ІННОВАЦІЙНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ ФОРМУВАННЯ ОСОБИСТОСТІ МАЙБУТНЬОГО ФАХІВЦЯ

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FACILITATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: DEFINITION, CONCEPT, PRACTICE

We are all accustomed to thinking of lecturers as the leader in the lecture room. Essentially, these are the people who tell us how to think and what to think about. They show us how to relate to subject matter and give us examples to understand their messages. But nowadays more and more schools, colleges and universities are advising teachers and lecturers to shift their roles from that of sole classroom or lecture room leader to one who aids students in leading themselves. They are recognizing that the most powerful kind of learning does not come from being told what to think but in learning how to think about it for oneself. Being a facilitator of learning and education of students means not operating under the traditional concept of teaching and generally education, but rather is meant to guide and assist students in learning for themselves – picking apart ideas, forming their own thoughts about them, and owning material through self-exploration and dialogue [0].

Before talking about the facilitation of professional education, let us begin from the existing definitions of it for better understanding what we are talking about, its analysis, giving its advantages and disadvantages and only then about implementing it on practice, in our case – in professional education.

Table 1

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<th>Definition of the term “facilitation”</th>
<th>Keyword</th>
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<td>A collaborative process in which a neutral seeks to assist a group of individuals or other parties to discuss constructively a number of complex, potentially controversial issues. The neutral in a facilitation process (the “facilitator”) plays a less active role than a mediator and, unlike a mediator, does not see “resolution” of a conflict as a goal of his or her work.</td>
<td>process</td>
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<td>Involves the use of techniques to improve the flow of information in a meeting between parties to a dispute. It is procedural assistance provided to enable participants to communicate more effectively and move towards agreement.</td>
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<td>A process by which a third-party neutral helps both parties to reach a consensus on disputed issues.</td>
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<td>Act of assisting or making easier the progress or improvement of something</td>
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A process intended to make something easier. Facilitation requires many important interpersonal skills, most of which center on initiating, maintaining, monitoring, and concluding different forms of structured group activities.

A collaborative process used to help parties discuss issues, identify and achieve goals and complete tasks in a mutually-satisfactory manner. This process uses an impartial third party, the facilitator, who focuses on the processes and procedures of dispute resolution and decision-making. The facilitator is impartial to the issues being discussed, rarely contributes substantive ideas and has no decision-making authority.

Assisting/guiding approach (“guide-on-the-side”) to a learning situation; can be contrasted to the directive teacher-instructor (“sage-on-the-stage”) approach [0, pp. 31-33]. Heavily influenced by Humanistic psychology.

Assistance provided to a group of people by an impartial party (facilitator) in order to help the group conduct a satisfying meeting or series of meetings.

A process in which the parties (usually a group), with the assistance of a neutral third party (the facilitator), identify problems to be solved, tasks to be accomplished or disputed issues to be resolved. Facilitation may conclude there, or it may continue to assist the parties to develop options, consider alternatives and endeavour to reach an agreement. The facilitator has no advisory or determinative role on the content of the matters discussed or the outcome of the process, but may advise on or determine the process of facilitation.

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<td>A well timed intervention that makes it easier for people to speak openly, make a decision, resolve an issue or generate creative ideas. It requires clarity of role, the skills and confidence to deal with disruptive</td>
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individuals or difficult situations, and the ability to move a group forward towards an assessment of their own performance.

Analyzing given definitions of the term “facilitation” in the table 1, we can see that most frequently it is defined as a process, act and approach both of which can be described with the word “assisting”. Thus, taking into account given definitions and basing on the previous study of it, we can understand facilitation as the process in which a neutral assist a group of individuals to discuss constructively a number of complex, potentially controversial issues. And if to talk about facilitation of professional education it is better to define it as an approach, therefore, we can suggest the following definition: facilitation of professional education is an approach which means working with students (learners) with the aim of enabling and empowering them. Effective facilitation is about assisting students or groups of them with their interactions and discussions in order to perform a certain task or achieve certain objectives devoted to the subject matter. It is a method that encourages students to share ideas, resources and opinions and to be critical and constructive at the same time.

Thus, while we facilitate the process of learning, students are encouraged to take more control of their learning process. The lecturer’s role becomes that of a facilitator and organizer providing resources and support to students (learners). In turn the participants (our students) learn with and from each other as they identify and implement solutions to challenges, problems or other developmental issues. They might also set their own objectives and be responsible for learning assessment.

These techniques are used most frequently in university education and more formal study. In contrast to individual learning where the lecturer becomes very involved and responsive to each student’s individual needs, with facilitation of professional education the lecturer supports and facilitates the students who develop and shape their own learning goals and achievements.

Facilitation of professional education has both advantages and disadvantages. It is based on the premise that the more responsibility a student takes for his/her own learning, the more effective the training or education will be. The advantages are the following [0]: learners use skills like synthesis and analysis; the learner is actively involved; learners interact with and learn from each other: there is no need for large amounts of learning materials: learners can work in an environment similar to that of the real world: a variety of learning methods are used. But there are still some disadvantages [0]:

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facilitated learning can be – or be seen to be – more expensive: the pace of instruction is based on the group rather than the individual learner: the lecturer’s role is not clearly defined: there is a need for extra facilities to allow for group work etc.; the learning is relatively time consuming in proportion to the amount of material covered: facilitated learning is not appropriate in some cultural contexts.

As already noted, the lecturer’s role in facilitation of professional education is to create and manage collaborative learning experiences, or group learning in which exchanges between lecturers and students and among students occur over a period of time.

Using facilitation if professional education and creating the appropriate courses usually take place over a series of weeks and may include: on-demand tutorials, presentations, and keynote addresses; online or face-to-face group discussions and exchanges; handouts, readings, and links to relevant websites; file and link sharing; surveys and polls; virtual real-time or physical classroom sessions, lectures, seminars; brainstorming sessions (virtual or face-to-face); group activities such as role play and games; field trips; projects and case studies [0, 0].

Also “facilitation” is often described as the art of making things easy for others, but if you make things too easy you risk returning to the spoon-feeding tradition in which learners passively digest whatever the educator wants them to. In essence, facilitation is an enabling role in which the focus is usually on what the learner is doing and experiencing rather than on what the educator is doing [0].

There is some of the facilitation styles that are can be used by lecturers for professional education: non-directive, appreciative, activity, group and adventure facilitation. Let us describe them next.

Non-directive facilitation. In his essay “Adventure Education” David Charlton provides an example of this approach: “…the facilitator recognizes the various signals given by the students indicating when and which way they want to go. The facilitator then creates the opportunity that enables them to go that way” [0].

Even if you do not adopt a non-directive stance all of the time, there are situations where it can be an effective strategy – for example, where you believe that students can work things out for themselves and will find it more rewarding to do so. An impartial stance can also help to encourage discussion or defuse conflict or help students become more independent and responsible.

Appreciative facilitation emphasizes what works well and pays attention to success and achievement. At its simplest, it involves catching
students at their best moments and providing positive feedback about what they did or said. Alternatively you can invite positive comments from participants for each other following a group exercise. Or just ask, “What is working well?” Cheri Torres brings together her enthusiasm for appreciative facilitation and mobile ropes courses in “The Appreciative Facilitator” [0]. Her handbook includes summaries of key research supporting appreciative facilitation, such as the “Pygmalion Effect” (“As the teacher believes the student to be, so the student becomes”) and how watching videos of your own successful performances leads to much greater improvements than watching videos of your mistakes. Appreciative facilitation draws on ideas and principles from Appreciative Inquiry (an approach to organization development) and Solution Focused Brief Therapy (“Be careful what you attend to. What you focus on expands”). Appreciative facilitation fits well with professional education, both as a source of techniques and as a philosophy.

Activity facilitation: this approach emphasizes the facilitator’s role during a group activity. Sometimes the facilitator may simply be enabling a group to achieve a task in the time available. But where the purpose of the activity is to generate experiences from which people will learn, the facilitator may want to intervene during the activity in order to influence what is experienced. This will typically involve changing the rules in some way – with or without consultation with the group [0].

Group facilitation can apply to any group situations – from the running of effective lectures (and keeping to the agenda of the lecture) through to sensitivity group training (where there is no agenda). Like it or not, the group dynamics in professional education can have a great impact. For example, if the primary aim is social development or team building among the students, group facilitation is clearly a must. But whatever your main purpose, you will at the very least want to ensure that the group climate is a highly favorable climate for learning and development.

And, the last one style is adventure programming. This approach to facilitation includes such techniques as “frontloading”, “isomorphic framing”, and “paradoxical symptom prescriptions”. Here we have an emphasis on “presenting” metaphors in advance of the activity puts the facilitator in the role of storyteller before participants have had the experiences to fit the story. This is an interesting mixture of drama and adventure in which participants are effectively improvising within the frame provided by the facilitator’s script. It is a style of facilitation that has been comprehensively challenged by Johan Hovelynck who is concerned that “adventure education is increasingly adopting the didactic teaching methods that it set out to be an alternative for”
Another important question is about choosing a facilitation style for professional education. So, five styles of facilitation of professional education have been outlined above. All have their advantages and disadvantages. In practice, lecturers-facilitators often have a “home” style that corresponds most closely to their values, and pick and mix ideas from other sources. Thiagi [0] eventually concluded that effective facilitators are: flexible, adaptive, proactive, responsive and resilient. Also can be highlighted such factors (amongst other factors) as importance of personal commitment, the ability to work with feelings and intuition, and the ability to work with clarity of intention. Be yourself. As a facilitator, you will be most effective when you are being your natural self and allowing your own personality to be expressed. People get permission to be themselves from the way a facilitator behaves – that is, through modeling. If you are stiff and formal, the group tends to be like that. If you are relaxed and self-expressed, the group tends to be like that too.

Search hard enough and you can probably find research supporting your own preferred facilitation style as a lecturer in the process of professional education. Whatever that may be, the research reported above suggests that you should not be a slave to just one style. Such advice is particularly relevant in the unpredictable arena of professional education. You need freedom for maneuver, room for judgment, flexibility to respond and to make the most of unexpected events and experiences. The challenge is to develop a facilitation style or combination of styles that works for you and your students and that makes good use of the many facilitative influences that are found in professional education settings.

Whatever style is adopted, one of the facilitator’s primary roles in professional education is to facilitate reflection on experience. This process is referred to variously as “reviewing” or “debriefing” or “processing”. Much of the advice in this area centers on the art of questioning. What students experience during a review is at least as important as the experience that they are reviewing. It is not enough to expect that the stimulation of the activity will keep students alert and involved during a dull review in which the facilitator runs through a series of questions. Review sessions are an ideal opportunity for enabling students to be more active learners. Experiential learning is based on learners being active, curious and creative. We should at least seek out learners’ own questions. When reviewing there is no shortage of opportunities for active reviewing.

Many researchers and scientists in the field of professional education have developed guiding principles to assist professional education practitioners.
facilitate learner-centered education. Following is a composite of some of these principles:

- involve adults in program planning and implementation;
- create a physical and social climate of respect;
- encourage collaborative modes of learning;
- include and build on the student’s experiences in the learning process;
- foster critically reflective thinking;
- include learning which involves examination of issues and concerns, transforms content into problem situations, and necessitates analysis and development of solutions;
- generate a participative environment;
- encourage self-directed learning [0].

As facilitator your words, actions, and gestures will all have an impact on the group with which you are working. For example, lack of enthusiasm on the part of the tutor is contagious. Students are sensitive to a tutor’s disinterest and disengage. On the other hand enthusiasm and passion for a subject can lift a group, even one that is tired and lacking in motivation. A facilitator needs to be able to read the mood and temperament of a group and decide which activities best match the circumstances. If a facilitator has built up a good rapport with the group, students should feel free to suggest alternative exercises or methodologies, and assuming a consensus is reached, these suggestions can be adopted.

There are many aspects to the facilitation process. There can be six dimensions of facilitation, which also can be applied to the facilitation of professional education [0].

- The planning dimension. This is the goal-oriented, ends and means, aspect of facilitation. It is to do with the aims of the group, and what program it should undertake to fulfill them. The facilitative question here is: how shall the group acquire its objectives and its program?

- The meaning dimension. This is the cognitive aspect of facilitation. It is to do with participants’ understanding of what is going on, with their making sense of experience, and with their reasons for doing things and reacting to things. The facilitative question is: how shall meaning be given to and found in the experiences and actions of group members?

- The confronting dimension. This is the challenge aspect of facilitation. It is to do with raising consciousness about the group’s resistances to and avoidances of things it needs to face and deal with. The facilitative question is: how shall the group’s consciousness be raised about these matters?

- The feeling dimension. This is the sensitive aspect of facilitation. It is
to do with the management of feeling and emotion within the group. The facilitative question is: how shall the life of feeling and emotion within the group be handled?

The structuring dimension. This is the formal aspect of facilitation. It is to do with methods of learning, with what sort of form is given to learning within the group, with how is it to be shaped. The facilitative question is: how can the group’s learning be structured?

The valuing dimension. This is the integrity aspect of facilitation. It is to do with creating a supportive climate which honors and celebrates the personhood of group members; a climate in which they can be genuine, empowered, disclosing their reality as it is, keeping in touch with their true needs and interests. The facilitative question is: how can such a climate of personal value, integrity and respect be created?

The key to an effective facilitation is preparation. The more prepared you are the easier and more effective your job is. Fail to prepare. Prepare to fail.

When you select activities, know why you are doing them. What do you hope to accomplish? So steps to the preparation can be the following:

Make sure your logistics (props, materials, etc.) are all in order.
Prepare a teaching folder/box containing your materials, flip chart pens, chalk, etc., whatever you need to run an effective class.
Set the room up in a format that includes all students, e.g., circular seating.
Is there room for break out groups?
Plan appropriate alternatives for when things don’t go as planned.
Have material in a variety of formats so as to accommodate different learning styles.
Don’t rely overly on overheads or PowerPoint presentations – only key points should be presented rather than text laden slides.
Run through the process in your mind: Visualization – picture yourself leading your group – What do you see?
What is the ideal? Is what you want to see happening what is really happening?
Have you extra exercises/discussion topics in case the group works very quickly?
Logistical considerations: Are you familiar with the catering arrangements so that you can arrange breaks, etc.?
Establish your credibility. E.g., don’t undermine your position by apologizing for your lack of familiarity with new technology, etc. Work with
Time-keeping. Be punctual and endeavor to finish on time. Poor time management leaves a poor impression.

Having prepared for your course, the next key consideration is how you might generate a good working dynamic with your students. The first meeting can be crucial as it sets the scene for the remainder of the course. It is important to spend some time getting to know the group and working out their expectations. Groups go through various stages in their development:

Forming – formalities are preserved and members are treated as strangers.

Storming – members start to communicate their feelings but probably still view themselves a little outside rather than part of the team. They attack others insular attitudes while guarding their own.

Norming – people feel part of the team and realize that they can achieve work if they accept other viewpoints.

Performing – the team works in an open and trusting atmosphere where flexibility is the key and hierarchy is of little importance.

As you work with groups you will be able to identify how well the group is gelling. Who is leading? Who is excluded? Why? How can this be dealt with? Is there a difficult group member? How is he/she being difficult? Can you deal with this person or how can you involve the group members in taking control of the situation?

Conflicts in class or lecture room can be very disruptive, but they can also be helpful. If the person, who is disagreeing with you, or with another group member, is raising valid questions, it may benefit the group to address the issues they are presenting. In fact, by listening to them, you may gain valuable insight into what is and what is not working in class, or where there is lack of understanding or difficulty with the course material. Conflict which is unmanaged can disrupt a group dynamic and undermine motivation and commitment.

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Conflict indicators can be the next one: body language; disagreements, regardless of issue; strong public statements; conflicts in value system; desire for power; increasing lack of respect; open disagreement; lack of clear goals. Conflict is destructive when it: takes attention away from other important activities, undermines morale or self-concept, polarizes people and groups, reducing co-operation, increases or sharpens difference. But also conflict can be constructive if it: results in clarification of important problems and issues, results in solutions to problems, involves people in resolving issues important to them, causes authentic communication, helps release emotion, anxiety, and
stress, builds co-operation among people through learning more about each other and the subject matter and as a result helps individuals develop understanding and skills.

If a lecture room disagreement moves on to the point of disruptiveness, specific steps should be taken. Below is a list of conflict resolution tactics that you can use when you feel a situation is getting out of control:

- Find some “grain of truth” in both sides of the argument.
- Identify areas of agreement in the two positions.
- Avoid arguing over individual ranking or position. Present a position as logically as possible.
- Avoid “win-lose” statements. Discard the notion that someone must win.
- Avoid changing of minds only in order to avoid conflict and to achieve harmony.
- Document the subject and set it aside to discuss at the next meeting.
- Ask to speak with the individual(s) after the meeting or during a break.
- See if someone else in the group has a response or recommendation.
- Avoid majority voting, averaging, bargaining, or coin flipping. These do not lead to consensus.
- Treat differences of opinion as indicative of incomplete sharing of relevant information, keep asking questions.
- Keep the attitude that holding different views is both natural and healthy to a group.
- View initial agreement as suspect. Explore the reasons underlying apparent agreement and make sure that members have willingly agreed. Agree that the person has a valid point and there may be some way to make the situation work for both parties.
- Present your view, but do not force agreement. Let things be and go on to the next topic.
- Create a compromise.

Effective facilitation of professional education requires: fulfilling the role of guide, not leader; establishing boundaries /rules for class behavior, conflict, etc.; cultivating atmosphere of respect; understanding personal learning styles and adult learning principles; understanding group dynamics; building group confidence; guiding and managing group interaction; understanding diversity/cultural differences; organizing content, designing structured activities and processes; active listening, paraphrasing, observing, clarifying and elaborating; interpreting verbal and non-verbal behavior;
confronting dissension and managing differences, conflict resolution; collaborating with others; promoting participation/ inclusion; analyzing accurately and rapidly; organizing, summarizing and connecting data; thinking and speaking clearly; keeping focused on the process and achieving its desired outcomes; giving and receiving feedback; utilizing questioning strategies and range of activities – quizzes, role plays, etc.; incorporating evaluation mechanisms; maintaining a good sense of humor – creating a light hearted atmosphere.

Thus, different facilitation styles and tactics in the process of professional education in its purist form are likely to occur in a well-resourced environment with participants (in our case, students) who are highly motivated and pro-active. Most training environments are unlikely to be able to offer the necessary conditions. However, elements of facilitation can be combined effectively with other styles of training to provide many of the benefits inherent in the methodology of professional education.

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СПРИЯННЯ НАУКИ: DÉFINI-ТОН, КОНЦЕПЦІЯ, ПРАКТИКА

У статті проаналізовано визначення терміна «фасилітація», її переваги та недоліки. Описано основні стилі фасилітації професійної освіти. Представлено основні принципи для тих, які практикуються у фасилітації професійної освіти. Описано шість ведучих аспектів фасилітації. Розроблено послідовність кроків щодо підготовки до ефективної фасилітації та створення позитивної динаміки роботи студентів. Описано індикатори конфлікту в аудиторії і тактика вирішення цих конфліктів; крім того, наведено вимоги для ефективної фасилітації професійної освіти.

Ключові слова: фасилітація, ефективна фасилітація, професійна освіта, стиль фасилітації, студент, викладач.

Струпінська Н.В., Сімон Кузнець

СОДЕЙСТВИЕ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ: DÉFINI-ТОН, КОНЦЕПЦИЯ, ПРАКТИКА

В статье проанализированы определения термина «фасилитация», ее преимущества и недостатки. Описаны основные стили фасилитации профессионального образования. Представлены основные принципы-руководства для практикующихся в фасилитации профессионального образования. Описаны главные шесть аспектов фасилитации. Разработаны шаги по подготовке к эффективной фасилитации и созданию положительной динамики работы студентов. Описаны индикаторы конфликта в аудитории и тактика разрешения конфликтов; кроме того, приведены
Definitions of the term “facilitation” and its advantages / disadvantages have been analyzed in the article. Main styles of the facilitation of professional education have been described. Guiding principles for assisting professional education practitioners facilitate learner-centered education have been mentioned. Six dimensions of facilitation have been presented. Steps of preparation to the effective facilitation and steps how you might generate a good working dynamic with your students have been developed. Conflict indicators and conflict resolution tactics have been described with the requirements to the effective facilitation of professional education.

Key words: facilitation, effective facilitation, professional education, style of facilitation, student, lecturer.

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