

[MUSIC PLAYING]

LARRY One of the things I'm focusing on over these conversations is what I call facilitative leadership. I'm talking about
SUSSKIND: facilitative leadership in the broad sense of skills and attitudes. A facilitative leader helps parties focus on issues, not their stand on the issues-- issues not positions.

Credibility and authority for a facilitative leader-- credibility and authority-- derive from performance, not from entitlements bestowed by those in top positions. Your credibility and your authority as a facilitative leader are not given to you. They are earned in the face of the people you are working with.

The goal is to look at a series of 10 micro skills that I'm going to assert, and that you will see are at the heart of facilitative leadership in the public sector-- micro skills like stakeholder assessment. How do you decide who should be involved in some effort at collaborative decision making? Agenda setting-- you've got a group, you've got a problem, but now you've got to lay out the work for the group.

Ground rules-- how do you help a group work when it's not a corporation? It's not an organization where everyone has internalized the same set of understandings. It's an ad hoc collaboration that the public sector generates, causes to have happen all the time. And we're imagining you're either the person creating that context or you're in it and you're trying to help manage some ad hoc assembly toward a solution to a problem. You need ground rules. What do you know about formulating ground rules for such a context?

Joint fact finding-- how do you get people with very different views of things, very different levels of capability, to engage together at analyzing, understanding before they seek to reach agreement on something? Mediation-- you're either being mediated upon or maybe you'll be a mediator. Maybe you'll be formally appointed the mediator. Maybe you're just the person who takes on the mediating function within a group because there isn't one, and nobody else is doing it. And somebody needs to help the group deal with the internal difficulties of a lot of people talking at the same time with very different ideas about what to do.

Generating options for mutual gain-- anybody in a group can help a group, when they're trying to problem solve, generate proposals or options. Creating value in a problem solving context-- what does that mean? How do you do that? Using objective criteria-- it's a very specific idea for how to help people when they have a bunch of options, and they're trying to choose amongst them, and they all want different things. How can you help them argue for their view in a way that helps the group toward agreement and doesn't just make the discussion less difficult?

Building consensus-- what does it mean to generate consensus, which is not the least common denominator, acceptable, bad alternative, but rather, an agreement on the best way of dealing with the differences that the group has? Helping a group learn from its mistakes or organizational learning-- I'm going to argue these are 10 microskills that somebody trying to facilitate in a leaderly way, in a public sector context, needs to have.

So that's a set of general ideas, key concepts. And what I wanted to move to this evening, I'm suggesting there's a series of micro skills that you can use, draw on, build. When we think about what's taught in planning schools in general and the planning department here in particular, I'm afraid we're not naming these as skills that planners need. So I'm trying to fill a gap, because, I mean, you may have picked these skills up in your own work, in your education, because people here come from many different backgrounds and areas. But I want to say a word or two about each of these.

And then I want to throw you into a situation, a role play simulation. When the negotiation starts, you will have a role assigned to you. I'll give you some general background about this. But the material you have in front of you is your confidential instructions for the role that you've drawn that you'll be playing.

Every trio will be playing exactly the same game. And when we start, I will encourage you to take your chairs and find space for yourself out of earshot of the other trios, give you roughly half an hour to see if your three people can agree on three things. And then we will stop. Everyone will stop at the same time, whether you have reached a satisfactory conclusion from your standpoint or not. You need to get to a minimum score for there to be an agreement.

So the idea is you can use these micro skills in this negotiation. The goal is to get a good result for yourself. There's no total score for the trio. There's a score for each person. We want to see what strategies people use to get a good outcome. I want to give credit to my friend, my very dear friend, John Foerster, who invented this with Bruce Stiftel.

OK, stakeholder assessment-- there's a technique for getting the right people to the table when it is your job to convene stakeholders. City says, oh, we're thinking of changing policy. We want to have a public meeting. We want stakeholder engagement. Who? How? How do you assess who the relevant stakeholders are, and how do you get them to participate?

Those of you who are involved in the renewable energy facility siting task force know that we have teams working with different communities trying to bring together the relevant stakeholders who are fighting about whether a renewable energy facility should or shouldn't be built. There's no point convening a process to build a consensus if you can't figure out who the stakeholders are and get them to be present and then figure out how to engage them in ways that take account of differences amongst them effectively.

So stakeholder assessment is a process, and it's a product. It generates the agenda when you do it right. It generates the agenda with everybody's participation in setting the agenda. It also helps to set and legitimize ground rules for the group if the process is run properly. But the product of a stakeholder assessment is basically a matrix of actors down the side, stakeholder groups, and their interests across the top. And you fill in all of those cells in that matrix. And the only way to do that is to talk to lots of people.

I'm arguing that stakeholder assessment is a skill. It can be learned. I hope that hearing about this this evening will encourage you to at least read about it, if not find a way to study it while you're here. Because planners are constantly asked to organize opportunities for stakeholder engagement, and nobody's talking about how you know whether you have the right people there. What's the point if you can't have a way of identifying the relevant stakeholder groups and who can speak either like them or for them?

Generating options for mutual gain-- you're going to be in a situation-- there's three issues. There's specific options under those three issues. Those options were generated by earlier conversations amongst these parties and others in the city. Generating options in real life is getting people to have the equivalent of that score sheet.

You say, come to an event or a task force. OK, participate. OK, we're talking about x. OK, I like it, or I don't like it. But what you really want is for them to have what you have in your score sheet, which is, here are the issues we're going to try to get agreement on. Here are the options under each issue that have, in a sense, been vetted for technical feasibility or plausibility. And here's where I stand on each option.

If everybody comes with that, you have a chance of negotiating an agreement. It's when people show up. They don't know what their score sheet is. They haven't talked to their people. They don't know what the agenda subitems are. They don't know the options under it. If you're at the beginning of such a process, you want to try to help generate options for mutual gain. Knowing how to do that is a skill.

Creating value-- you're going to be talking with three people about three issues for 30 minutes. There are actually ways of framing packages of the three issues that create value. And either you know how to do that or you don't. The good news is I can teach you how to do that. The good news is you'll probably infer it from the result of this half hour exercise. But it is a skill to create value by helping multiple parties package multiple options under multiple issues in the right way. Make the pie larger through value creation.

Building consensus comes off of that, which is you've got three people. They come with very explicit priorities and directions. You start with, in many cases, angry parties. You've got people who are there to protect their interests. You've got people there who are there to advance their interests. You have people who are there to sabotage the whole effort almost always. And you're trying to get agreement, because if you can get agreement, you can guarantee everyone that's what's going to happen. You were empowering everyone there by saying that the decision rules are consensus.

In this case, this is an advisory process. Well, you want to have an effect as somebody in an advisory process. Get unanimity amongst all the advisors and then hand that to whoever the elected official was who said I'm creating this advisory process and say, we reached unanimous agreement. We hope you'll go along with it. But we are your constituents, all of us. And we have reached an agreement.

You want to empower people, help them reach a consensus. When a process of public engagement is organized by some elected or appointed official or entity, they're trying to get ideas about what they can go forward with that people won't vote against them, won't fight them, won't bring litigation. That's a way to empower people through consensus.

Using objective criteria in distributive negotiation. Whatever agreements you get are going to get different scores for each person. You're talking about an agreement that distributes value across the three of you. You each have some minimum you have to get. You have some goal you desire, and you have time limits. And if you get an agreement, it distributes value across the three parties.

How do you make a case for the package that distributes the most value to you that you most want? You can't say, I like this one best, because it's best for me, and expect that to carry the day. What else should you say? So-and-so likes it. You could say that. Maybe some of the people would say, well, then, OK, I'll go with what you want, because so-and-so likes it. That's a pretty weak way forward.

If I had an hour, I'd ask, what's your theory of practice at the moment? and ask people to tell me what you would say when you present the package that's best for you and you're trying to get the others to agree to it. One of the things that you can learn how to do is to argue on the merits for the option that's best for you by not making it a test of will with the other two parties, but rather, trying to focus on what the other two parties would agree any other neutral observer who knew everything that was going on would agree that that's the best option.

That's an objective measure. It doesn't mean correct in the sense that objective. It means, what would any neutral or independent party say is the best outcome hearing everything? And I want to be able to refer to the prevailing norms or the past precedent that the same communities use, something that's not about, it's best for me, that's why you should go along with it. Something that refers to an objective standard independent of your interests.

Mediation, you're going to see practice because one of you is a mediator in this exercise. One of you represents the homelessness task force appointed by the city. There's a task force, but only the head of the task force is coming. There's a group of neighbors in this area who are very, very concerned about the idea that there would be a homeless shelter down the street where they live.

Part of the concern of the neighbors is what they think will happen in this shelter. Will people just have a place to sleep at night? Will it provide job training for people so they could go from the shelter if they're staying there to a job, or at least a job interview? How many beds? What mix of activities will go on in this shelter if it's built?

You also have to decide when this shelter is going to open. It's perfectly usable in its current form, although a lot of people would like to fix it up in a variety of ways, depending on their idea of what the shelter is for and who it's for and how many people it's going to serve. But some people are really keen to get this thing to open right away, and other people wouldn't mind if it didn't open for a very long time.

You have to agree on an opening date. You have to agree on how many beds, what's the mix of uses. And you all come with very strong views from the homeless task force or from the neighborhood about these issues.

The third person there works as the city planning assistant director, works for the mayor directly. The mayor has a huge stake in this getting solved. But the city council has a very different idea from the mayor of what this should be and who it should serve and how it should be funded, and all kinds of stuff. The mayor would like credit for settling this and avoiding giving it to the council to decide.

The person there for the mayor is the planning director, and the mayor has said, you be a mediator and help these two, who initially seemed to be at odds, and get an agreement, because I want there to be an agreement. So you'll see some form of mediation in action. I can't guarantee anything about the way the mediation will play out, but we'll talk about that, especially afterwards.

The last two are not a big deal for us this evening, but I'm arguing they are really important skills. If you're in a setting where something goes on for a while and you don't help the people that you're trying to involve in this, understand what's happening as it's happening so that they can learn from, and modify their way of working together, you've failed as a leader.

Organizational learning-- encouraging it is a leadership skill. Similarly, at the individual level, people engaged in some practice should take some time to reflect, even if they're angry at each other, even if they haven't reached agreement. They should try to learn something about how the way they're approaching things is working. People should be encouraged to reflect on their engagement in processes like this, and you, as the leader, need to encourage them to reflect either together or small groups or separately, so they get to be more effective. I would argue that's a leadership skill, helping people improve, modify their personal theory of practice.

So each group has a number on your confidential instructions. So all three people in the group should have the same number. It will work better if you're not in earshot of each other doing exactly the same thing in a different way next to each other. So I want to give you half an hour, 30 minutes.

You are the role you're assigned. Confidential means confidential. You can't show your piece of paper to the other person across from you and say, sure, I believe it. It says it right here. You can't prove something is the truth by pointing to a piece of paper. You can in a game, but you can't do it in real life. When you're done, if you want to share your confidential instructions, I'm fine with that. But that's when you're really done. OK, it's in your hands. So find a comfortable place for your trio to be.

[ROLE PLAY BEGINS]

PARTICIPANT: We're trying to get to a position of whether or not we can come to an agreement on getting a shelter developed. I am Mr. Goldsmith, the Planning Director.

PARTICIPANT: I've been around Westfield for 20 years. I remember the old social service center that's now unused. We are looking at how we could make sure that we agree to reopen this social center service to a shelter.

PARTICIPANT: So you said job counseling, a soup kitchen, what else? And medical care, along with housing or pets for people who would otherwise be in the street. Now, it's already December. It will take six months, we understand, to rehabilitate the center to get it to open, but would like this to be open as soon as possible.

PARTICIPANT: I'm Jane Woods. I'm part of Neighbors Together. I'm really glad that we are here having this meeting. I've been living here in the same house for 18 years, and so I understand the history of the multi-purpose social center. There was a daycare, before that, a teen counseling center. Neither of those stayed in the area.

My concern is that homelessness is a systemic national problem. It's a big problem, but it's not clear that turning buildings into shelters would do anything about the problem itself. It's addressing a symptom, not a cause. So my question is, will the task force consider job creation strategies that will help these people earn an income?

The homeless task force claims to have reviewed all the available sites in our city, but has only taken six months to do so. So I'm just slightly confused as to how you can have such a comprehensive review in such a short period of time.

PARTICIPANT: I think it'd be fantastic to set some grounds for this discussion. Thank you both for your introduction. I think it's going to be really important for us to just recognize that we all have interests in this community.

PARTICIPANT: The Neighborhood Association does not have a problem with opening beds. The problem is with the services to us to make sure that people are not going to stay here for a long time so we address the homelessness issues. Is that right?

PARTICIPANT: We want a limited amount of beds.

PARTICIPANT: A limited amount.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: So before we continue, maybe we can spend some time recapping your timeline.

PARTICIPANT: We were told that it would take until May. And I think if we work together on this, along with the residents on trying to help them get jobs, we want to make sure that a, we do some work together to try and reduce homelessness, providing more jobs.

But b, we also have the capacity next year to make sure no one is homeless.

PARTICIPANT: We're concerned about the long term impacts that this have on the people in the neighborhood, property values. And why can't this energy be poured into creating more affordable housing in the city? Why are we not exploring these options and having a more comprehensive, like official probing into what sites are better, as well as companies by employment creation opportunities and relying on already existing medical facilities, instead of building something new, wasting all of that time.

PARTICIPANT: It's going to be helpful for me to do some mirroring so that we are all on the same page of what was stated so that we can identify where there are key tension points between each other and how we can address some of those points. Thankfully, we're all on the same page that we want to find a solution for homelessness.

A point that Ms. Woods is bringing up is, there hasn't been enough community engagement. Their request also is that can they get some more statistics on what the exact need is?

PARTICIPANT: If we have a capacity of 60 bed--

PARTICIPANT: An addition of 60 people into the neighborhood that just found out about this seems a little bit absurd. We are very concerned about what this will do to our property values, as well.

PARTICIPANT: Can we agree to conduct additional engagements with the community over the next spring?

PARTICIPANT: And we will be providing the support necessary to make sure this consultation happens as soon as possible.

PARTICIPANT: We're just concerned about what this will mean for us, as well. We want to support our homeless neighbors, but also make sure that we're OK.

PARTICIPANT: With the city, we're going to work with this community to try and address the issues of homelessness, and not just host them, but try to get people jobs.

PARTICIPANT: It would be worthwhile discussing whether or not additional services will alleviate the concern about the longterm issue.

We agreed to an engagement process to be conducted until next spring, and we agreed that we can start that discussion of 20 beds with additional services of workforce programming and agreed that this facility can be used and should be used for other services to support homeless.

PARTICIPANT: We also agreed that we would engage very soon.

PARTICIPANT: We'll pick this up next. Thank you.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

PARTICIPANT: All right, great. All right, excellent.

[ROLE PLAY ENDS]

LARRY
SUSSKIND: This is a scattergram of the possible agreements when people follow the rules. The numbers are just a list of the possible agreements. This is Hutter score along the bottom and Wood score this way. The mediator's score isn't plotted here.

You can see that the high score is 157 for Wood. Hutter gets 105. And the high score for Hutter, 165, when Wood gets 120. And then there's a bunch of other possible agreements. So all eight groups got agreement in the limited time available. But the agreements were different.

This scattergram is designed to show that it's possible to create different amounts of value and distribute them differently, all within the same frame of allowable agreements. All of these are legitimate given the minimum that each party had to have. And yet, some pairs were able to generate a high score, and some only were able to get a low score-- all legitimate agreements following the rules.

I'm showing you what the maximum is in your role that you could have gotten while your counterpart got an acceptable amount for them. And so the question is, were you just satisfied with less, or was the way you approached it destined to get you less than what the maximum is you could have gotten? There's no way to really compare it to anybody else unless you have all the score sheets and all of the confidential instructions.

There are a lot of possible agreements in this same context. Almost all of the Goldsmith roles got over 100 points. I overheard one group where both the parties said, yeah, sure, we'll give you 20 points each. And then the person in the Goldsmith role said, well, I do have to tell you, I had a hidden agenda. I was working for the mayor. The mayor insists that this not open until next winter.

Now, this person is passing themselves off as a neutral mediator. But the fact of the matter is, they have an agenda. They also have a personal agenda of wanting one group to do better, do as best as possible, even at the expense of the other group. That's not neutrality. We typically define mediation as neutral or non-partisan assistance to parties in a conflict.

Mediation and facilitation are functions. They're tasks. They're services that can be provided. We happen to have this sort of analytic backdrop where we can see oh, the mediator had a bias. The source of the bias, in this case, was they worked for the mayor. And the mayor said, you're my person at this thing. I don't want this to fail because I don't want to give my city council counterpart the opportunity to take over this issue and run it the way that he wants to run it.

On the other hand, you should help the parties reach agreement. So the mediator had a struggle with their mandate and their personal beliefs and the perceptions of the parties. So, Claudia, you got the high score. I'm curious what your counterparts have to say about your way of working with them, since you've got the highest score, substantially higher, 157. Did she seem to be pushing you around?

She did something to end up with the highest possible score in that role-- same information, same cards dealt, different result.

STUDENT: As a mediator, just, yeah, you need to adjust those numbers on mine.

LARRY What should it be?

SUSSKIND:

STUDENT: 68.

LARRY OK. Now I understand.

SUSSKIND:

STUDENT: Jennifer was great to speak with. I think she had really clear goals and was also really amenable to working with the housing task force. Yeah.

STUDENT: She's very firm advocating for the residents, and she also is very clear about coming to an agreement, like I kind of feel I need to giving some the things I want in order to reach.

LARRY Your score is perfectly fine. It just happens to be less than it could have been because your counterpart got the most possible. And I'm trying to see whether there was anything that she said, did, that made you feel like you should lower your expectations. Or do you feel like your expectations were met, so fine? So she got a higher score-- so what?

STUDENT: I feel like the way she said it helps us to empathize a lot with the residents. I think that's why.

STUDENT: Yeah, I think Jennifer was really clear on the fact that-- it sounded like the neighborhood that you were part of had frustrations in the past and that you didn't want this to recur. And you were, I think, really clear about the impact that had on you and your constituents.

LARRY So you've got the high score at the other end of the-- 150. What's the reaction of your partners to hearing that
SUSSKIND: whatever it was you said or did got you the highest possible score? You didn't get a bad score. It's just the low score.

STUDENT: I think we maximized the winning of the both parties, of the three parties, even.

LARRY I appreciate the point. I mean, in this context, people have a minimum score. If they get the minimum score,
SUSSKIND: they can go back to their group and say, we got what we wanted. But you can create more value than just the minimum for each side depending on how you proceed.

If you presume that your goal is your minimum, then you're not going to look for possible trades that will create more value for both sides. And the other person isn't going to say no, because you're offering something better than what they would otherwise get. And you're getting more for yourself. This is about creating trades for mutual gain.

And the only way to do that is to play the game of what if. And I didn't listen in to your tables. But usually the way you find your way, if you imagine that everybody's starting down here at a bare minimum and you want to go as far to the Northeast, you can presume there's a Pareto curve, which is the list of options that go across the top. So you're starting down here. And you want to move as far as you possibly can to the Northeast.

You don't know how far you can get because you don't have all the scores ahead of time. But you want to move that way. So if I say, well, if you offer me 7, agreement 7 down at the bottom, it's barely acceptable-- 107 for Wood, 105 for Hutter. And then I say back to you, if I'm Wood, how about if we go to 13? You get more.

I do too, but you get more. I'm moving from 7 to 13. And I'm looking for a package where I offer you more by making a change on the list of which option I'm agreeing to under one of the issues that seemed important to you if you will move to a different option on another issue that's most important to me.

The two parties do not value the three issues the same. They have different priorities. If you can't discover that, then you can't offer a "what if." So understanding the other side's interest is the first step in creating value for mutual gain. And so what if? It's a trade. It's a package. And I don't know what to offer until I know what's important to the other side. I won't know that if I don't ask.

And I'm exploring all the possible "what if"s until I get to the putative, but I don't know where it is exactly, Pareto frontier, which is this outer edge from top to bottom of scores. Now, you can be, in economic terms, at the outer edge you're super efficient. You've used up all the value because you've moved out to this frontier, this surface across the top.

But there's a lot of places that you could be that curve goes all across the whole spectrum. It's no more about efficiency. It's about equity. Anything on that curve-- no more value left to split. But I can move along the curve where I do better, you will do worse.

When you're talking about a Pareto efficient curve, you are talking about a zero sum situation. There's a maximum amount of value. And as long as I go to the Northeast and hit that curve, I haven't wasted any possible value. I've explored enough "what if"s, understood enough about our differing interests, that I can move. But where on that curve I end up, that's not about using all the value. That's about who gets what.

In the process of building consensus, in any effort to create value, in any effort to generate new options, packages, for mutual gain, we're both advantaged by the more we move out to that surface. So for people who read books about win-win, it's an illusion because there are constraints on both sides relative to what issues they can agree to or can't. Or there are legal limits or there are time limits.

You can see how you did relative to the extremes. First of all, you got an agreement. So that was good. Now, within the frame of agreement, did you set your goals too low and, thus, accept a deal that was fine, but not the maximum you could have gotten if you had been more aggressive? Did you set your goals too high, hit a wall with the other side, and collapse down to a barely acceptable agreement from both of you because there was no more time to create value?

I'm talking about the context in which these kinds of micro skills come into play. The more confident you are in what you're doing when you're doing these, the more you will feel, yes, I should keep posing more questions to understand their interests better. Because if I don't understand their interests, I'm never going to propose something good for them and great for me, because I can't do the first part because I haven't asked enough questions.

So the more confident you are about the search for value creation, the more you're going to ask questions, not just for the sake of counting how many questions, but for the sake of understanding the other side's interests. And the more confident you are, the more you'll search for unexpected trades, unexpected what-ifs.

The more confident you are about this underlying structure, the more assertive you will be about your interests, the more focused you will be on the other side's interests, the more confident you will be about suggesting packages and options for mutual gain. So it's not just about learning what these micro skills are. It's also about being able to use them with confidence. I want you to take away the sense that there's micro skills you can work on to advance your leadership capacities.

Next time we meet, I want to be able to talk with you and get as many individuals as I can to say, oh, what do you see as your own strengths and weaknesses relative to facilitative leadership? Because what I want to provoke is your plan for what you're going to do. And I want to put that in the context of being here in the department and in the degree program you're in. How are you going to enhance your capabilities?

The answer is going to be personal and different. I'm also expecting some people to say, I'm not so worried about being in a leadership role. I'm content to be part of a team and be working on something I believe in. And the leadership doesn't appeal to me, or I don't see myself that way. If that's how you think, I hope you'll say that. I want to be sure you've asked and answered it in a thoughtful way so that you can use the time you have here appropriately to the extent you want to take facilitative leadership roles. So I'll see everybody next Thursday, and dinner, once again.