

Integral Facilitation Primer & Self-Assessment

This is an introduction to a workbook that accompanies the Journey of Facilitation and Collaboration, a five-day experiential workshop offered twice a year at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.



This short paper introduces a comprehensive model of facilitation upon which this workshop is based, in addition to a self-assessment instrument used to rank your skills relative to 20 Archetypes of the Integral Facilitator.

To learn more about this workshop, read its objectives below and visit JourneyofCollaboration.com.

What is Facilitation?

Facilitation as a discipline has been around since the 60's and 70's, and is used by organizational development consultants, facilitators, trainers, business coaches, project managers, meeting chairman, clergy, and other group leaders. Still, it's not well known by the majority of people who meet everyday in groups. Even among its practitioners, a clear definition and placement of this field within the larger field of human science is difficult to agree upon.

Any noteworthy accomplishment in this day and age takes the focused energy of committed groups. Yet, people working ineffectively together is the most often cited obstacle to finding solutions to problems.

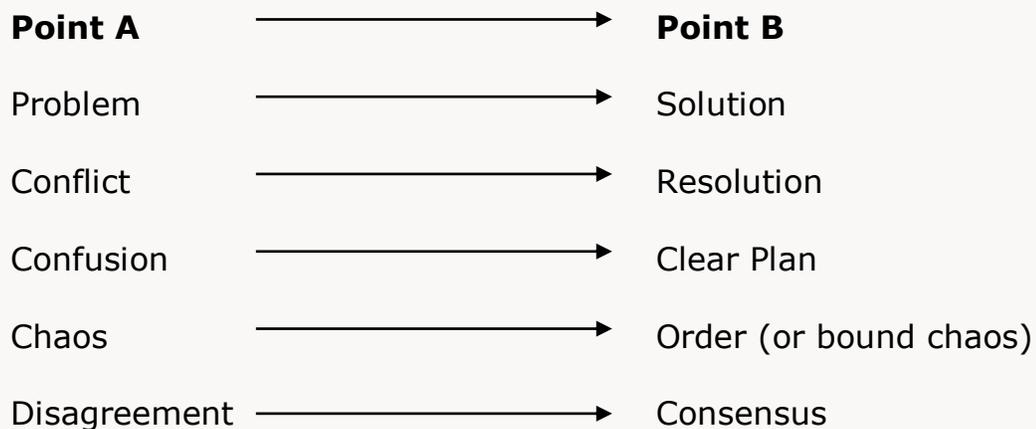
Facilitation is now the technology of choice for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of groups. Richard Weaver & John Farrell, authors of "Managers as Facilitators," go so far as to say that...

"Facilitation is the most important role emerging in the modern workplace."

Speaking across centuries, a sage delivers timeless wisdom on the essence of leadership, and the spirit of facilitation...

*A good leader is best when people barely know that he leads. A good leader talks little but when the work is done, the aim fulfilled, all others will say, "We did this ourselves."
— Lao Tse—*

Facilitation, in its simplest form, is the act of helping groups to make a change as easily as possible. It's about helping a group get from point A to point B where these points could represent any of the following:



Why Facilitation?

Much of our lives are spent working, playing, and being in groups.

We enjoy dinner conversations around a well trimmed table, take-up a round of cards, suit-up for a Tuesday night soccer league, visit a park with our kids, or deliver a new product to a customer...all with the participation of others. Yet, how many of us take a moment to think about the deep well of potential contained in these groups? What would it take to really unleash this potential? How much more meaningful, impacting, and downright fun could our lives be if we could access the extent of this tremendous power?

Taking this a step further, unleashing the potential in groups onto the stage of complex local and global challenges is becoming an imperative. With all the seemingly exterior problems that need fixing—pollution, terrorism, global warming, nuclear threats, pandemics, etc., we suggest that the source of these problems is internal. Unless consciousness evolves from egocentric to ethnocentric to world centric, people won't care enough to solve these problems.

Integral Facilitation: How It All Fits Together

Imagine you are on stage for a moment...the lights beam hot and bright in your face. An announcer's voice comes booming over the audio system: 'We are proud to welcome a great performer to our community today. (Insert your name) will be attempting to juggle four balls at once! But wait, our performer will demonstrate not just one but five different juggling patterns!'

Are you sweating yet?

The reason groups often fail to address tough challenges is that members don't realize that they are really juggling four dynamic elements at once--- they have to understand and manage themselves, stay on task and within a plan, provide some kind of outcome, and work within a cultural context. As if that is not enough, these four elements interplay to form distinct characteristics or patterns over the life of the group.

Sound too complicated? It is if you try to juggle all four balls without first isolating and then adding one ball at a time. You can also get overwhelmed with the daunting task of learning five patterns before taking the time to express each pattern along the way.

In order to teach you to juggle, let's start by first learning what each ball looks like and practice throwing it up in the air and catching it. Then we'll add more balls and teach you the patterns that underlie each phase as the group moves through its development.

A Holistic Perspective: The Four Quadrants

The main feature of the map of group engagement contains **four "quadrants"** that correspond to the four aspects of any engagement (see Diagram 1). They are:

1. **SELF-AWARENESS:** The inner values, intentions, knowledge, and motivation of the individual, whether the group leader, a participant, or the group facilitator. This is the realm of self-awareness.
2. **TASK MANAGEMENT:** This quadrant presents constraints such as time, cost, quality, and scope. It is fueled, as well, by content such as facts and figures that can stimulate the work of the group to achieve an expected or intended product described in a plan. Also, a primary task of facilitators is the management of their own behavior.

- GROUP MANAGEMENT:** The processes the group uses to produce something tangible lands in this quadrant. Outcomes may look like a list of ideas, a report, a new product, a solution, or an improved organizational system. In order to engage the group to produce these outcomes, process tools, methodologies, and interventions may be employed.
- GROUP AWARENESS:** Each group or organization possesses its own unique and ever changing internal dynamic: its specialized values, symbols, worldviews, structures, and behavioral norms. These are reinforced because of the conditions and context it faces. Being able to recognize, read, and understand internal group or organizational culture must become a central focus if we are to solve complex problems.



Diagram 1: Four Quadrants of Group Process

Let's apply this model to a simple example:

You have been asked by your supervisor to form a team to develop a new product. Referring to diagram 2 below, there are a variety of factors to consider when faced with the decision to start a new project.

To begin, you are a crucial part of the process. Motivating yourself to serve as the project lead is not just a matter of "doing it because the boss said so". If you are to invest in the project's success, you must align yourself

with the effort on a basic level. Asking some questions about how the project serves your interests can help motivate your commitment.

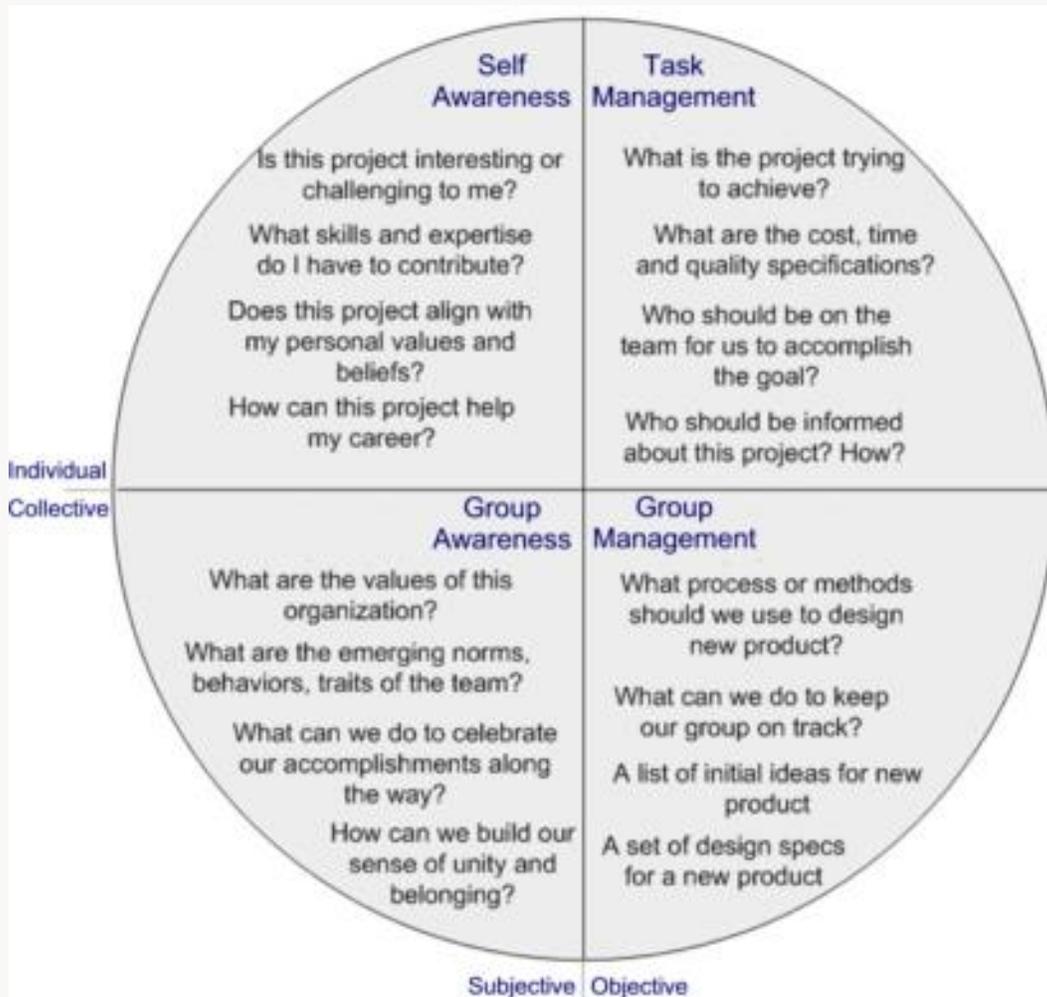


Diagram 2: New Product Team

Every effort maneuvers within constraints and includes its “must haves”. In this case, the project will likely need to determine customer wants and various stakeholder needs. An interview with the supervisor or “sponsor” of the project will provide vital information about what can be spent, who else needs to be involved, and project risks. These critical assessments will come together in the form of the plan for initiating the project. This can be translated into formal project management format with a charter document, tracking software, and system for evaluating progress.

The team may have some initial ideas about what type of product to create. While these initial ideas are important, the process used to cultivate and deepen the creativity of the group needs attention if they are to produce a “blockbuster” product. Paying attention to the process may involve specific group exercises such as brainstorming as well as more technical methodologies calling for statistical analysis. As the team continues its work, they will begin to converge on designs for the new product.

Each team has its own unique dynamic, with its rivalries, factions, past history, and power players. Planning for and managing appropriately how the team will develop will help lead to a more constructive team culture. In addition, as the capacity of the team grows to work together in more complex ways, the organization is building its own capability to address new or existing challenges. In this way, a culture of collaboration is developing that will have many positive affects on the organization.

20 Archetypes of the Integral Facilitator

The capacity of a group to move through each phase of problem solving can be greatly and predictably increased by applying particular tools and skills.

Imagine a painter’s pallet. The painter has access to many hues and textures that give life to a certain form----a landscape, portrait, object, or idea. Applying particular colors and at particular times, the artist will have significant impact on how the final product affects a viewer.

During our **Journey of Facilitation and Collaboration Course** at the University of Wisconsin, we teach a series of competencies to encourage groups to evolve into high functioning teams. Like a good painter, you learn how to recognize when a new color should be applied to stimulate, focus, or appreciate. By drawing on competencies at the appropriate time, one may increase the capacity of a group to solve multi-disciplinary, multi-scale and multi-cultural challenges. While certain competencies are emphasized during particular stages of group development, these competencies are not bounded in a certain stage. Often you will employ many competencies. As you move through the weird and wonderful forms of group problem solving, you will carry the entire pallet of colors.

Now that this part of the integral model has been outlined, you may be asking, “How can it be translated into the way I work as a collaborative leader or facilitator?”

Facilitators play many roles as group leaders. For a facilitator to be truly integral, these roles should address the tasks of each quadrant and throughout the levels of group and organizational complexity.

We've identified 20 archetypes and corresponding competencies required of an integral facilitator and mapped them into the four quadrants shown on the next two pages. Understand that we group these not for rigid application to those tasks assigned to each quadrant but in an attempt to organize our thinking and cover all the roles occupied by facilitation.

Integral Facilitator Self-Assessment

Following the competency map below is an Integral Facilitator's Self-Assessment. Complete this assessment to determine your level of competency for each of these archetypes, then consider the questions that follow to help you craft a develop plan to enhance your skills.

You may freely use this assessment in your meetings and organizational work to help develop the facilitation skills of yourself and others as long as it is presented intact within this document as a whole.

20 Archetypes of the Integral Facilitator

| <u>Self-Awareness</u> | <u>Task Management</u> |
|--|---|
| Core Values & Intentions (The Inner Guide) | Ten Commandments Collaboration (The Pat) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presence• Intuition• Objectivity• Integrity• Possibility• Humor• Adaptability• Empathy• Results• Mastery | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage your ego toward the background• Follow inner guidance in service to the group• Be directive on process, impartial on content• Be confident, secure, and authentic• Challenge participants to stretch• Be light with group, serious with task• Adapt to and be creative with the unexpected• Honor and respect your participants• Facilitate progress toward group objectives• Seek feedback, learning, and coaching |
| Theoretical Knowledge (The Scholar) | Assessment (The Consultant) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand role of facilitator• Distinguish between content and process• Fluent in approaches for data generation, grouping, selection, and decision-making• Know signposts of group dysfunction• Fluent with Integral Facilitation Model• Understand stages of group development and how they impact process design and approach• Know how to work with individuals who are visual, verbal and kinesthetic.• Know how to facilitate groups that over-process (talk excessively or analyze without decision). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with client to build an integral project charter• Assess personality, behavioral styles, and organization• Assess and share my biases with client• Solicit evaluation and make adjustments• Follow-up to maintain momentum and continuity |
| | Process Design (The Architect) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negotiate tasks, deliverables, roles & responsibilities• Design events to achieve clearly defined objectives• Prepare to unique needs of audience• Select best resources and processes for event |
| | Presentation (The Orator) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present with self to connect with others• Pay attention to audience, one person at a time.• Comfortable with silence• Use voice as an instrument |
| | Group Memory (The Scribe) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effectively use presentation tools• Accurately, concisely, and clearly record and organize participant inputs |
| | Accountability (The Warrior) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate accountability for results• Provide tools to facilitate accountability |
| | Roles (The Shape Shifter) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition into other roles as situation dictates• Modify behavior/style for gender, personality, culture |

20 Archetypes of the Integral Facilitator (Continued)

| <u>Group Awareness</u> | <u>Group Management</u> |
|--|---|
| <p>Listening (The Friend)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend to whoever is speaking and if distracted reengage with the speaker.• Listen to grasp significance and meaning of individual participant comments (content) while facilitating.• Listen for depth and meaning in conversation using non-verbal cues in body language and my intuition. <p>Inquiry (The Investigator)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question incongruence• Clarify and reveal assumptions• Ask open-ended questions to draw out participants• Concisely summarize key points of discussion <p>Understanding (The Muse)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read group culture, i.e. norms, patterns, values, power relationships.• Use and interpret body language to connect and engage.• Take advantage of “surprises” and “mistakes” in service of group goals.• Sense group’s energetic state and how it might need to shift to support the current task.• Sense group’s cognitive and emotional readiness for the task and adjusts approach as necessary.• Sense group’s readiness based on stage of group development. <p>Forbearance (The Empath)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be inwardly and outwardly silent to hold space of the group.• Keep attention on participant, not myself• Be empathetic, putting yourself in other’s shoes• Honor participant’s ability to experience and process their thoughts & feelings. <p>Set (The Shaman)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select and time process to consider group “state”• Intervene to shift state in support of task• Employ words, icons, symbols, and activities relevant to group culture• Create rituals for learning, connection, transition | <p>Setting (The Lover)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Model and demonstrate ways to cultivate safety and trust• Prepare physical environment for mood, culture, and purpose.• Configure room to support group culture, purpose, and process. <p>Facilitating Participation (The Magician)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help groups understand the value of full participation through stories, metaphors, and actions.• Give clear and concise instructions for group activities and check for understanding.• Clearly summarize key points during dynamic discussions.• Demonstrate techniques that cultivate a participatory environment. <p>Facilitating Process (The Guide)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinguish process from task and content• Employ the appropriate process tools given the task, culture and individuals in the group.• Assure the group understands what process it is using and why appropriate.• Effectively facilitate selected processes to reach the stated goal or task. <p>Intervention (The Coach)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lay the groundwork for intervention—Permission• Identify behaviors requiring intervention—Perception• Weigh decision to intervene—Predicament• Use an effective intervention method—Process <p>Conflict Magic (The Mediator)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide safe environment for conflict to surface.• Engage participants in a collaborative negotiation process to address key aspects of a conflict.• Impartially articulate various perspectives of an issue.• Identify underlying needs and interests of all parties.• Develop and analyze options and consequences.• Constructively respond to disagreement in support of learning and group capacity. <p>Consensus Building (The Guardian)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate understanding of consensus concept• Know the pros and cons of consensus building and alternative decision-making methods.• Model positive tone for collaboration.• Facilitate a consensus building process.• Facilitate alternative decision-making methods. |

Integral Facilitation Skills Self-Assessment

Facilitation Skills Assessment. Rate yourself on each of the archetypes, and indicate skill level desired

- 0 No Skill
- 1 Limited knowledge
- 2 General, conceptual knowledge only.
- 3 Can perform with assistance. Have applied knowledge.
- 4 Can perform without assistance. In-depth knowledge. Leads or directs others in performing.
- 5 Can give expert advice and lead others to perform. Sought by other for consultation and leadership. Have comprehensive knowledge with ability to make sound judgments.

| Competency | Score |
|--|-----------|
| Self-Awareness | |
| Core Values & Intentions (The Inner Guide) | |
| Presence: I can identify and work with my personal patterns, thoughts, and feelings and center or re-center my body and mind when off track. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Intuition: I am attuned to nuances and actively share my insights in service to the group. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Objectivity: I release my personal judgments or agenda. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Integrity: I am true to myself, what I perceive, and capable of standing up for my beliefs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Possibility. I believe in the brilliant possibilities and innate intelligence of what a group can achieve or become. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Humor: I take myself lightly and my work seriously. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Adaptability: Trusting in the innate intelligence of groups, I am open and adapt to the unexpected. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Empathy: I relate to the challenging feelings that participants meet in the face of change and conflict. I honor and respect who they are and the values they hold. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Results: I am committed to helping groups define and achieve its desired results. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Mastery: I have a beginner’s mind. I am committed to life-long learning, and open to receiving feedback and coaching, from participants and peers alike. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Theoretical Knowledge (The Scholar) | |
| I understand the role of facilitator. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can distinguish between content and process. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I’m fluent in idea generation, grouping, selection, and decision-making processes. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I’m fluent with the Integral Facilitation (four-quadrant) Model. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I know and actively monitor signposts of group dysfunction. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I understand stages of group development and how they impact process design and approach. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can engage individuals who are visual, verbal and kinesthetic. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I know how to facilitate groups that over-process (talk excessively or analyze without decision). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Self-Awareness Score (Your Total/90) | |

Integral Facilitation Skills Self-Assessment (Continued)

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Task Management | |
| The Ten Commandments of Collaboration (The Path) | |
| I can manage my ego toward the background, quieting this part of myself when necessary. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can "turn within" to access inner guidance in service to groups. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can be directive on process, impartial on content. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I am confident, secure, and authentic about who I am and how this influences my facilitation style. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can challenge participants to stretch to their full potential. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can be light with group, serious with task. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can adapt to and be creative with the unexpected. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can honor and respect participants. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can faithfully facilitate progress toward group objectives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I actively seek feedback, learning, and coaching. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Assessment (The Consultant) | |
| I can collaborate with a client to build a project charter. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can assess personality, behavioral styles, and organizational development using a series of inquiry questions or a client intake interview. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can assess and share my biases or conflicts of interest with the client. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can solicit evaluation and make adjustments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can follow-up to maintain momentum and continuity between group engagements. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Process Design (The Architect) | |
| I can negotiate tasks, deliverables, roles & responsibilities. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can design events to achieve clearly defined objectives. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can prepare for unique needs, objectives and context of audience. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can select best resources (e.g. facilities, staff, equipment) for event from among many available. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Presentation (The Orator) | |
| I can be present in a way that builds a personal, genuine connection. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can pay attention to audience, one person at a time. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can be comfortable with silence. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can use voice as an instrument. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Group Memory (The Scribe) | |
| I can effectively use presentation tools (such as visuals, whiteboards, or easels). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can accurately, concisely, and clearly record and organize participant inputs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Accountability (The Warrior) | |
| I can facilitate individual commitment for tasks, results and next steps. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can apply tools or methods to hold participants accountable for commitments made. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Roles (The Shape Shifter) | |
| I can transition into other roles as situation dictates, including consultant, coach, or group member. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can modify my behavior/style to support organizational type, personality, or culture. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Self/Task Management Score (Your Total/145) | |

Integral Facilitation Skills Self-Assessment (Continued)

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Group Awareness | |
| Listening (The Friend) | |
| I can attend to whoever is speaking and if distracted reengage with the speaker. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can listen to grasp significance and meaning of individual participant comments (content) while facilitating. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can listen for depth and meaning in conversation using non-verbal cues in body language and my intuition. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Inquiry (The Investigator) | |
| I can clarify and reveal assumptions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can question incongruence in statements made or actions taken by participants. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can ask open-ended questions to draw out participants. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can concisely summarize key points of discussion. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Understanding (The Muse) | |
| I can read group culture (norms, patterns, values, key power relationships). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can use and interpret body language to connect and engage participants. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can take advantage of "surprises" and "mistakes" in service of group goals. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can sense group's energetic state (e.g. calm, agitated, flowing) and how it might need to shift to support the current task. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can sense group's cognitive and emotional readiness for the task and adjusts approach as necessary. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can sense the group's readiness to make a change (or take action) based on its stage of group development. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Forbearance (The Empath) | |
| I can be inwardly and outwardly silent to hold the space for a group. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can keep attention on participants, not myself. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can be empathetic, putting myself in another's shoes. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can support participant's ability to experience and process their own feelings and thoughts. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Set (The Shaman) | |
| I can select and employ processes at the appropriate time that consider group "state" (e.g. calm, agitated, flowing). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can intervene to shift a group's state in support of the task. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can employ words, icons, symbols, and activities relevant to culture of the group. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can create rituals for learning, connection, and transition. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Group Awareness Score (Your Total/105) | |

Integral Facilitation Skills Self-Assessment (Continued)

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Group Process | |
| Setting (The Lover) | |
| I can model and demonstrate ways to help cultivate safety and trust. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can prepare physical environment for mood, culture, and purpose. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can configure room (tables, chairs, etc.) to support group culture, purpose and process. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Facilitating Participation (The Magician) | |
| I can help groups understand the value of full participation through stories, metaphors, and actions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can give clear and concise instructions for group activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can clearly summarize key points as a result of group engagement activities or discussions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can demonstrate techniques that cultivate a participatory environment. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Facilitating Process (The Guide) | |
| I can distinguish process from task and content. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can select the appropriate process tools given the task, culture and individuals in the group. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can ensure the group understands what process it is using and why appropriate. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can effectively facilitate selected processes to reach the stated goal or task. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Intervention (The Coach) | |
| I can lay the groundwork for intervention by earning standing or <i>permission</i> from the group. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can identify behaviors requiring intervention by <i>perceiving</i> when it may be necessary. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can weigh the decision to intervene by intentionally grappling, in real time, with the <i>predicament</i> to take action in service to the group. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can use words, gestures, or activities to deliver an effective intervention <i>process</i> . | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Conflict Magic (The Mediator) | |
| I can provide a safe environment for conflict to surface. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can engage participants in a collaborative negotiation process to address key issues. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can impartially articulate various perspectives of an issue. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can identify underlying needs and interests of all parties. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can develop and analyze options and consequences. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can constructively respond to disagreement in support of learning and group capacity. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Consensus Building (The Advocate) | |
| I can teach and help participants understand what consensus is and how to employ it during group decision-making. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I know pros and cons of consensus building and alternative decision-making methods. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can model and reinforce a positive tone to support group collaboration. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can facilitate a consensus decision-making process. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I can facilitate different decision-making methods (e.g. directive, voting, consensus) as needed. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Group Process Score (Your Total/130) | |

Learning Plan

The three archetypes I'm most going to focus on improving are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Specific skills I plan to develop are:

Specific actions or behaviors I plan to try during the workshop:

My Overall facilitation goals are:

Dynamic of Quadrants

Now that we understand the basics of our integral model let's expand it a bit by looking at it from a depth perspective.

In the previous example, we saw inklings of a dance that goes on in groups between the individuals as participants, the plan or task at hand, the expected or emerging outcome from the group's work, and the collective culture of the group. At any one time, the interplay of these elements can appear extremely complicated! This interplay is so complex in fact, that no map or set of probabilities could capture it. However, we would like to suggest that there is a definite pattern or complex dynamic that can be understood in order to better serve group development and problem solving.

By working explicitly in each of the four quadrants and giving full treatment to them as a group conducts its work, we are expressing fully the elements of group behavior. We would like to suggest a general direction for moving through the quadrants (see Diagram 3)



Diagram 3: Dynamics of Four Quadrants

Self: Self-awareness is the foundation of every group or organizational engagement. It is a place that an individual must return often for grounding, reflection, thinking, and re-ignition. Let's give this simple orientation to self a name: "the ground".

Task: The external world has its relevant information, dictated bounds, and realistic constraints that shape our actions. The internal ground must meet the hard line of time, money, quality and cost. This quadrant must be used to inform the work of the group as it goes about its work. For this reason, we would like to call this next interaction “informed”.

Group Management: Now that the ground has its marching orders, we meet the group or organization. This well grounded plan primes the group to engage in complex problem solving and initiates the group in processes that will produce collective results. Let’s call this shift “process”.

Group Awareness: Grounded in self, informed by bounds, productive with ideas, the group’s internal agency is being changed. A group or organization’s culture can be assessed before a first meeting, but it is never static. Every day and in fact every moment, it is changing based on who is present, how they are present, and what is being worked on. We would like to suggest that this shared, collective culture is the vital focus of our model. Through this lens we shall see emerging patterns of behavior, group development, and ways of being that can lead to ever more complex problem solving. It is the result of group or organizational work as well as the engine of continued work.

Group Development Through Stages

That groups move through recognizable phases and patterns while addressing challenges has been well established through nearly fifty years of group development theory (Scheidel, Crowell 1964) (Tuckman 1965) (Fisher 1970) (Poole 1981) (Peck 1987) (Tubbs 1995) (Chan-Allen 2001). These theories have two basic camps: those that argue a linear progression through distinct developmental stages and those that see a dynamic interplay between task, relation, and solutions.

The linear “unitary” theorists note that groups first orient or “form” themselves during their initial encounter (see Table 1). They then share enough information to begin seeing conflicting opinions and perspectives. A noted group practitioner calls this “divergent” thinking (Kaner, 2007). Later ideas are tested and themes emerge that begin to form potential solutions. These solutions become recommended by groups that achieve “performing” or “convergent” stages.

| Tuckman | Fisher | Tubbs | Kaner | Peck |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Forming | Orientation | Orientation | Divergent Thinking | Pseudo-Community |
| Storming | Conflict | Conflict | Groan Zone | Chaos |
| Norming | Emergence | Consensus | Convergent Thinking | Emptiness |
| Performing | Reinforcement | Closure | | Community |
| Adjourning | | | | |

Table 1: "Unitary" Group Developmental Models

The second camp of theorists is led by Scott Poole. He suggests that groups take part in a dynamic interplay between the content of ideas, the process of how they come up with ideas, and the relationships people have with each other. The toggling back and forth between these three elements can lead to multiple types or paths to decision making (Poole 1981) (Rough 2002). This dynamic model is often described as in opposition to the set, linear path offered by the unitary perspective.

While it is helpful to characterize group dynamics and to describe its natural cleaves and folds, we believe that it is also valid to prescribe methods for optimizing the work of any group.

Our experience suggests, therefore, that embracing both unitary and dynamic models enable us to more accurately contextualize complex challenges. Although a group or an organization flows dynamically across each quadrant, it often evolves in an identifiable, staged manner. By ensuring that appropriate emphasis and skills are placed in each quadrant, the group will develop naturally through stages towards its destination in the most optimal way. We will discuss specific skills, called competencies, for ensuring proper emphasis in each quadrant later in the introduction.

As suggested in diagram 4, once the group takes one turn, it is naturally propelled into its next turn of group development.



Diagram 4: Group Development Moving Through Quadrants

Five Stage Model of Group Development

By combining both the unitary and dynamic models, we suggest that five stages both describe and propel complex problem solving in groups. We refer to these five stages and the qualities associated with each as follows:

- 1) Prepare (Calling)
- 2) Jump (Pseudo-community)
- 3) Saturation (Chaos)
- 4) Convergence (Emptiness)
- 5) Integration (Community)

Prepare (*Calling*): The first stage asks a convener to take stock and prepare. This includes assessing relevant data about scope, expected outcome(s), and determining who should be engaged in the effort and at what points. Organizational or group culture must be uncovered so that it may be reflected in the process of engagement. In addition, each individual should be able to describe why he or she is involved and how it may serve their interest or life journey. We refer to this important element as “the call”.

Jump (*Pseudocommunity*): Now the group is ready for its first engagement. Members introduce or reacquaint themselves and the challenge

is outlined in a way that motivates and aligns with their values. During this stage, a group wades into its challenge and often energetically produces a laundry list of ideas, issues, and concerns. It is a polite undertaking characterized by skirting tough issues and avoiding disagreements. Scott Peck calls this a “pseudo-community” because the group tries hard not to ruffle feathers (Peck, 1986). In the background, however, a jump has taken place into new and uncharted territory.

Saturation (Chaos): During this next identifiable stage, the group will stretch and contort itself to address the complexity of the inherent, and possibly yet uncovered, challenge at hand. Variables that went unaddressed in the polite stage will surface. Differences in opinion will be voiced and alliances will be formed between factions of individuals who hold similar views. Often times there is significant pressure to make a decision and finish or “get on with” the work. Sam Kaner calls this feeling of saturation “the groan zone” because participants may be so fed up with complexity that they literally groan out-loud with frustration (Kaner, 2007). It is during this critical stage that many groups give up and fall into old patterns of thinking. Emerging from this chaotic stage, however, is the potential for new insights and potential.

Convergence (Emptiness): From the chaos and difficulty of the previous stage comes discovery. This can occur after a period of utter despair, where members are confronted with hitting the wall of frustration in the previous stage yet again. To prevent the pain, factions begin to listen to each other and ideas may be recast in different, unique formulations. Emerging from seams and tight corners of solution spaces, come new proposals that cross lines of thinking, scales, values, and variables. There are often revealing moments that cause the group to say “AH-HA!” These “breakthrough” solutions help the group to feel that they are building robust answers that will excite customers, serve constituents, or motivate people to act. The group converges on preferred solutions.

Integration (Community): Once new solutions form, the group shifts from struggle to application and implementation. Now the conversation is about how resources can best be deployed to give life to these solutions, and what infrastructure is needed for long term growth. There is commitment, support, and understanding at a level that has eluded the group until now. Individual members speak a shared language, have powerful stories to tell, and point to a common direction on behalf of the group. In fact, some groups achieve such states of synergy that they seem to operate as one entity: like a school of fish, high caliber sports team, or performance group. When the process concludes, some individuals return to their respective places of origin—they adjourn and bring with them new insights or

transformations at the personal level. Some individuals, however, may plunge into a new challenge or “call” revealed by the work of the group. This transformational quality of working in groups can have tremendous benefits to organizations and society if it is harnessed actively.

Moving Through Stages: Entering Into Greater Capacity for Problem Solving

As suggest previously, the shift into another stage of group or organizational development occurs naturally as a result of fully expressing each of the four quadrants in the current stage. In other words, a group becomes ready to move into a more complex realm of problem solving when it appropriately meets the challenges of each quadrant at the current stage. It has built enough capacity as group to uncover greater depths and subtlety.

To illustrate, Stewart has been asked to gather a group of people together to implement a new accounting procedure. He holds his first meeting with a team of people from different parts of the organization only to find out that he is ill prepared---folks do not know why they have been convened, who is in charge of making the final decision, or what resources they have to support their work. Stewart must address the *preparation* step fully before the group will entertain in a “jump” into complexity. Unfortunately, they will now have to spend lots of precious meeting time preparing for this jump---time that Stewart could have saved everyone if he had laid some groundwork before hand.

At this point, we can give the four quadrants an element of movement based on the pace a group develops through these stages. Now the model can be translated as shown in Diagram 5 below ^[1]

^[1] This also emulates the “Kaner Diamond Model of Decision Making” (Kaner 2007)

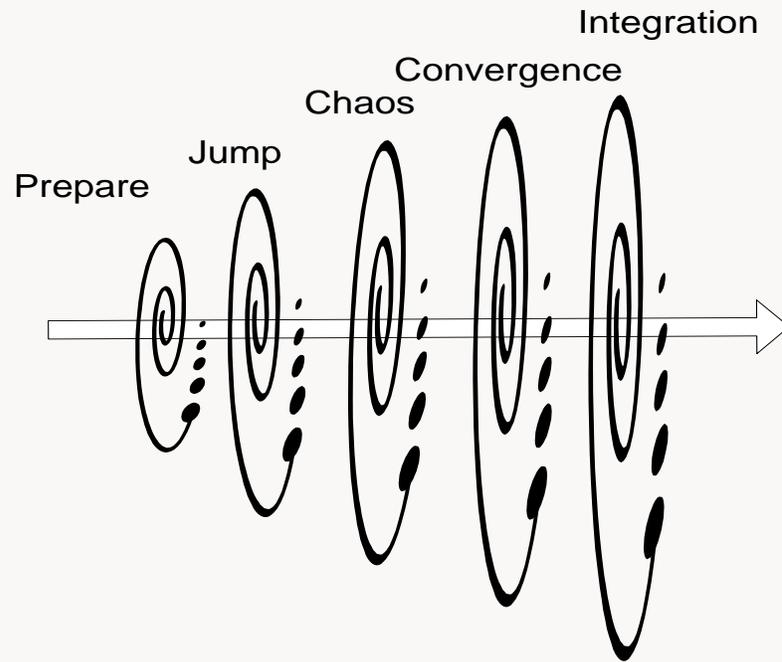


Diagram 5: Group Engagement Through Stages

This model does not suggest that every group moves through these stages in a linear manner. In fact, as Stewart's story demonstrates, you may shift back and forth between stages, in this case from Jump to Preparation. Groups can and do make leaps between stages where they move from Chaos to Jump or Preparation and Chaos to Jump. However, we suggest that if a group carefully tends to each of the four quadrants they will be far less likely to move unknowingly backward. For this reason, Diagram 5 shows a forward dimension as a proscriptive, ideal model.

About the Authors

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