judgement and control?



⁴Sourced and adapted from "The Four Fold Way – Angeles Arrien".

Facilitator Hot Spots and Tricky Bits

"If I own my imperfections I don't have to go looking for them in anyone else"



What are some hot spots and tricky bits that you would like to explore in your work and interactions with groups?

Inspired by the Groupwork Institute www.groupwork.com.au

About Babel Fish Group Pty Ltd



Andrew Rixon

Babel Fish Group, led by Andrew Rixon PhD, is a company dedicated to helping organisations transform through the development of collaborative environments, high performing teams and productive positive relationships.

Since completing his PhD in mathematics and community ecology at the University of Queensland in June 1999 Andrew has gained global experience in working with organisations, within Australia and internationally in the USA, the Netherlands and the UK. The complex systems perspective drawn from his PhD has informed Andrew's experience and allowed him to make contributions in the areas of systems and software development, knowledge management, social research, facilitation and management consulting.

Today, Andrew's focus is on how effective communication and facilitation skills can change the way we work. As a keynote speaker, workshop leader and professional facilitator and change consultant, Andrew's style is engaging, light hearted and curious. Andrew juggles in his spare time.

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