

## Phillips & Phillips (1993): Facilitated Work Groups: Theory and Practice

In this paper the authors deliberate several issues concerning different aspects in group facilitation processes. Facilitation has the role to mobilize skills, knowledge, judgments and wisdom of the group members. Phillips & Phillips deliberate that the key for effective group facilitation is to understand the emotional group life. This leads to the possibility that the group can discover within itself and enables the ability to resolve relevant problems. In the paper it is emphasized that the facilitator contributes to the process and structure and not to the content. In the following main points addressed in paper are summarized.

### Introduction

- Facilitator as integrator, rather than group leader.
- Facilitation focuses process → If the facilitator contributes to content:
  - Risk 1: He might be treated as another participant and loses the ability to reflect on the process.
  - Risk 2: Might damage the ownership of the group with the results.
- Facilitator works with the group, but for the leader. → Leader ultimately chooses and commits resources.

### Groups

- Rewarding groups: People feel personally involved.
- Unrewarding groups: Lifeless, not happening in the here-and-now, no personal involvement.
- *Group life*
  - Character of personality of the group → Understanding of emotional life enables for the facilitator to carry out its task more effectively.
  - Role of facilitator as neutral outsider. → Enables to see effect of group life & task.
  - Each individual influences group life → Understand different roles (expert, skeptic, clown, mother, leader, etc.) helps to make benefit of each individual.
  - Emotions and feelings as drivers for the group life. → Key to work effectively.
- *Potential of groups*
  - Attending to process can help to manage creative and destructive forces.
  - Help to deal with conflict in constructive ways.
- *Shifts in the group life*: Group Think: e.g. constantly seeking advice from outside experts.
- *Group size*: 7 to 15 participants are optimal.
- *Group's environment*: Room should be appropriate, etc.
- *Structure*: Limits and boundaries helps group to stay on constructive paths.

### Issues of facilitation

- Observing verbal and non-verbal behavior: Participant roles, emotional life, relationships, what is not said → Reflect back own observations

- Monitoring feelings: Facilitators own feelings reflects often group feeling.
- Six different ways of intervening: 1. Pacing the task (influences timing of the group's work). 2. Directing (Introducing new activity). 3. Handing back in changed form (reflect observations back from new perspective). 4. Reflecting (e.g. "you seem to be saying"). 5. & 6. Questioning and summarizing (Helps that all members understand content of discussion).