THE FACILITATIVE ADULT TRAINER ROLE

© Ágota DOBOS
(Corvinus University, Budapest, Hungary)

agota.dobos@uni-corvinus.hu

The facilitative approach in adult education is not merely a set of techniques and methods but a training philosophy based on an underlying integrated theoretical framework with core values and assumptions. They are closely connected to the learner-centred approach in which the emphasis is put on constructive adult learning, which is satisfying the real practical needs of the learner and resulting in creative and productive knowledge. The study aims at exploring and specifying the concept of facilitation and the related practice in the perspective of adult education. The facilitative adult trainer role is distinguished from other roles built on the application of the facilitative methods and techniques. Applying the mental models of unilateral control and mutual learning of Roger Schwarz to adult education, educators are revealed in their specific roles: taking control of or sharing responsibilities for learning. The study encourages the shift from the prescriptive to the collaborative approach by reflecting at learning situations that facilitate the effective learning process.

Keywords: the philosophy of facilitating learning, core values and assumptions, prescriptive vs. facilitative approach in adult education, facilitative trainer role, process and content expertise, collaborative constructivist perspective, learning transaction, creative knowledge, practical competency development

Examining the question of facilitation from the point of view of the adult trainer role, the interactive training sessions provide an appropriate context for the analysis, because in these workshops the facilitative approach plays a central role. An extensive analysis cannot fall within the scope of the present study, so what we are trying to do, is to place the concept of facilitation and the related practice into a perspective of adult education and to reveal values and assumptions we consider important in order to increase the effectiveness of adult education.

Dilemmas of the adult educator role

In an educational culture, where the traditional way of teaching supposes a teacher who is standing at the blackboard at the front of the classroom talking to the students who are (ideally) listening, it is important to emphasize that we have to break with these traditions if we want to adequately address the various needs of the adult learners. We have to consider the special characteristics of adult learners that distinguish them

from the young ones, and we should offer them alternative opportunities that meet their training needs and learning styles. Adults today are willing to join the lifelong-learning process accepting that formal schooling is rather the beginning than the end of their careers as learners, this is what knowledge society requires from all of us. At the same time they tend to take up learning programmes with their own clearly defined needs and objectives in mind, therefore, we are expected to focus on these specific elements when designing training programmes for an adult target groups.

These needs partly derive from the adult learner status that can be expressed by key assumptions indicating the basic differences between adult and childhood learners. Adults are voluntary, problem-centred, independent, experienced and self-directed learners looking for ideas/options, decide content grouped by interest/need, concerned with using knowledge now, view learning as lifelong process, equal to the teacher/trainer (Walsh, 2003:5) - which are the most frequently mentioned characteristics of adult learners. These features seem to reflect highly motivated adults at a high level of the ability of self-directed learning. An almost ideal learning situation, reflecting the distinguishing features attributed to adult learners, is often closely approximated in the professional continuing education, or leadership training, however, adulthood itself does not necessarily bring about these specific abilities, and the adult target group is far from being homogeneous.

Consequently, the pedagogical and andragogical practice do not seem to exclude each other; on the contrary, both can have relevance, if used appropriately. Even M. Knowles, at a later stage of his career, argued that the two paradigms can be handled flexibly, and it depends on the professional discretion of the educator which strategy to use in order to achieve the desired learning outcome (Knowles & Holton & Swanson, 1998:133). Not the opposition of the wrong pedagogical practice and andragogy, but rather the analysis of the special features of the child-centred pedagogy and the adult-centred andragogy should be considered. In adult education there has been a definite shift from teaching to learning (Maróti, 2002:7-8). Knowledge to be acquired is directly related to the learner's everyday life, problems to be solved at the workplace or in private life. In terms of today's social needs, the value of creative knowledge and practical skills has considerably increased, which requires new attitudes to teaching that result in "worthwhile knowledge" (Garrison & Archer, 2000). In our analysis we are trying to find the reasons to justify the facilitative approach opposed to the prescriptive, authoritative one, because it seems much more effective in achieving the learning outcome, especially when practical competency development is at stake.

Rogers's student-centred approach suggests important practical aspects for the educators of adults to consider: the individual's own experiences should be put in the centre, and should be respected as the part of the self of the learner, who has his own interpretations of the world. "We cannot teach another person directly; we can only facilitate leaning" (Smith, 2004). Individuals tend to learn things that can be integrated into the structure of their selves, so learning should be relevant to them. In order to assimilate new knowledge and skills, it is important to provide supportive climate for the learner, freedom of choice and responsibility otherwise the rejection of anything that is threatening by changing the routine is highly probable. "The educational situation which most effectively promotes significant learning is one in which (a) threat to the self of the learner is reduced to a minimum, and (b) differentiated perception of the field is facilitated." (Knowles & Holton & Swanson, 1998:49)

Based on all this, it is hardly avoidable to redefine the traditional teacher roles and functions and the adult educator should accommodate himself/herself to the changed circumstances and the new expectations. But what is the nature of the new role, and what exactly is required from the adult educator? If it seems evident that the curriculum, the syllabus and the whole training programme should ideally be organised and planned to meet the participants' expectations, the educator cannot adhere to the traditional learning environment and teaching style. In these conditions the involvement of the learner remains at a low level, there is little opportunity for addressing personal needs, even less for finding out what the learner is interested in, what learning style would suit him/her best. This anomaly can result in bad performance in the training programmes and high dropout rate.

What we would need is a new philosophy and a different approach to teaching and learning. Above all we need qualities, attitudes that do not direct but facilitate learning. At the same time it is highly probable that the facilitative approach will be new not only to the educator but to the learners as well, who grew up in the traditional education system.

The meaning of "facilitation" and "facilitator" in adult education

The word facilitator comes from the Latin word *facil,* which means "to make easy". It is acceptable to use the English version in Hungarian texts, too, however, further clarification is needed, partly because the concept is not so widely known, partly because facilitation can have several readings depending on the context in which it is used.

Focusing on the facilitative trainer role, the following definitions can help us refine the understanding relevant to us. According to Doyle (Doyle et al., 2007), the facilitator is "an individual who enables groups and organizations to work more effectively; to collaborate and achieve synergy. She or he is a "content neutral" party who by not taking sides or expressing or advocating a point of view during the meeting, can advocate for fair, open, and inclusive procedures to accomplish the group's work".

We can agree with this statement regarding the management of group processes, collaborative learning is a key concept in the learning transaction, but neutrality is more problematic if we have a trainer in mind. If we consider neutrality relevant to the facilitative trainer role, we will deprive the trainer of the knowledge and skills to be able to intervene in a way that adds to the group's creativity and the clarification of the content. He or she would also lack the behaviour of the trainer-facilitator - so highly appreciated by Rogers - to be himself/herself in the learning process.

Bens (2000) defines the facilitator as "One who contributes *structure* and *process* to interactions so groups are able to function effectively and make high-quality decisions; a helper and enabler whose goal is to support others as they achieve exceptional performance".

Facilitating decision-making seems to have a direct connection with the business sphere, where democratic decisions are made with the involvement of the parties concerned. Both definitions indicate the central role of the interactive group processes, which itself means a very important element in adult training. However, both definitions rather refer to a professional skilled facilitator, who leads the group processes, involves participants in common thinking by using special techniques, but personally remains neutral. But how does the educational approach fit the facilitative perspective, and what are the specific characteristics attributed to it?

The facilitative approach can be interpreted on a fairly broad scale: in the world of business organisations as a coach, consultant, or a leader, as a trainer or even a parent (Schwarz & Davidson & Carlson & McKinney, 2005), so the educational role is only one among several others. Making a distinction between the various facilitative roles, in terms of the attitudes to the client or the group as well as to the process and the content, can help us specify the role we are primarily interested in.

Table 1. - Schwarz and Davidson: The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook, 2005. p. 28.

Facilitator	Facilitative Consultant	Facilitative Coach	Facilitative Trainer	Facilitative Leader
Helps a group increase its effectiveness by diagnosing and intervening on group process and structure.	Helps a client make informed decisions by bringing content expertise to the client's particular situation.	Helps individuals achieve their goals by helping them learn to rigorously reflect on their behaviour and thinking.	Helps clients develop knowledge and skills they can apply to real problems or opportunities.	Helps groups of which they are the formal leader or a member increase their effectiveness by diagnosing and intervening on group process and structure while contributing their content expertise.
Process expert Content neutral	Process expert Content expert	Process expert Involved in content	Process expert Content expert	Skilled in process Involved in content

The comparison shows that *process* and *content expertise* together are inherent in coaching and training, while in case of other roles the process expertise prevails, and involvement in the content varies with neutrality. The trainer, facilitating adult training processes, is different in a sense that he/she has to be a content expert besides having the methodological background to use facilitative techniques to assist learning. As far as the content expertise is concerned, it is the knowledge of the subject matter that the training session is focusing on, and educators are expected to transmit to the learners. "As a process expert, you know, what kinds of behaviour, process and structure are likely to contribute to high-quality problem-solving and decision-making, and you know which elements contribute to making an effective group." (Schwarz & Davidson & Carlson & McKinney, 2005:29)

We assume that facilitation for the purposes of adult education is much more complex than simply combining content with process expertise. In order to choose the relevant methods, either facilitation or other, the educators need to have values and assumptions about the nature of the learning process. The connections of the educational practice to relevant theoretical and philosophical foundations are the key elements of the educators' competence to be able to make well grounded choices. It is not our intention here to give a detailed analysis of educational theories, but the most influential ideas should be referred to: the philosophical perspective of Dewey that is putting individual and social experience in the centre, the

psychological approach as applied in Rogers's humanistic ideas, or the theory of the communicative competence of Habermas - all having invaluable input to the interpretation of adult learning called a "collaborative constructivist" perspective by Garrison and Archer (2000). This theoretical framework is recurrently referred to in the present study, as it is a perspective for adult education consistent with the training philosophy our practice is based on.

Talking about the facilitation of learning it is necessary to mention Rogers' contribution to the understanding of the interpersonal relationships occurring in the learning process. Rogers defined the "core conditions" for facilitative (counselling and educational) practice as *congruence (realness), prizing, acceptance and empathy*. According to him, the facilitator enters the teaching-learning process with his or her real self, to make it a personal encounter between equal parties. Moreover the facilitator accepts and trusts the learner as an individual with his or her emotions and potentialities. A further element that establishes a climate for self-initiated experiential learning is emphatic understanding (Smith, 2004).

"When the teacher has the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems *to the student*, then again the likelihood of significant learning is increased…. [Students feel deeply appreciative] when they are simply *understood* - not evaluated, not judged, simply understood from their *own* point of view, not the teacher's." (Rogers, 1967:304-311) It is argued if the full understanding is possible and explained as the "fusion of a number of perspectives" what can really achieved. Unlike Dewey, Rogers tends to focus on the psychological climate and there is less discussion about the intellectual aspects of the experience. (Garrison & Archer, 2000) "The strength of Rogers' approach lies in part in his focus on relationship. As he once wrote, 'The facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal *relationship* between facilitator and learner'" (Smith, 2004).

Empathy, besides resilience and teamwork is also regarded as one of the most important factors determining our abilities in interpersonal relationships (Goleman, 2006). Organization development literature pegs empathy as perhaps the most important of the soft skills because it is such a powerful tool in today's workplace, sometimes even more important than subject expertise. These skills are important for the management development training programs because they are in direct connection with team building, including employee motivation and empowerment, and managing change - central areas of responsibility for today's managers (Walsh, 2003:3).

Sometimes, the terms *facilitator* and *trainer* are used as synonyms, but calling a trainer a facilitator, neglects content expertise, so the term "facilitative trainer" suggested by Schwarz seems more adequate to recognize both sets of responsibilities and skills. Having the content expertise, the facilitative trainer will refuse to deliver long lectures not because he or she is not knowledgeable enough to do it, but because of believing in a different training philosophy, and accepting other core values and ground rules for conducting a training session. And this is what the substantively neutral third-party facilitator and the facilitative trainer still can have in common: the same underlying core values and principles. Facilitation is not merely the application of a set of methods and techniques, but an understanding of *why* they are needed and *how* they work (Schwarz & Davidson & Carlson & McKinney, 2005).

The "unilateral control model" and the "mutual learning model" in the practice of adult education

The *unilateral control model* and the *mutual learning model* provide points of reference for the interpretation of the adult educators' behaviours in the teaching-learning process. The *unilateral control model* as used by Schwarz (based on Argyris and Schön Model I.) describes a philosophy that has been shaping the code of acceptable behaviour in American businesses. While being the key to success for several decades, because of its inherent contradictions and weaknesses, it may even become the obstacle to succeeding in the future. The suggested shift to the *mutual learning model* underlines the importance of the group processes and the facilitative leadership. This statement can have an important message for education, if we agree that worthwhile knowledge, as the desired learning outcome at different levels and in different forms of education, is directly related to the effectiveness at the workplace.

Applying these mental models to educational situations, we can reveal the educators in their specific roles: taking control of or sharing responsibilities for learning. The focus is on the background motivators that result in certain types of behaviour. Both are based on core values and assumptions (1), strategies (2) and consequences (3). According to Schwarz the facilitative approach is based on four explicit core values, and the principles that follow from them: (1) valid information - sharing all the information you have about the issue; (2) Free and informed choice - means free decisions based on information not on pressure; (3) internal commitment - each member of the group is personally responsible for the decision and willing to support it; (4) compassion - adopting a stance to temporarily suspend judgement (Schwarz & Davidson & Carlson & McKinney, 2005:42-43). Schwarz also suggests using the models and the ground rules defined in it for *diagnosis* - to identify ineffective group behaviour and plan the intervention; as a teaching tool - to develop effective group norms; and to guide the educator's work (Schwarz & Davidson & Carlson & McKinney, 2005:61). In this way, they facilitate self reflection, which is of ultimate importance in defining the intended direction of change.

The analysis focusing on the horizontal relationships between the relevant categories of both models, results in the opposition of the dimensions, which can help grasp the nature of the difference between the two types of behaviour. At the same time, the vertical approach reflects the structure of each model, in which the interrelated levels include the underlying principles, the strategic behaviours and their outcomes thus structuring them into a coherent system. Even if the clear-cut division of behavioural patterns related to the individual categories in the theoretical models may simplify the reality of an educational process, they help understand the behaviours of the educators as group leaders, and define those that can have positive impacts on individual and group achievements.

Table 2. Adaptation is based on Schwarz and Davidson: The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook, 2005, pp. 36, 42.

UNILATERAL CONTROL MODEL		MUTUAL LEARNING MODEL	
Core Values and Assumptions		**Core Values and Assumptions**	
• Achieve my goal through unilateral control • Win, don't lose • Minimize expressing negative feelings • Act rational	• I understand the situation; those who see it differently do not. • I am right; those who disagree are wrong • I have pure motives; those who disagree have questionable motives • My feelings are justified	• Valid information • Free and informed choice • Internal commitment • Compassion	• I have some information; others have other information • Each of us may see things the others do not • Differences are opportunities for learning • People are trying to act with integrity given their situations

In the dimension of the *core values* of *the unilateral control model*, the educator has intended purposes that he or she wants to achieve without involving others or even considering the opportunity that other people can also have valuable input. Anything that can hinder the achievement of this goal should be eliminated or avoided, including expressing negative feelings or discussing the matter, because this interaction can divert the educator from the originally intended course of actions and might result in losing the game.

Opposed to this, in the *mutual learning model* the educator is ready to accept the others as equal partners, and share all the information he or she has, as well as the reasoning behind the statements so that the partner can understand it. Valid information is the basis for *informed and free choice* in defining the objectives and methods that help achieve them, which results in a feeling of personal responsibility for the decisions and their outcomes. Schwarz defines *compassion* as "empathy for others and for yourself" which "does not involve unilateral protection and enhances the other core values rather than diminishing them." (Schwarz & Davidson & Carlson & McKinney, 2005:43)

Core assumptions in the *unilateral control model* make you as an educator keep the whole process under your control believing that the only valid and complete understanding of the situation belongs to you. Consequently there is no place for disagreeing or thinking in a different way as the right perspective is represented by the educator, who knows what the interest of the group is. Other people's motives are assumed as inappropriate, and it is the educator, whose emotional reactions are unquestionable. The assumptions refer to all the thoughts and feelings that arise in an educational situation, and directly influence the actions. Interactions are reduced to minimum; there is no need for the involvement of others.

In the *mutual learning model* the core assumptions reflect a completely different attitude, according to which the educator does not want to prove that he or she knows everything but accepts the contribution of others. It also means that the educator takes himself/herself as the member of the group who has due contribution. The perspective of the educator is only one of the

many possible and relevant ones, and the educator, being curious to learn more about the others, is relying on the contributions the group members can bring to the group The core values and assumptions of the mutual learning model are associated with the principles of curiosity about other people's views and understandings; transparency in sharing intents, reasoning and strategy; and joint accountability for the situation, which means "interdependence with others in the system" (Schwarz & Davidson & Carlson & McKinney, 2005:45).

Table 3. Adaptation is based on Schwarz and Davidson: The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook, 2005, page 36, 42.

UNILATERAL CONTROL MODEL	MUTUAL LEARNING MODEL
Strategies	**Strategies**
• Advocate my position • Keep my reasoning private • Don't ask others about their reasoning • Ease in - indirectly stating my idea • Protect myself and others	1. Test assumptions and inferences 2. Share all relevant information 3. Use specific examples 4. Explain reasoning and intent 5. Focus on interests not positions 6. Combine advocacy and inquiry 7. Jointly design the approach 8. Discuss undiscussable issues 9. Use the decision-making rule that generates the commitment needed

The developed strategies are based on the core values and assumptions of the two models. On the one hand, the situation is controlled unilaterally, which means advocating the position of the educator, while hiding the reasoning behind it and trying to ease the others in the interpretation of the situation in the way he/she sees it. Instead of inquiring into others' reasoning or behaviour, the educator assumes that he/she knows what they are saying and why. There is no interaction, and the educator excludes learning about the views of the others, while being protected from unexpected questions, embarrassing inquiries, and negative feelings. On the other hand, there is a strategy that supports mutual learning and effective group processes thus creating the nine ground rules (see Table 3.) for the Skilled Facilitator approach.

Table 4. Adaptation is based on Schwarz and Davidson: The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook, 2005 page 36, 42.

UNILATERAL CONTROL MODEL	MUTUAL LEARNING MODEL
Consequences	**Consequences**
• Misunderstanding, unproductive conflict, defensiveness • Mistrust • Self-fulfilling, self-scaling processes • Limited learning • Reduced effectiveness • Reduced quality of worklife	• Increased understanding, reduced unproductive conflict and defensiveness • Increased trust • Reduced self-fulfilling, self-sealing processes increased learning • Increased effectiveness • Increased quality of worklife

And finally, as a result of the chosen core values, assumptions and strategies the effectiveness of the learning process shows striking differences in the dimension of the consequences by reinforcing facilitative approach compared to the traditional unilateral or authority-based one. The ultimate

consequence of the *mutual learning model*, which is built on the facilitative approach, is effective learning in a supportive environment that ensures quality professional career.

Becoming a facilitative trainer

For learning to take place, group facilitators and trainers must model effective techniques and approaches. Learning activities are designed to actively involve participants in their own learning, to allow them to experience different types of methods, and to give them an opportunity to experience learning by doing. The facilitative trainer is also becoming a participant in the interactive learning process, who is not only ready to share his/her own knowledge and experience but also ready to learn from the group. This is a sort of partnership, a collaborative relationship, in which learning becomes mutual, the responsibility is shared.

In this sense we can even raise the question if it is fully appropriate to use the term *learner-centred,* which may imply that the switch from teacher-centeredness will result in the subordination of the teacher, which is not what a collaboration-based approach is about. The facilitative trainer is the leader of group dynamics, learning is taking place basically in group and in communicative exchange of experience, the emphasis is put on tasks that make people think, solve problems, develop competencies and personal qualities, very often change attitudes. The roles they play and the behaviour required both from the trainer and the participant, are basically different from those well-known in traditional educational situations.

A comparison between the presenter's role and the facilitator's role can help us highlight the specific features of the two typical approaches analysed before at the level of the educational practice.

Table 5. Mary Walsh: So, Now You're a Trainer! ICMA Washington, 2003. p. 16.

Presenter	Facilitator
■ Brings new information to the group ■ Focuses on facts ■ Decides what information is important based on knowledge and expertise in the identified area	■ Draws information from the group ■ Focuses on processes ■ Helps the group figure out what it needs to know based on an understanding of group process and of the needs of the particular group
■ Moves the group in a specific direction based on information and material that needs to be covered ■ Provides handouts and back up material to supplement the presentation ■ Generally talks more than members of the group ■ Answers questions ■ Has knowledge and experience in the specific topic that is being covered	■ Guides the group toward appropriate conclusions based on issues that are raised by the group ■ Summarizes information and ideas developed by the group during open discussions ■ Generally lets the group do most of the talking ■ Raises questions ■ Has knowledge and experience in organization development, group dynamics, and group process

Reflecting on our own personal education, learning experiences in the family and at school, we can easily find the examples of the application of the unilaterally controlling approach often without the awareness of its reduced effectiveness. In terms of the learning outcomes the real question is whether the method applied in training can result in the "performance-related knowledge", expected from any adult today, which enables the learner to apply it in practice while adapting to changing situations. This kind of knowledge cannot be transmitted without the active involvement of the learner, who is allowed to be a productive participant of his or her own learning. (Maróti, 2005)

Constructivism, which has gained considerable space in the interpretation of the learning process since 1970s, questions the basic premise of the traditional teacher- and teaching material-centred model, by challenging the existence of an objective knowledge that is understood and interpreted in the same way by everyone (Feketéné Szakos, 2002:35).

In the transactional perspective used by Garrison and Archer learning in educational terms involves individual construction of meaning and social enculturation. Meaningful knowledge is created and shaped in the process of collaborative reconstruction of experience. Learning is also influenced by previous knowledge and experience, as well as social interaction. (Garrison & Archer, 2000)

As we can see, the facilitative role of the adult trainer should not be narrowed to the application of the interactive techniques as a routine. To become committed to the facilitative approach requires the theoretical understanding of the problems in order to be able to give the answers "why, how and what" we should do. "The level of congruence between intended outcomes and demonstrated practices is far more important in understanding the nature of the teaching learning transaction than is the application of specific teaching techniques." (Garrison & Archer, 2000) Reflection on practice and redesigning the core values and assumptions can help work out new strategies and choose the most suitable methods and techniques.

Our experience in the field of training Hungarian civil servants and elected local government officials reinforce the assumption that practical skills can be better developed if the opportunity is given to model them and discuss all the related issues in a safe environment of an interactive training session. In the appraisals of the training events the participants themselves highlight the same elements that the theory of adult education regards important. They appreciate having the opportunity to rethink their previous experiences and to embed them in a more general theoretical framework, which enables them to transform instinctive actions into conscious ones. Learning from others and learning in a group is given a high value too. Participants articulate the positive impacts of the training sessions on the development of their communication skills, tolerance, personal character, even if they were not marked as the primary objectives of the workshops. These are the additional impacts on the personality of the participants that derive from the operation of group dynamics (Bagdy & Telkes, 1988:36).

The interest in the interactive and facilitative training approach is slowly growing in Hungary in the field of the further training of civil servants, while for example in the U.S. the interactive training workshops in the further training of the similar target group have been very popular for long decades. It is not surprising that they have grown out of the pragmatist theory and practice of adult education, in which the real practical needs of the learner as well as the applicability of the new knowledge and skills to real life situations are the primary factors that determine the training

methodology to be used (Dewey, 1912). As the competence-based performance evaluation in Hungarian public administration has been introduced, the training approaches that can better serve the development of practical competencies tend to become more popular.

The facilitative trainer is undoubtedly a key player in this process. "The soul of facilitators is the "caring persona" they bring to their work, which is not just knowledge, experience in using techniques, this is something even more." The characteristics of this soul according to Wilkinson are the following:

- "Facilitators care about people. They value people, their views, and their input. They want each person to walk from a facilitated event feeling welcome, heard, and understood. They model positive affirmation and demonstrate their caring through their words and actions.
- Facilitators want to help… Facilitators get great pleasure from being of assistance. They genuinely enjoy using their expertise to help others succeed.
- Facilitators put their ego aside. Facilitators recognize that they are servants of the group…They don't get upset with a participant's difficult behaviours. They don't take concerns personally. They are willing to play as little or as great role as necessary to help the group be successful." (Wilkinson, 2004:29)

Being dedicated to the facilitative approach in training adults, we cannot avoid giving up the relative safety of the theoretical field and taking up risks like getting unexpected questions, having participants in the group, who may have more experience than we have, or who may be more informed and knowledgeable about certain issues than we are. If we accept the principle of partnership, and respect for the personality of the adult learner, who brings his or her knowledge and experiences to the training session to share them with the others, the risk does not seem so big. The trainer also brings to the session the whole set of competencies required from a professional adult educator: personal, social, cognitive and special (Szabóné Molnár, 2005) and both parties have the opportunity to learn from the other. In this transaction with the learner the facilitative trainer can regain the seemingly lost authority of the traditional educator, but it will be of a completely different sort, the kind of authority that had been served for.

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