

15th National Outdoor Education Conference
Ballarat, 2007

Improving facilitation in outdoor education:
Focusing on being as well as doing.

Glyn Thomas
La Trobe University

Paper ?

Thomas, G. J. (in press). Facilitate first thyself: The importance of person-centered approaches to facilitator education. *Journal of Experiential Education*.

The final draft of this paper can be downloaded at ...

http://www.latrobe.edu.au/oent/Staff/thomas_papers/JEE_final_12_9_07_printing.pdf

Other papers on facilitation can be accessed at ...

http://www.latrobe.edu.au/oent/Staff/thomas_glyn.htm

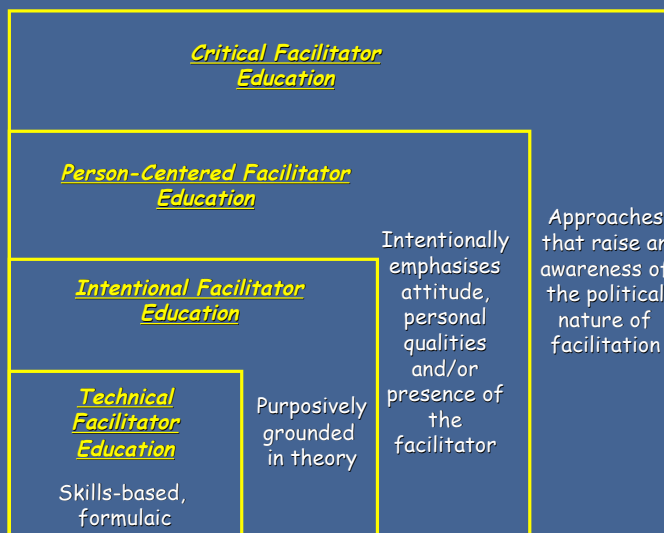
Parker Palmer (1998)

- ◆ Some days things go so well with our groups that we know we were born to do this ...

Other days ...

- ◆ We wish we were never born !

Dimensions of Facilitator Education model.



(Thomas, 2005)

Video (Chapter 8 from Mr Holland's Opus)

- ◆ "There is a lot more to music than notes on a page"
- ◆ "Playing the sunset" was Mr Holland's way of helping her to 'get present.'
- ◆ Note his response to self-beration

Some examples from the literature ... on the importance of person-centred facilitator education.

- ◆ Dale Hunter, *Zenergy* (NZ)
- ◆ Suzzane Ghais, *Extreme Facilitation*
- ◆ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*
- ◆ Jensen and Jensen, *The 9 Disciplines of a Facilitator*
- ◆ Zehm, *The role of self in teacher development*

Methodology of my study....

- ◆ 7 facilitator educators running courses in Australia and NZ
- ◆ Interviews and participant observation (34 days)
- ◆ Surveys of program graduates

- ◆ (more details in my papers)

The role of self-facilitation ...

- ◆ Sub themes:
 - ◆ *self-awareness focus*
 - ◆ *emphasis on being.*

Glen Ochre and Ed McKinley

Groupwork Institute of Australia

- ◆ facilitation processes, skills, and tools are built on a firm foundation of self-awareness
- ◆ "facilitate first thyself"
- ◆ must have "an understanding of what pushes our buttons"
- ◆ "if we can manage ourselves - we can manage the group"

Shirli Kirschener

Resolve Advisors

- ◆ Must be able to "hold the space"
- ◆ recognise the role of the "self-as-instrument" when facilitating
- ◆ emerging facilitator must "work on yourself"

Dale Hunter and Hamish Brown
Zenergy

- ◆ facilitators who find themselves getting 'triggered'
- ◆ need some kind of a personal development method, some way of processing all that stuff.

Going deeper ...

- ◆ an improved self-understanding can be fostered by considering the influence of unconscious processes when facilitating.

"the reason it is hard to get to your [learning] edge is that you have a self-defensive mechanism" and "these mechanisms are good at keeping us away"

Shirli Kirschener, Resolve Advisors

*Roger Schwarz
Schwarz and Associates*

- ◆ Espoused theory vs theory in use

Emphasis on 'being'

- ◆ *being-with, being real, or being in the moment*
- ◆ Being-with is a conscious act of connecting with others.
- ◆ Being-with is about being aware of your own sense of self and at the same time sensing the self of another....
- ◆ It also involves having a strong respect for another's limits, boundaries and choices.

Critical facilitator education

- ◆ Natural extension requiring the development of higher levels of self-awareness
- ◆ Asks us to consider the impact that we have on the facilitation process
- ◆ Mike Brown's research

- ◆ Exercise ...

Essential reading ...

Kirk, P., & Broussine, M. (2000). The politics of facilitation. *Journal of Workplace Learning: Employee Counselling Today*, 12(1), 13-22.

Mindell, A. (1995). *Sitting in the fire: Large group transformation using conflict and diversity*. Portland, OR: Lao Tse Press.

- ◆ Mindell excerpts ...

How do you rank ?

- ◆ Where do you have rank ?
- ◆ How could your areas of high rank influence (positively or negatively) the groups you work with.
- ◆ How could your areas of low rank influence (positively or negatively) the groups you work with.

Concluding thought ...

- ◆ Good facilitation is not about our activity or the things we do, but rather it is more about helping participants to make real contact with each other.
- ◆ One key to this self-awareness ...
- ◆ Parker Palmer ... excerpt