



Facilitative Leadership

A Process Orientation to Continuous Improvement

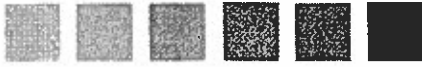
The underlying belief in the creation of this training tool kit is that in order for school leaders to lead second order change they must learn to lead collaboration. Because collaboration is an essential characteristic both for improving schools and for highly effective schools, it is necessary for the school leader to develop his/her staff's capacity to collaborate. This is best done through modeling and the routine and consistent use of collaborative protocols. Direct training in collaboration skills is useful when the skills are taught in the context of a collaborative experience.

We recognize that school leaders are generally not prepared to lead their schools as a collaborative endeavor. Creating a cooperative/collaborative culture in a school is a significant second order change for many schools. At the same time, we recognize that all school leaders can draw on some previous experience with cooperation and collaboration to begin to make sense of the activities in this manual. It is not essential for the leader to be an expert, in fact it is more desirable for the leader to learn collaborative skills and protocols along side the staff, thus demonstrating and modeling his or her own willingness to learn to collaborate.

The facilitation of collaboration entails understanding three related but separate functions: facilitative stance, facilitation, and the role of the facilitator. These are nested functions. (*See page 1.3.*) A facilitative stance is the broadest nest. It represents the leader's beliefs, attitudes and dispositions. The role of the facilitator is the next nest. It relies entirely on the leader's facilitative stance but represents behaviors. Facilitation is the center nest and represents the particular collaborative meeting processes that the facilitator leads.

The facilitative stance is essential but insufficient to facilitate collaboration. Attitude is important but it is not enough on its own to lead second order change. The school leader has to be able to take on the role of facilitator which is nested in attitude but demonstrated in behaviors. The facilitative stance and the role of facilitator are actualized in facilitation practices and processes that support the transformation of the school staff from competitive, isolated, incongruent individuals into a collaborative group focused on common goals that transcend personal interests.





Introduction

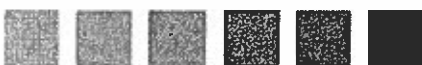
A Facilitative Stance is a positive disposition toward cooperation and collaboration. It begins with the recognition that the school leader is in charge but not in control of the school. The power a school leader has to effect change in the staff is directly dependent on how much cooperation the staff offers. A facilitative stance places trusting and trustworthy relationships at the center of leadership work. (*For more on trust see Section 3.*) In order to develop the staff's capacity for change the school leader must cultivate cooperation and teach and use collaborative practices in order to realize the goal of school improvement.

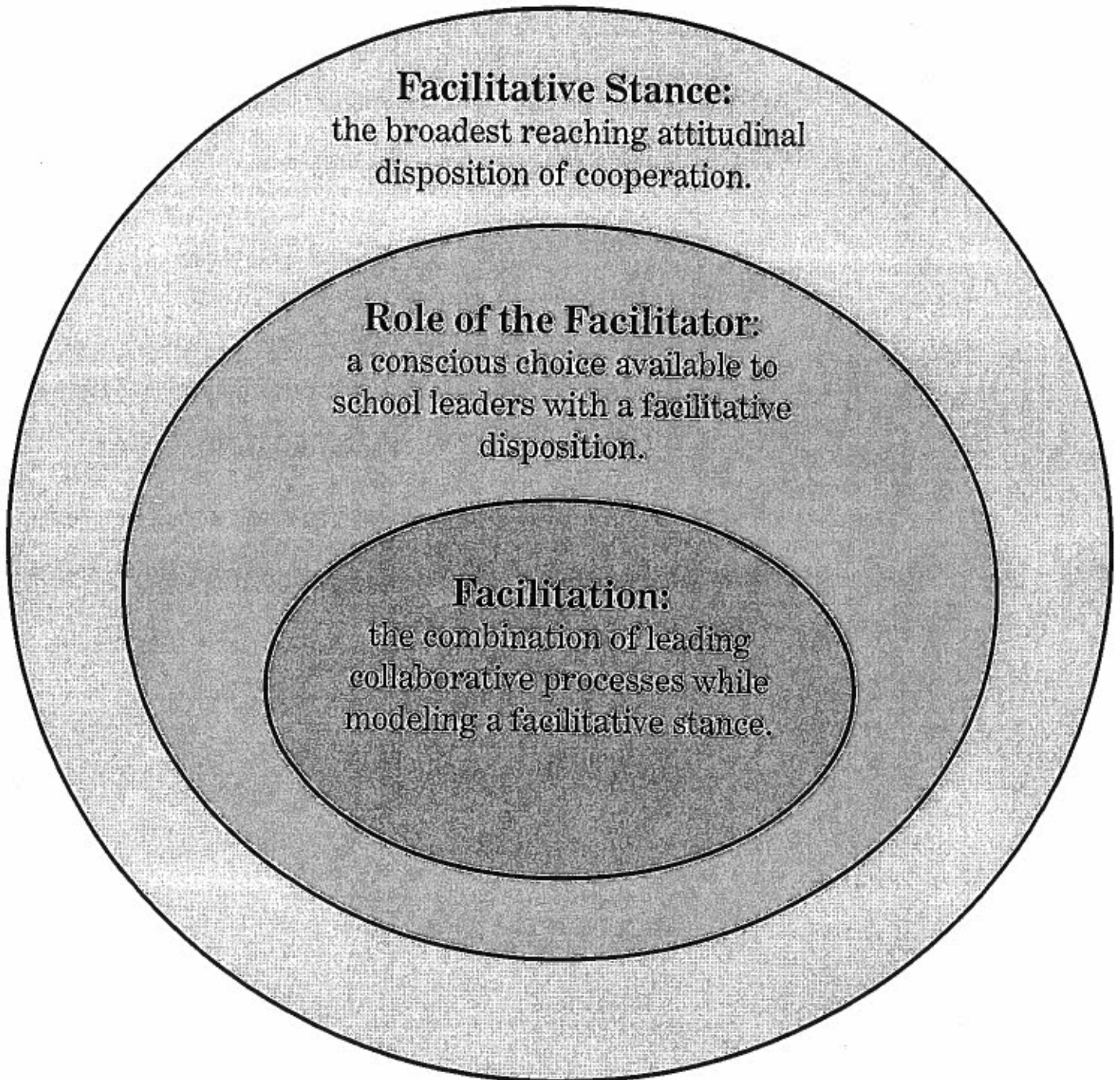
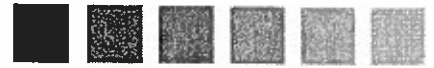
A school leader with a facilitative stance would naturally embrace the following principles of cooperation.

- The solution is in the room.
- Relationships are the goal.
- Process matters.
- People have their own inner resources for excellence.
- All of us are smarter than any one of us.
- My success is dependent on your success.
- I can trust the process.

The Facilitator is a person or group of people in charge of guiding the collaborative protocols. The facilitator puts care and thought into designing process protocols. He or she trusts the processes they design to support the work of the group, while monitoring and adjusting the effectiveness of the process. The facilitator intervenes when the group's process hinders the group's effectiveness. The facilitator's interventions are designed to help the group learn how to diagnose and improve its process. The facilitator's role is not to do things for the group but to teach the group to do things for itself.

Facilitation is the process of planning and leading collaborative, socially constructive and personally transformative protocols for staff.







Introduction

Facilitation

Operational Definition of Facilitation

Facilitation is a collaborative group process led by a facilitator and designed explicitly for the needs and goals of the group. Facilitation is what a facilitator does to support the continuous improvement of the group's members' ability to work effectively together.

Guiding Principles for Facilitation

- Process matters – there is a right process for the task.
- Groups work more effectively with facilitation.
- The best people to make a decision are the people who are affected by the decision.
- The best people to solve the problem are the people having the problem.
- The time it takes to engage effectively with each other will be saved in the reduction of confusion and frustration later.
- All group members have value and something to contribute.
- None of us is as smart as all of us.
- My success is dependent on your success.





Facilitator

A facilitator models the belief that people have their own inner resources to achieve excellence. A facilitator's goal is to become unnecessary to the group as the group learns to self-facilitate. Through a facilitated process, participants form bonds of inter-connectedness and interdependence. It is through such experience that differences are resolved, diversity is valued, beliefs are shared, and people learn to appreciate each other's styles, beliefs and uniqueness. All group members stretch to accommodate and transform their thinking and perceptions to form a wider bond of trustworthy relationships.

– Bruce Willis. (1997)
Twelve Roles of Facilitators for School Change

Facilitator's Role

As a facilitator it is your responsibility:

- To model trust and assume all people are trustworthy.
- To design and lead an appropriate process to accomplish the group's goals.
- To be an attentive listener - model deep and active listening, restates, reframes, encourages, summarizes, clarifies and checks for the group's understanding.
- To synthesize the group's ideas.
- To track the group's progress.
- To identify areas of agreement.
- To keep the group moving forward toward its goals.
- To provide for inclusion - create protocols and procedures that are sensitive and effective to including every member of the group.
- To manage the boundaries of the group and its work.





Introduction

Facilitator Knowledge and Skills

As a facilitator you should:

- Develop processes appropriate to the needs of the group.
- Lead the process.
- Trust in the process.
- Demonstrate a value for all group members.
- Track participation.
- Engage and involve all group members.
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in other people's points of view.
- Model and support constructive communication.
- Restate what people say.
- Reframe what people say.
- Utilize clarifying questions to support group understanding.
- Own your part of an interaction.
- Acknowledge your feelings and the feelings of others.
- Synthesize complex and divergent ideas.
- Demonstrate cultural competence.

