

agenda and, by extension, part of the outcomes of the meeting. As he intervened, Kenefick shared his reflection about whether possible choices offered by group members would inhibit their ability to achieve their stated goals. In this way, Kenefick was able to use the agenda as a living, working document that was modified by participants' specific interests.

The co-president and Kenefick's style of leading as an incorporation of members' interests to the evolving agenda mirrored one another. During the first portion of the meeting, the co-president invited others to participate through her gently directing statement, "I am just gonna kinda open up the floor, I think." Her speaking style can be characterized as inclusive. The way she formulated decisions incorporated participants' suggestions and, at the same time, moved the meeting along by specifying what she thought the group should do next. She would make comments like, "How 'bout until 1:15?" In this way, she both made a decision and invited input from the group. Following JS's comment, Kenefick mirrored that style by adding, "How does that sound to everybody?" In this way, the two leadership styles functioned in a coordinated way to both direct the group and, at the same time, demonstrate openness to the group's input about the decisions that were being made.

JS's remarks during the entire meeting were often phrased as questions in a "What do you think?" form rather than in a declarative statement form, such as, "I think that . . ." This question format (or question sound, as in a rising intonation) functioned as a way of including participants rather than demonstrating an authoritarian leadership style. JS's style contrasted sharply with her co-president, MF, who typically made comments that were in a more declarative form (which we examine later).

By helping to coordinate the group's action in following the co-constructed agenda, JS instantiated herself as primary leader of the group, with Kenefick's role as the facilitator. For his part, Kenefick used his speaking turns to coordinate with JS to keep the group on track with regard to the tasks identified on the group's agenda. He directed the group by making comments about what members had "talked about" or not talked about and reminded them of things that came up earlier in the meeting that they had not fully discussed. He kept reiterating the group's goals and the desired outcomes that had been stated at the opening of the meeting, and used the agenda and time management to keep the group on course during the meeting. By engaging in these behaviors, he demonstrated how a facilitator can exercise leadership as a role or as a set of behaviors in which he or she engages. In this retreat, the formal leader was clearly JS, as designated by her title of co-president. In addition, she enacted leadership by making decisive statements that shaped the group's activities during the retreat. At another point in the meeting, JS stated, "Well, let's begin with the 20 . . ."

utes . . .?," and Kenefick, as the facilitator, would follow in sequence by asking, "Does that work for everybody?" In this way, they both engaged in a collaborative style of leadership that coordinated participants' actions in an inclusive way throughout the meeting. In the next section, we explain how these various types of facilitator's "interventions" in the group process are achieved interactionally and examine that process in the context of this particular facilitation.

COLLABORATIVE INTERVENTIONS

Schein (1987) described a broad array of actions that constitute interventions and advised optimal times to use them, but did not demonstrate exactly how they are implemented in practice and how participants work through any particular intervention with a facilitator. In the following examples, we demonstrate ways that Kenefick intervened and the effects of such interventions on the group's progress.

After orienting participants to the agenda, Kenefick (JK) said:

96. . . . I want to make a couple of comments before we move on and look at the
97. agenda (0.2). One of the observations that I want to make is that a group of people
98. is more powerful than any individual. So as I sit here and listen to all of the passion
99. that you bring to this endeavor and it's pretty exciting, for an outsider to say wow, this
100. group is going to do some pretty amazing things. And then all the individual stuff
101. you've brought, uhhh, because of your professional expertise, your contacts, your
102. affiliations, experiences you've had before So it is a nice mixture of people
103. with different background, with different interests. And what I want you to keep in
104. mind is that each individual needs to keep track of their own limits. So, how much
105. you sign up for, what you are interested in, what you want to contribute, what you
106. want to see next year . . .

This intervention is noted first by the "comments" (line 96) and "observations" (line 97) that set Kenefick's utterances apart from those made by others. His meta-commentary oriented retreat participants to the differences between "groups" and "individuals," and is informed by his process consultation stance regarding interventions. One function of this statement is to provide "conceptual input" to group members that primarily serves a "teaching function" with respect to informing them about their task or process. However, this teaching function held secondary status to the primary "agency-directing function" of the statement. In this way, the statement functioned to help members understand their agency in both the

tion as it currently exists and how it *can* exist in the future. By stating that “a group of people is more powerful than any individual” (lines 97-98) and then contrasting this with “each individual needs to keep track of their [sic] own limits . . . how much you sign up for what you are interested in, what you want to contribute” (lines 104-105), Kenefick focused participants’ attention on the onus for action as their individual and collective responsibility rather than as his responsibility as the facilitator.

Soon thereafter, when the group was discussing the Center’s competition with other services offered locally, Kenefick proceeded to further clarify his role by saying:

141. And can I, I am also going to play the heavy throughout the day and watch the
142. time, so . . . my suggestion is so we can have an idea of how much time to spend on
143. this. Uhhh, if we could get, if people have things in front of mind, like Jennifer
144. knows she wants to cover competition, if there are other things that you want to
145. cover, you can kind of shout them out now and break them down so that I have a
146. general idea of how much stuff we want to cover and how much time we should try
147. to allot for it.

During this discussion, which came at a point in the meeting where participants were beginning to talk about substantive issues about the Center, Kenefick clarified his role by reminding the group that he will “play the heavy throughout the day and watch the time” (lines 141-142). Kenefick then put a pause to this talk by saying, “if there are other things that you want to cover, you can kind of shout them out now” (lines 144-145). These statements served to establish and maintain the facilitator role with respect to a meeting boundary-keeping function.

In the next several turns, as members began to talk their way into this meeting, Kenefick demonstrated in his responses to each participant how he would maintain the agenda and time-keeping framework of this meeting. Two examples are given in sequence.

The first example occurred just after Kenefick had established the flexible agenda that included everyone’s ideas and issues. Instead of moving forward with this request, TM rerouted attention to results from a survey of members that was distributed in the last newsletter. After the survey results were described, participants again began to talk about their ideas for classes and competition (by following up on the point made by JS). In an attempt to emphasize the action-oriented phrasing of one member’s comment and to remind all group members of their agreed-on goal of following conversation with action, Kenefick interjected with “sounds like someone has an action item for their [sic] action plan already.”

Several turns later, MS asked, “Is there a focus?” This almost served as a reminder that both JS and Kenefick had described the purpose of the meeting as “focusing.” The question occurred amidst a member’s monologue about the way that the Center itself “provides many things” but could be developed more specifically “for younger children,” a monologue that may have been an attempt at trying to focus the Center’s many activities around an overarching goal that has a more targeted audience.

What followed this monologue was a lengthy discussion about the individual needs of board members and their children. We provide some context about this discussion to understand the types of intervention that Kenefick engaged in during the discussion.

During the discussion, individuals and their responsibilities for activities scheduled by the Center became implicated and were the focus of the interventions in which Kenefick engaged. The first instance of this focus began with AF, who used the pronoun “you” in her statements that seemed to be directed to LB, the director of the Center. AF stated, “If you offer this . . .” and “you do it in the afternoon . . .,” and LB responded by saying, “If a few parents suggest [a new children’s class] . . . [then we will] try to get a teacher.” AF again stated her goal of having the Center “focus on the 3-5 age group,” and LB responded by saying:

555. We did try science, but not for that . . . we can always start again. We stopped
556. it because we didn’t have enough kids to sign up for science. We tried a nature (.)
557. with me and Jennifer ((laughs)) and that was it. We tried (.) but we didn’t get
558. anybody, so we keep trying things and then we don’t have enough people.

In these lines, the participants involved expressed an orientation to the taking of personal responsibility within the Center. As the director of the Center, LB schedules classes. The board members have children and claim to “want” to take classes that, unfortunately, did not suit their family’s schedules. The director described her actions as “trying” to accommodate these needs but failing to do so due to a lack of enrollment. Therefore, she put the onus back onto the interested board members by suggesting that another member (AF), or others in general, get several people together to form a class. This shift from the personal responsibility of the director, the one paid to run the Center, to those making the criticism (or request)—a parent, board member, or the other Center members—demonstrates the active role everyone should play in the organizing and running of the Center.

After just a few more turns, Kenefick interjected with:

618. It’s about 25 after 12:00, and we’ve talked about going in the area of 12:30
619. with this portion and then taking a break. You have, talked about competition and

This intervention was consistent with Kenefick's stated role as "timekeeper." This intervention was significant in that Kenefick did not take up the content theme he reiterated earlier (lines 97-105) but, instead, seeing that the individual responsibility theme was being addressed by members, he intervened in a way that related solely to his function of managing the meeting time. Then, with guidance from the co-president, who later suggested that the group "take another 20 minutes, we're on a roll," Kenefick reiterated that "we'll go until a quarter to." The group accepted this guidance and proceeded to speak until the next allotted time.

The topic turned to the way the Center is used as a drop-in playroom for children during the day, at which point MF, the co-president, entered the room for the first time. As LB stood up to open the door for MF, she left her seat open. MF entered and sat down in the chair formerly occupied by LB. He began looking through the folder he was handed by LB and looked onto the papers of the person (KC) sitting next to him. MF then introduced himself to Kenefick, who was seated to MF's right. LB re-entered the room and turned to take an open seat next to SW (off camera). As all this was going on, KRM had been discussing the drop-in room at the Center and the toy situation there.

For several turns, MF watched and listened to other participants. When he finally spoke, his participation demonstrated a different orientation toward what the meeting was accomplishing and, consequently, altered the type of intervention possible and necessary by Kenefick. MF's first remark of, "I don't quite understand what you're saying, Tammy," called into question not only a statement made by another board member but also potentially the work in which the board members were engaged. It was at this point in the meeting that the facilitator's role changed as the tenor of the interaction changed, a change that required Kenefick to influence the group process to re-establish a collaborative frame.

INFLUENCING GROUP PROCESS TO RE-ESTABLISH A COLLABORATIVE FRAME

Thus far, we have described two types of interventions—those related to creating and maintaining an agenda and those related to meeting management. There are, of course, many other ways in which a facilitator can deliberately influence the direction of a group's conversation. Of these, *confrontative interventions* (Schein, 1987, see also Sline, Vol. 1), direct feedback or counseling used to raise group members' awareness of their interpersonal processes, are often used to help group members become reflexively aware

of their roles in the group process.⁸ However, these types of interventions would not have been appropriate in this setting because participants were not there to, nor did they have any history of, exploring their relational processes. As the following discussion shows, the focus on strategic planning did not prevent Kenefick from having to address a major process challenge through his use of feedback or redirective statements in the course of the meeting.

Although the introductions exchanged among group members at the beginning of the meeting helped to set the tone of the meeting, create "buy-in" from participants for the agenda, form and structure certain roles (such as that of "facilitator"), and provide a time for participants to orient to one another's speaking style and interests (in the topics to be discussed), when a participant enters such a meeting after all of these activities have been "accomplished" (even if that accomplishment is recognized as a continuous interactional process), what can one say about the communicative behavior of someone who seems to speak in ways that run counter to the previous group norms? This is an even more important question when the person occupies a leadership role, such as co-president.

As mentioned earlier, MF came late to the meeting, close to the end of the first half. When he entered, LB handed him a portfolio. When he selected the supposed empty seat left in the room, he introduced himself to Kenefick, who was sitting next to him, and shook his hand. Kenefick handed him an agenda and pointed to where they were in the meeting. MF then got up and put on his nametag.

The meeting continued with participants throwing out ideas for raising funds for the Center. MF responded to one idea with "No," and the responses he gave to other ideas were also negative, such as "Well, we cannot do that again." In responding in this ways, MF—frequently speaking as an expert, rejecting suggestions made by citing past history, and negatively evaluating others' ideas—changed the rhythm of the talk that had been established.

After the lunch break, MF dominated the discussion. He continually answered when a question was asked by another participant and evaluated any suggestion made. This type of speaking style was unique to this participant and was quite different from the style of JS, the other co-president.

It is interesting to note that when MF joined the meeting, changes were immediately evident in the tone of the meeting. During the first 90 minutes, members' voices were medium pitched and nonconfrontational. If a participant did not agree with a suggestion made by another, it was not stated

⁸We have characterized "confrontative interventions" as "feedback" or "counseling" for our purposes in this essay; for a fuller definition, consult Schein (1987).

overtly but in a manner such as, “What about . . . ?” MF, in contrast, rejected ideas outright by making remarks, such as “I don’t see it” or “I don’t think there’s an avenue to do that.” The dynamics of the group interaction also changed because his turns talking were both more frequent and lengthier than other members’ turns.

The intervention used by Kenefick with MF came in the form of redirecting the focus from him as an individual to “the group.” The following example was preceded by a discussion about the physical space of the Center and the limitations of owning a building in the neighborhood where the Center is located:

1250. MF: I don’t know how many billions of dollars they raised and they bought a

1251. brownstone . . .

1260. MF: You have to have a plan how much square footage we really need. . .

1261. AF: mmm hmm

1265. MF: Yes, that’s all possible I’d say (1.0)

1266. JK: Well, it’s up to this group to decide, what you want to do

1267: and what you want to do over the next year

1268. MF: That’s right

1269. JK: So, that’s what this day is for, right?

In this instance, Kenefick redirected the focus of the comment made by MF from his ability to decide and pronounce what was possible for the group in his role as co-president (line 1265) to the work of “the group” members in the room to make a “decision” together (“it’s up to this group to decide,” line 1266).

A second example of how Kenefick was able to influence the group occurred after the group began to report on the breakout group sessions:

1520. JK: OK, reactions from the group?

1521. MF: I’ll give you some feedback from the nannies, since they’re not here. First of

1522. all, the idea of doing the pillows on the floor, not going to be going for that at all.

1523. We wanted to put new chairs in and the first thing they said was there are no arms

1524. on the chairs. So, the idea of sitting on the floor, that’s not going to fly. It’s a good

1525. idea to try get ideas, . . . I did informal surveys, . . . so I think it’s a good idea to

1526. solicit information because they do have good ideas . . . It might be great to try.

1527. JK: Other reactions? Or where you might be able to see a role for yourself in what

1528. this group was talking about

1529. (4.0) OK, last group

1530. JS: Well, we tried . . .

Again, Kenefick redirected attention away from this particular member and his comments and opinions to try to include the other members of the group (calling for other “reactions,” line 1520). In this way, Kenefick enacted his previous comments about maintaining a balance between individual members taking responsibility for what they say and will do and how the group interacts. Specifically, the precedent had been established in this group, prior to the arrival of MF, that individuals were encouraged to express their suggestions openly, but that the group as a whole gets to make the decision. Therefore, to re-establish this collaborative frame for interaction and decision making, Kenefick’s statement recognized the contribution made by this particular group member and simultaneously reinforced the notion that the group as a whole is responsible for making decisions.

EVALUATION OF THE FACILITATION RESULTS AND DISENGAGEMENT FROM DEPENDENCE ON THE FACILITATOR

At the end of the retreat meeting, Kenefick recapped all the ideas, suggestions, and plans that had been made. The meeting ended on a positive note, with members seeming engaged and energized to continue the work that they had begun. The group decided when the next meeting would be and JS then concluded the meeting by asking members to come 30 minutes early to the next meeting to sort out the toys that children play with when they drop by the Center.

Because of the role that he played throughout the meeting—as a facilitator who helped the group to establish and manage the agenda—Kenefick did not have to work to disengage from the group. Group members had created their own action plans, including their roles and responsibilities. They were, thus, not dependent on Kenefick to continue as a facilitator; his work with that group was complete.

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION AND GROUP FACILITATION

Boden (1994) described the purpose of ethnomethodological studies of organizations as “treat[ing] members’ competence in and local knowledge and understanding of a setting as a central topic of investigation” (p. 47).

a new “competence,” so to speak, for members of the board of directors of the Family Center. These members began with a patterned way of speaking during meetings that had only been described to the facilitator by a co-leader of the group. Therefore, group members and the outside facilitator had to learn the “local knowledge” of the other to effectively coordinate their actions in this retreat meeting. One way of framing the competencies that group members learned is by explicating the two cultural discourses present during the meeting: the discourse of Family Center meetings and the discourse of facilitation.

Discourse of Family Center Meetings

To claim that board members had patterned ways of conducting their meetings may seem simplistic and perhaps glosses over the significant differences that any new member who enters a scene or event helps to construct. To highlight differences between the two discourses that made up this particular meeting interaction, some common features of the meeting sequences of talk used in this Center are described.

Typically (as determined from a recorded corpus of 18 meetings over a 2-year period), meetings are held on a weeknight, and an agenda and minutes are distributed by the director at the outset of the meeting. One of the co-presidents (there have been three presidents since this study began) usually begins the meeting by asking if everyone has read the minutes from the previous meeting, giving members 2-3 minutes to do so, followed by approval of the minutes. The director is then called on by the president to give a report. Her report includes detailed information about the checking and CD accounts and any recent events that have transpired during the week, as well as issues that have arisen over staffing or other maintenance issues on which she wants board input. A discussion of the upcoming events, included on the agenda as a separate item, is then initiated by the director and lasts until the meeting concludes approximately 1.5-2.5 hours after it began. Members enter and leave at any point during the meeting time.

This sequence of events was routinely enacted and included typical features of individual turns. For instance, introductions were made whenever a newcomer attended a meeting. These introductions were accomplished by each member stating his or her name, age of his or her children, and the way he or she first came to the Center. At other times during meetings, participants routinely spoke about topics they had knowledge of or interest in, not waiting to be called on and talking at length until another topic arose. A final recurrent feature of meetings was that the co-president was the main decision maker regarding topic change, often referring to the agenda as a

way to move the conversation. Although there are other patterned ways of speaking, these meeting sequences and turn-taking norms are the most relevant to this discussion.

Discourse of Facilitation

Despite the espoused facilitation technique or orientation used during the retreat meeting (as described previously), another way to characterize what we hear during the meeting can be described as a “discourse of facilitation.” This notion stems from the cultural discourse theory espoused by Carbaugh, Gibson, and Milburn (1997) that recognizes the ways in which group members form distinct patterned ways of interacting that implicate deeply felt beliefs about being, acting, and knowing. This discourse of facilitation includes the terms and phrases used by Kenefick, the facilitator, that mark his role as distinct from typical meeting roles (for this group). For example, Kenefick referred to “action plans” (Heron, 1989), “individual and group goals,” “keeping track of time,” “making personal commitments,” and using “feedback” to help group members see how the “group functions.” He described his role as “keeping track of the process” and characterized the work in the meeting and beyond as a “continuous process” of refining progress toward the Center’s goals.

This discourse, although clearly marked by speech acts, is also marked by the interactional role that Kenefick played. In several instances, Kenefick restated the amount of time the group spoke about any particular issue, reiterated topics raised, asked for affirmation about what to do next, and declared a stage complete or that it should continue for an allotted period. In this way, the “discourse of facilitation” is marked not only by what Kenefick said but by how it was interactionally accomplished. This accomplishment was achieved by Kenefick’s turns that occurred in the midst of a stream of participant talk. That is, although the sequence of talk in meetings typically continued until everyone had a chance to contribute, Kenefick often broke the sequence by making a “facilitation” comment.

The fact that the group agreed to participate in a “facilitated meeting” signals an indication of participants’ receptivity to such “external” help. Their receptivity is important to note despite the fact that this was the Center’s first use of a facilitator and that members indicated that they were not familiar with what a facilitator did. Within the meeting itself, there was a distinct lack of disagreement expressed about any of the “facilitation” techniques Kenefick suggested. This unanimous agreement with suggested procedures was echoed in the way JS, the co-president, began using the specific terms of facilitation initiated by Kenefick; for instance, she discussed “our plans” and “goals” in relation to the meeting.

In describing and analyzing the meeting and the facilitation throughout, we have been concerned with how participants come to create meaningful ways of participating together, creating "work" in a voluntary way. This approach harkens back to Philipsen's (1992) remarks about how "communication studies [are] centrally concerned with how interlocutors achieve common understandings" (p. 139). As we have shown, a facilitator is not a mere conduit for a way of structuring talk; rather, by taking on a role that is recognizably "outside" the typical way in which a group works, a "facilitator" works with a group to create "situated meaning" (Philipsen, p. 139). In addition, through the use of a distinct discourse—in this case, what we have called the discourse of facilitation—a facilitator shares with participants an alternate "system of resources for interpreting communicative acts" (Philipsen, p. 139).

By examining the group interaction turn by turn, it becomes clearer how participants blend their discourses to collaboratively construct a "facilitated" meeting. This blend was comprised of the typical sequences of Center meetings, infused with speech acts from a "facilitation" discourse. ~~By noting some features of these two discourses, we find that they were not necessarily competing but actually became used in concert.~~ Therefore, when attempts are made to try to understand the process of facilitation itself or to make claims about what it can achieve, it is important to understand that its achievement is predicated on typical ways of speaking and an examination of *how* the two are interwoven.

CONCLUSION

One of our goals in this chapter has been to demonstrate how "facilitation is a jointly constructed process" rather than a persuasive role that a designated person plays during any given group meeting. Therefore, even though our data include comments about how the retreat meeting was planned prior to its taking place, it took the unfolding of the meeting to actually see how the facilitation was enacted. We demonstrated how the participants themselves (although clearly some more than others) played a direct role in how those events unfolded, including "allowing" themselves to be facilitated. In keeping with this interactionally based view, we showed how "group influence" was used by Kenefick to help keep the group on track when the male copresident, MF, did not participate in the same way as did others members.

Our claims about group facilitation from a communication perspective draw on the way that Boden (1994) conceptualized organizational interaction. She noted that "joint action is . . . pervasively problematic to notions of

single rational actors and individual preferences" (p. 207). Through our analysis, we tried to demonstrate ways in which group members routinely engage in this discourse of single rational actors and how a facilitator who is aware of the differences between individual action and group process can help a group to interact in ways that maximize the value of each.

Furthermore, although Schein (1987) gave an extensive description of the process consultation model and even promoted an understanding of facilitation as an integral part of a group interaction, rarely did he, or others who follow his model (e.g., Rockwood, 1993; Schein, 1997; Schein, Kahane, & Scharmer, 2001), clearly demonstrate in their work *how* facilitation is achieved as "joint action."

Another point we wish to stress is the "reflexivity" of facilitation, in that it is not just a facilitator's task to get a group to be reflexive of its actions; this reflexivity also includes the facilitator. This notion stems from Boden's (1994) description of institutional talk as demonstrating:

the ways in which the reflexive properties of talk *necessarily* instantiate and creatively extend organization. These qualities of all interaction are, in turn, extended in time and space "back" before a particular verbal exchange and "forward" into the life cycles of those organizations (and others in their sphere). Interaction is thus an autonomous domain of action in that it unfolds independently, but it is *simultaneously* embedded in a sociocultural world. . . . Talk creates its own local logic, turn by turn. At the same time, everyday interaction creates the contexts and interprets the contingencies out of which next actions spring. (p. 215)

To accomplish this demonstration of facilitation in action, turn-by-turn sequences of talk were included to show how the facilitator's action and interaction affected the processes and outcomes of this group meeting. By recognizing that every action on the part of facilitators is, in fact, a jointly enacted intervention, group communication facilitators will hopefully choose their actions—their words (and their silences) and their moments of interaction—in ways that help group members to come to their own collective understanding of effective group communication and, ultimately, to manage their own processes and problems.

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTION

This transcription system is a simplified version adopted from the Sacks et al.'s (1974) system. However, given the nature of the data from the retreat meeting studied, with lengthy monological sequences (see Tracy, 2005), we made the choice of following grammatical rules to ease readability. Therefore, we employ capitalization and some punctuation within transcribed portions to indicate sentences rather than using the Jefferson system for these devices, which may not be as familiar to all readers. Furthermore, we tried to reproduce the speaking statements as they were uttered and have left any grammatical errors of speech as they were spoken. When omitting words, or entire lines of speech, we have used ellipses.

(.)	Micropause:	Brief untimed pause
(1.5)	Timed pause:	Silences within or between turns
(())	Double parentheses:	Scenic details
()	Single parentheses:	Transcriptionist doubt
,	Comma	Continuing intonation, slight downward contour
TM:	Initials:	Speaker
??	Double question marks:	Uncertainty of speaker

APPENDIX B: RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

Participants in the meeting are listed under the following initials (pseudonyms used in document are given in parentheses):

JS:	Co-president (Jennifer Stevenson)
KS:	board member
LB:	Director of Family Center
MF:	Co-president (Michael Fumigali)
JK:	Facilitator
TM:	Recording Secretary/researcher (Tammy)
SW:	potential board member
KC:	board member
KRM:	Vice President
MS:	potential board member
AF:	potential board member

APPENDIX C: RETREAT AGENDA

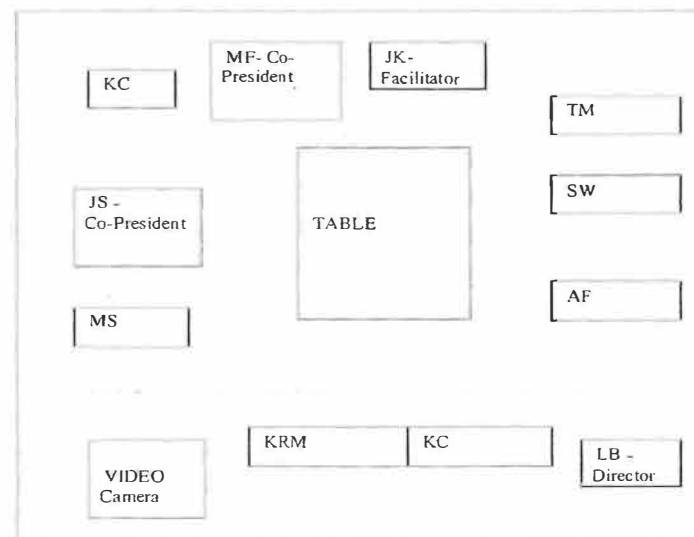
Family Center Retreat, March 23, 2001
Faciliator: Jim Kenefick

Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. Idea Sharing
- III. Goal Setting
 - a. Increasing membership and improving programs
 - b. Fund-raising and development
 - c. Physical improvement
 - d. Other efforts to maintain and improve Family Center
- IV. Small Groups create Action Plans and individual commitments
- V. Group Review of Action Plans and individual commitments

APPENDIX D: SEATING ARRANGEMENT

Prior to the arrival of the co-president, LB occupied MF's space. Due to the positioning of the video camera, four of the participants could not be seen clearly on the screen.



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USING FOCUS GROUPS TO DESIGN A NATIONWIDE DEBT-MANAGEMENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Timothy G. Plax
Patricia Kearney
Terre H. Allen
California State University, Long Beach

Ted Ross
Ross Campbell, Inc.

Critical to making good decisions is having as much pertinent information as possible; in that sense, effective decision making is informed decision making. Acquiring pertinent information, however, is often easier said than done; finding such information when an important decision must be made can be very challenging. Depending on the time frame and the type of information required, there are a variety of ways to acquire the data necessary for making informed decisions. Over the last several decades, scholars and practitioners alike have relied more and more on the facilitation of focus group interviews to acquire such data. For example, communication scholars have used the data acquired from focus group interviews to understand and promote organizational growth and change (see, e.g., DeFrancisco, 1996; Kreps, 1995) and to develop and assess services and products (see, e.g., Bormann, Bormann, & Harty, 1995; Chapel, Peterson, & Joseph, 1999).