

Facilitating experiential learning as a process of metaphor development

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Perspectives on metaphors in adventure education:

Ever since Stephen Bacon introduced the metaphor concept to outdoor education (Bacon, 1983; 1987), it has been very present in the related literature. The metaphoric model proposed by Bacon was further developed in a series of articles in this journal and other texts (Gass, 1991; Gass, Goldman & Priest, 1992; Gass, 1995; Itin, 1995; Priest, 1995; AEE-list, 1995; Flor, 1996). A common characteristic of this writing is its emphasis on metaphors as facilitators' introductions to outdoor activities, rather than participants' guiding principles during their actions. Two issues seem relevant here. The first one concerns who's the agent of learning, the developer of the metaphor, and the second one whether metaphors are primarily looked at as 'figures of speech' or 'figures of thought' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Several authors have drawn attention to participants' metaphors (Nadler & Luckner, 1992; Hovelynck, 1995; Nadler, 1995; Mack, 1996; Delay, 1996; Schödlbauer, 1996) thereby more or less explicitly questioning the central position the metaphoric model attributes to facilitator-defined metaphors. Their concerns revolve around how emancipatory and holistic, and ultimately how 'experiential' adventure education is or wants to be.

Their attention to learners' metaphors coincides with a view of metaphors as 'figures of thought' rather than 'figures of speech'¹ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Whereas the metaphoric model's emphasis on 'dressing metaphors' (Bacon, 1983) suggests that metaphors are stories, learners' metaphors are seen as mindsets which capture participants' experience and as such underly their 'here and now' actions. Metaphors in this view are guiding images, reflected in language as well as other behavior.

With a concept of metaphors as participants' guiding images, experiential learning can be understood as a process of metaphor change, and the task of experiential trainers or educators consists primarily of facilitating the development of images that generate new potential, or 'generative metaphors' (Schön, 1993).

This article explores the process of metaphor change as it occurs within experiential programs as well as elsewhere: I'll try to illustrate how people - in training just as well as at home - frontload their situations themselves, and how they develop new metaphors when the old ones won't do. I'll subsequently suggest some guidelines for facilitating experiential learning as they follow from my understanding of this process.

The development of generative metaphors

A few years ago I gave two friends of mine a hand finishing the electric wiring in their house. For this purpose long and narrow plastic pipes had been laid through the brick walls while constructing years earlier. Every single one of these pipes contained a string, that would allow us now to pull the wiring through. Unfortunately, one of these strings had been pulled by accident and left us with a 8m long curved pipe without a means to pull the electric wire. We first tried to just push it through, but the wire wasn't rigid enough to make that work. So we reinforced it with wire and tried again. It lasted a while before we got frustrated with this strategy, realizing it wouldn't work despite efforts to reinforce the wire with all sorts of things. Amidst the frustration came the idea - first as a joke - to flush rather

¹ As a native Dutch speaker I have a commonly used word available for each of these concepts. First we have the word 'beeldspraak', which literally means 'image-speech' and is a common word for 'metaphor'. Furthermore we have the word 'denkbeeld', literally meaning 'think-image'. I find the latter hard to express in English, if not with Lakoff and Johnson's phrase.

than push the wire. Water! From ‘water’ our thinking shifted to ‘air’, and only a few minutes later we had tied a tiny piece of fabric to a sewing thread and sucked it all the way through the pipe with the vacuum cleaner. The wire followed. Sometimes it pays off to take jokes seriously...

The original set-up being a string to pull, our initial image had been one of pulling and pushing: our minds were set on ‘mechanics’. As it became increasingly clear that our mechanical thinking didn’t allow us to solve our problem, we accommodated ‘hydraulic’ and ‘pneumatic’ metaphors. All of a sudden it became easy: the point was in our problem-setting rather than in problem-solving - as Donald Schön (1993) puts it.

Stages in metaphor development

Schön has described the process of metaphor development in different stages that are easily recognizable in this story. A first important phase consists of people’s immersion in the experience. We were pushing and pulling wires with different methods. Despite our getting better at pulling and pushing, the feeling grew that this would not work.

In the midst of this, the generative image was triggered: sucking. We stopped looking at our problem as if it were a mechanical one, and re-imagined it as a pneumatic problem.

It seems important to notice that, at first, we didn’t have a precise idea of where to go with this idea, but we somehow felt it could apply to our situation. Schön called this ‘an unarticulated sense of similarity’.

An immediate consequence of this new perspective was a change of vocabulary: we ‘reframed and renamed’. We didn’t talk about strength, length and rigidity anymore, but about weight and volume...

Only then, Schön points out, follows ‘an explicit account of similarities’: we ‘mapped’ how the image of sucking would apply to a situation that until then we had looked at as one that needed pulling or pushing. The result was a new approach, and a solution.

In my summary - but with his words - Schön’s stages look as follows:

- immersion in the experience
- triggering the generative metaphor
- unarticulated sense of similarity
 - naming and framing
- explicit account of similarities: ‘mapping’
 - new solutions.

The development of task-related metaphors in adventure activities:

The same stages of metaphor change are observable during our programs’ activities. Let’s look at a second example. In this case the group was asked to cross a canal without getting wet. They received some planks, two big transparent sheets of plastic, more life jackets than there were group members, a role of string, and duct tape. Their intention was to construct a raft. In a long hands-on discussion the group’s impression that the planks and the life jackets wouldn’t offer sufficient flotation to even bring one of them across grew stronger and stronger.

Interestingly, the plastic sheets had until then been called ‘tarps’ and ‘sails’². The names reflected frames in which the sheets were meant to keep the passengers from getting wet, or as an alternative to oars. Amidst this increasingly frustrating discussion the phantasy of a hot air balloon appeared. The sheets became ‘containers’, holding air. The next moment the sheets had become ‘floaters’. The imagined raft now looked totally different. Both the sheet’s sides were taped together lengthwise, and one end was tied closed with string. One group member then held this open-ended, sausage-shaped bag up and ran a little ways with it to fill it with air. When it seemed full the open end was tied closed. With a few planks taped onto these ‘floaters’, the raft could carry one person at a time. The leftover string was used to pull the construction back for the next passengers. Crossing still was delicate business, but it worked!

² It was a French language course, and the actual words used were “baches” and “voiles”. These were later replaced by “flotteurs”, and “le plastic”

Again, Schön's different stages of developing new metaphors are recognizable in this event: immersion in the experience, a new metaphor and the unarticulated sense of similarity, naming and framing, mapping and a new solution. In addition, the two stories combined may shed some light on the 'triggering of the generative metaphor' - a moment to which Schön paid relatively little attention considering how crucial it is in the process of metaphor development.

As with the electrical wiring the main difficulty with the raft was the participants' image of it: they held a perspective on the task and the materials available that *set* the problem they subsequently tried to *solve*. 'Immersion in the experience' then doesn't just mean 'busy with the activity': participants are immersed in the experience their metaphor creates.

In the midst of this experience occurs the 'triggering of a generative metaphor'. Interestingly in both events the image that lead up to the solution was first presented as a joke. Neither the garden hose nor the hot air balloon were meant seriously: they were attempts to lighten up the atmosphere of discouragement and frustration, to deal with a sense of stuckness. Jokes often carry new metaphors: after all the point of a joke is an interruption of the expected line of thought...But mostly the joke remains merely an opportunity to release tension. If the new image is carried further into task strategies however, it tends to open up new options.

Another way to cope with growing frustration is to take a break. Here again it seems that this interruption is a chance to break with the line of thought the group is getting stuck in as well as with the frustration itself: generative metaphors seem to regularly come up right after breaks.

Schön describes the new metaphor as a sudden image characterized by an 'unarticulated sense of similarity' with the moment's experience: there is a sense that the idea of the plastic as a container - rather than a tarp or a sail - is relevant, but no explicit idea on *how* it is relevant, and what its practical implications are.

The new metaphor thus enters the creative stage of its development during which participants attune their understanding of the new image. Schön refers to this stage as 'naming and framing'. It may be most recognizable by its changing vocabulary, but it is more than a matter of using different words. Not only didn't the participants call the sheets 'sails' anymore, they also treated them differently: whereas sitting or standing on a 'sail' wasn't a big deal, sitting on a 'floater' meant a risk of punching a hole in it and putting the whole crossing at stake.

This stage results in an 'explicit account of similarities': elements of the new image are now 'mapped' onto the lived situation, and offer a new perspective on the job or issue at hand. Once the new problem-setting was defined, problem-solving seemed pretty straightforward.

Integrating these data into the overview given earlier, I'd revise my summary as follows:

- immersion in the experience
 - sense of stuckness
- coping with frustration: jokes, break, ...
 - triggering of the generative metaphor
 - unarticulated sense of similarity
 - naming and framing
- mapping: explicit account of similarities
 - new solutions

Whether or not this list should be understood as a sequence of strictly separated stages is not essential. What does seem important is the idea that new metaphors originate while we're immersed in an experience, that they evolve from a vague feeling of relevant similarity toward a comparison that can be articulated, and that this process leads to new possibilities.

Metaphor change as an objective in experiential training and education

The participants on that course obviously didn't come to change their perspectives on plastic sheets, so why get into these examples at such length? Again, the focus is not on the metaphor's contents, but on

the process of its change. The focus is not on the metaphor, but on metaphORIZING. Not on the image, but on imagining.

The advantage of the concrete activities I described is that this whole process is relatively easy to trace. As such these activities offer participants - as well as ourselves - an opportunity to become more sensitive to the way their metaphORIZING creates possibilities and restrictions. That's one of the nice things about outdoor training. With regard to this article, the evolution of task-related metaphors is easier to describe than the development of metaphors we aim to facilitate.

In what follows I'll attempt to document how the same stages occur with regard to the metaphors training and education is meant to address, and which I want to refer to as 'the metaphors we live by' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). These include how we imagine ourselves and others, how we view relationships, how we picture communication and conflict, how we envision our futures, and related issues.

A first example takes place in a corporate training on teamwork, and focuses on the group's 'root metaphors': these are central metaphors shared among group members, underlying the group's functioning (Srivastva & Barrett, 1988). In a sense they represent a group's 'life metaphors', and that is how I'll treat them. The second situation is about facilitating the change of a personal 'life metaphor'.

Developing 'the metaphors we live by'

First the corporate training case. The team a colleague and I were working with went through a number of dynamics with apparent ease. They seemed to not discuss things very thoroughly, but the results didn't suffer from it, and the team members seemed to feel just fine with their way of working. Things changed in the first activity that required extensive brainstorming and a critical investigation of alternatives: the brainstorm resulted in a variety of options, but constructively confronting each others' ideas in order to choose one of them - or combine elements of different ones - seemed impossible. We witnessed a very polite conversation in which most members said something about several ideas, but remained very careful to not attach more value to any one of them: the alternatives were safely kept separate.

Occasional reference to differences in opinion during this conversation happened in terms of 'defensive', 'attacking', 'marked positions', 'armed with information', 'withdrawing'... The team's language reflected an image that became increasingly salient and could be summarized as 'discussion is war'. Its behavior reflected the implications of this metaphor: since conflict is destructive it should be avoided.

Note that we were not trying to make a big deal out of someone's *figures of speech*: we observed how they fit into a consistent pattern of verbal and nonverbal behavior that seemed to reflect a *figure of thought* which makes a constructive discussion impossible. Changing this group's root metaphor of conflict and communication was likely to give access to new potential: as long as 'constructive discussion' remained a contradiction in terms in the team members' minds, they were not very likely to deal with complex situations very efficiently or satisfactorily. So metaphor change seemed a valuable goal. At this point in the story, however, that was *our* opinion: the participants were immersed in the experience their metaphor of conflict generated....

As the conversation lasted for a while several signs of 'stuckness' started to show. Some of the more obvious ones in this case were the number of team members dropping out of the discussion, and an increase in 'loaded' silences. Another indicator was the repetition of entire episodes of the conversation, as if they hadn't occurred before, while in fact the same team members would say the very same things they had said just a few minutes ago. The life equivalent of a television 'action replay' almost.

During one of these silences we asked the team members what was happening. Their first reaction was to demand that we teach them communication techniques. We refused to do so and invited them again to look into their experience. The conversation that followed brought up several related root metaphors which they felt proved ineffective under the current circumstances: 'expertise as a territory', 'confrontation as an assault on that territory', 'communication as a technique' and 'the trainer as a provider of solutions'.

Here things get a little more complex than in the examples above, because a number of metaphors these managers lived by played a combined role in what had happened. The participants were very aware that their image of expertise as personal territory was not viable. Its relevance was obvious: an increasing number of issues at work seemed to get stuck on this metaphor. Some participants were struck by their observation that their interaction was still affected by this image in situations that didn't belong to anyone's field of expertise, such as the dynamics we presented: they saw that as a sign that it had really become a 'root metaphor'...

Understanding confrontation as an attack seemed tightly linked with the first image. Several participants confirmed the feeling that questioning or evaluating decisions at their workplace was often perceived as a judgment of the decision maker's professional competence. The group easily agreed that this 'figure of thought' cost them a great deal of energy that could be better spent, and defined this as an area for attention.

The restrictions of a technical view on communication were also clear. To some they had become clear by defining the four root metaphors: the felt need to continuously guard one's professional respect among colleagues was hard to reduce to a matter of communication techniques. Consequentially, communication rules wouldn't have kept them from getting stuck in their territory metaphor.

And there was the image of the trainers as providers of solutions, in this case teachers who present - prescribe - communication techniques and maybe even monitor whether they're applied properly or not. There are several reasons not to take that role: group dynamical, systemical, epistemological... At the moment I'm describing participants aren't interested in these kinds of arguments. Fortunately our participants sensed themselves that it wouldn't have contributed to their learning: it would have placed the focus on their communication, and kept the image underlying their communication out of reach. While they now found the latter to be much more relevant.

I can't really describe the further change of these metaphors during the program: the fact that these images remained intertwined and that they developed over a longer period of time makes them hard to trace. Their identification seemed to be an important point in the process however: their mere expression pointed out that there were other options. This moment also made it possible to revise and refine program objectives, and offered a chance to clarify our roles as facilitators.

This program fragment already brings up some issues in the facilitation of experiential learning: one of them concerns the timing of intervention, another one the 'learning space' offered (Srivastva, Obert & Nielsen, 1977). Before focusing on facilitating I want to present a second course fragment, presenting the change of an individual 'life metaphor' - to the extent metaphors can *überhaupt* be individual.

The second fragment happened during a five day course for a group of volunteer leaders of a humanitarian organization. They are rappelling down a 15 meter rockface. Seven participants have descended when a young woman takes her turn. She had mentioned her fear of heights before the activity started, but also expressed her wish to rappel anyway. After that she was actively involved with anchoring the ropes and checking other rappellers' belays. She then watched them descending, visibly rehearsing the different moves she would need to make to eventually rappel herself.

Now she is on belay and approaching the edge of the cliff. One of the other group members is quietly talking her through the steps to make, as she had asked him to do. On the very edge, without moving her feet, she leans back half a meter, stays in that position for a second, then pulls her upper body up again, stands there for a moment, leans back again...

She probably repeated this sequence five or six times, silently and without watching anyone, until the moment I asked her what was happening. Nadler (1995) wrote about this moment: 'one of the cardinal rules in edgework is to select a moment in the adventure-based activity when the emotions (..) are at their peak and freeze or stop that moment.' He named his approach 'edgework', and that word feels very appropriate for the conversation that followed. We processed the experience right there, on the edge, on belay.

Whereas her initial metaphor presented the 'rappel as a height', on the edge this image had shifted to the 'rappel as a proof of competence to her father'. She spoke of how he had instilled the idea in her that there were 'a number of things she shouldn't even try, because they weren't meant for them -

working class people.’ This had included higher education, and throughout her university studies she had felt that she needed to fight her father’s prediction of failure in order to succeed in doing what she wanted to do. She had received her Master’s Degree one month before the program, and felt she now needed to prove her capacity to get a corresponding job. Her father had predicted that she wouldn’t find one, as he had predicted that she wouldn’t successfully make it through the outdoor training program she had been selected for.

Not the height, but the tiredness of fighting her father in order to achieve something had stopped her from continuing her descend. Her ambiguity about the need to continuously prove herself had been reflected in her leaning back and forth, and back and forth, and her perspective on rappelling had changed her language: during our conversation she didn’t talk about ‘descending’ anymore, but about ‘convincing’...

The option to not rappel looked totally different from the new perspective. Gradually the ‘rappel as proof’ shifted to the ‘rappel as a trap’: rappelling now stood for the decision to continue her fighting her dad’s prediction of failure.

On the edge she decided not to go.

The facilitation of experiential learning

An image of metaphors as participants’ figures of thought, rather than facilitators’ figures of speech, sheds a different light on facilitating experiential learning. The emphasis shifts from developing metaphors *for* participants to facilitating the development of metaphors *by* participants. Our insight in the process of metaphor change suggests that the timing of process intervention shifts from *before* the activity to *during* the experience.

My further exploration will assume that both course fragments presented above described relevant learning events: in both cases the participants widened their behavioral repertoire; they imagined new options and ‘realized’ them. The management group also gained some insight in how their metaphorizing creates possibilities and restrictions, and experimented with looking for alternative metaphors in a variety of situations.

Wondering what we learn from these experiences with regard to experiential learning and its facilitation,

the further text will depart from the question of which aspects of facilitation contributed to their learning. My answer to this question emphasizes the creation of a learning space in which participants can enact the metaphors they live by, the appreciation of the potential held by these metaphors, and the facilitation of these metaphors’ change where they prove restrictive.

Creating an open learning space

The first condition seems to be a learning space that is sufficiently open and safe for participants to enact their metaphors (Weick, 1995). I said earlier that participants ‘frontload’ their own situation. The idea of ‘enactment’ goes one step further: not only do participants give metaphorical meaning to a program situation, in doing so they create a situation that ‘realizes’ their metaphor.

An easy and recognizable example seems to be the enactment of a metaphor of ‘dogs as dangerous animals’. Some people are afraid of dogs almost regardless of the dog involved: the person reacts to his or her image of a dog, more than to the dog itself. They look at dogs *as if* they were dangerous. Unfortunately dogs tend to sense people’s fear, and seem to become more aggressive as they sense it. These people thus ‘realize’, enact their metaphor: the dog now *is* dangerous.

I’ll refer to Karl Weick (1995) for further treatment of enactment: in this article I want to point at its relevance for experiential learning. The notion of enactment implies that participants will enact their metaphors into the program environment - during outdoor activities, as well as debriefings, household tasks, meals or time off. If we want our programs to be an opportunity for participants to develop the metaphors they live by, and to learn about how their ‘figures of thought’ create and restrict options, our first task as facilitators is to open up space for their enactment of their metaphors.

Underlying this idea is an appreciation of the fact that we cannot offer *experiences* to participants; at most we can propose *activities*: participants construct their experiences. 'Experiences are not what happens to us, but what we do to what happens with us' (Weick, 1995). As Martha Bell (1993) pointed out earlier in this journal, this invites a revision of some assumptions commonly expressed in AEE-texts. It invites appreciating the equivocality of activities, and valuing the idiosyncrasy of experiences. At this point, however, the state of the art in experiential programming is often associated with the design of isomorphic activities and their metaphoric introduction (Priest, 1995; Flor, 1996; Rehm, 1996), which essentially represent attempts to *reduce* equivocality early in the process.

Appreciating the potential of life metaphors

I feel it is important to complement this article's focus on developing new metaphors with a few words on the potential of the metaphors participants enact in activities. The metaphors our managers identified at a moment of stuckness shouldn't make us forget that they were successful in a number of dynamics, and - far more importantly - succeed in running their business. The young rappeler's metaphor of difficult situations has without any doubt served her at a number of occasions. The metaphors people live by always make sense in the context in which they were developed. They may become problematic as they become 'fixed images' (Leuner, 1977), but *a priori* every metaphor generates possibility. It seems important to recognize and appreciate the potential of participants' metaphors. First because people connect through appreciation, not through a focus on what goes wrong and needs improvement. The expression of genuine appreciation is part of how to create a safe learning space. And then because a one-sided focus on developing new metaphors runs the risk of losing the potential of older ones. Recognizing metaphors' 'as if' character makes it possible to benefit from the potential of several different views simultaneously: developing new metaphors doesn't necessarily imply forgetting the older ones.

Facilitating the development of generative metaphors

Seen from this perspective the task of the facilitator further consists of guiding processes of metaphor change to completion. His or her interventions intend to facilitate the development of the enacted metaphors. With Schön's work as a theoretical background this can be understood as attending to the different stages described above.

As mentioned the managers in the program fragment wouldn't have learned about their life metaphors if they hadn't received the space to enact them to begin with. Neither would the young woman have evolved in her relationship to her father if she hadn't received the space to enact it. In a first stage they were 'immersed in the experience' they created by enacting their metaphors.

Obviously, as a facilitator, I am part of the picture as well, and when I say 'they' that is largely a matter of emphasis. I inevitably enact my metaphors too. I try to remain aware of them and to clarify them to the extent they affect the program, and to the extent I'm able to. I only exceptionally choose to have *my* image of *their* enacted metaphors direct the unfolding program however, and along with Greenberg, Rice and Elliott I would qualify attempts to do so as a 'non-experiential response mode'. While this may at times represent a helpful 'additional response mode', I continuously remind myself that an experiential approach directs the learning process, not the content (Greenberg, Rice & Elliott, 1993).

Metaphors hold possibilities and restrictions, as illustrated: as the interacting group members enact their images, groups may get stuck in the situation they created. As process indicators of 'stuckness' seem to mark an entry to metaphor change as well as an increased receptivity to intervention (Greenberg, Rice & Elliott, 1993), they are important for facilitators to remain sensitive to. Indicators mentioned in the program fragments include disengagement, silences, and the short cycled repetition of events I called 'action replay' - present in both cases -, but there are many more: facial expressions, sighs, changes in voice sound, switching language...

The 'triggering of generative metaphors' is likely to occur in the midst of attempts to cope with the frustration that goes along with participants' sense of stuckness - possibly jokes or breaks.

Facilitator intervention in this perspective - whether before or after the triggering of new perspectives - aims primarily at attending to the participants' metaphorizing. The approach at this stage has common ground with Nadler's 'edgework' model, which I quoted earlier (Nadler, 1995). It is important, however, to note that 'the edge' doesn't refer to 'a moment in the adventure-based activity', as the quote may suggest: it is the edge of the participants' metaphor. The managers described above encountered this edge during their discussion, when the activity was little more than a distant onset. In the rappel case the metaphor's and the cliff's edges may appear to coincide, but a closer look reveals crossing the cliff's edge meant *not* crossing the metaphor's, and vice versa.

In both cases 'the edge' seems an opportune moment for intervention. The reason for intervening at the edge is twofold. First, with Leslie Greenberg's computer metaphor: 'You can't change a program unless it's up and running'. Or closer to this article's vocabulary: you can change a metaphor only while it's enacted. Secondly the markers 'indicate (...) current readiness to focus on relevant puzzling issues. (...) Their exploration can lead to the accessing and reexamination of emotion schemes that have been centrally involved in important areas of (their) functioning (Greenberg, Rice & Elliott, 1993). Moments of 'stuckness' thus mark the metaphors' availability and the participants' openness to intervention.

Guiding a process of metaphor development to completion implies the facilitation of the process from the 'unarticulated sense of similarity' to a metaphor that presents new potential - whether that means new possibilities in dealing with each others' expertise, new options in relating to one's father, or alternatives to metaphors such as 'fear as an emotion to be conquered', 'feedback as critique', 'personnel as a resource' etcetera... These alternatives unfold through a process of 'renaming and reframing', resulting in a more or less explicit 'map' which clarifies the options the new metaphor generates. The process of metaphor change thus comes to a momentary end: this point can be understood as the completion of a cycle.

Completing cycles of metaphor development can take different forms. After the above-described management group took up the task of re-imagining each others' confronting questions and remarks, they started enacting metaphors which made 'constructive discussion' increasingly possible. Facilitating this process required little more than checking in on how this task evolved at a few occasions. In the rappel case the cycle of metaphor change was completed differently. After choosing not to rappel and while stepping away from the edge, the woman seemed sunk in thought. She didn't look satisfied with her decision, and when I checked in with her she told me that her choice felt 'unfinished'. Exploring this further led to a final step in the reframing cycle which consisted of clarifying her choice to not rappel to the group. Further facilitation here consisted of questioning her apparent lack of resolution. Sometimes participants tend to quit the process prematurely, and running the development of generative metaphors to completion may include some gentle persistence.

A process experiential approach

I have described several experiential learning events in an attempt to better understand the learning process and its facilitation. The program events were chosen from Outward Bound courses in Belgium and France. Such programs are approximately one week long, center-based, and without a pre-planned schedule: the choice of activities is expected to facilitate participants' enactment of 'the metaphors they live by'. Part of the facilitators' task therefore is to develop a program as the process unfolds.

The facilitators' task can be further understood as appreciating the potential of enacted metaphors, and facilitating the process of their change when these metaphors become restrictive rather than generative. The task then is to guide processes of metaphor change to completion: this has been presented against the background of Schön's work.

An essential characteristic of this frame of reference is the central position given to the experiencing participant and the process of metaphorizing which captures their experience.

'No lived experience can be exhausted by a single interpretive scheme' (Schutz, 1967), and facilitating is no exception. I have looked at experiential learning as a process of metaphor change, but there are many other perspectives. The point remains that our interpretive scheme makes a practical difference: just as our image of the wiring problem defined what we did to solve it, and the managers' metaphors affected their

options in their initiative and discussion, our image of metaphors reflects and directs the way we facilitate our participants' learning.

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