

Facilitation 101

Facilitation Foundations for Trainers

What is Facilitation?

Facilitation follows content with **practice and feedback** for the learners to **develop their skills**, resulting in training.



Core Skills for Facilitators



Clarity

Focus on clarity of message. Be brief and direct. Save long opinions or discussions for later.



Engagement

Engaged participants always get more out of a training. Ask for participant opinions and ideas.



Time Management

Be conscious of time in order to respect participants and cover the content of a training.



Flexibility

Remain calm, positive and ready to make changes based on environmental and group dynamics.

Engagement Strategies

Provide Wait Time

Pause to allow participants to think. Silence invites deeper thinking and more engagement.

Practice Eye Contact

Demonstrate that you are invested in participants when you are presenting, and that you are listening to them when they speak.

Talk to the Whole Room

Continually moving your focus, voice and eye contact among all participants will make everyone feel more engaged.

Effective Co-Facilitation



Define Roles

Plan based on skills, needs and preferences



Continuously Check In

Ensure your plan is still on-track



Have a Code Word

Listen for when support is needed



Stay Engaged

Circulate and support participants

Facilitation Challenges & Solutions

Dominant Voices



Redirect Politely

Silent Participants



Invite Gently

Tech Issues



Have a Backup Plan

Recommendations for Wait Time

Count Silently: After asking a question, silently count to five in your head before prompting further.

Maintain Eye Contact: Look around the room expectantly to show you are waiting for answers.

Resist the Urge to Fill Silence: Allow the pause to encourage others to respond, even if it feels a little uncomfortable.

Adjust as Needed: For more complex questions, you might extend the wait time slightly; for simpler ones, three seconds may suffice.

Questions to Facilitate Discussion

Exploratory Questions

- What do you think about ____?
- What bothers/concerns/confuses you about ____?
- What are some ways we might respond to ____?

Open-Ended Questions

- What is your understanding of ____?
- What do you want to know about ____?
- What are some questions you have in relation to ____?

Priority Questions

- What is the most important concept you see?
- Considering the different ideas in the room, what do you see as most critical?
- What do you find yourself resonating with the most?

Summary Questions

- What did we learn?
- What benefits did we gain today?
- What will you be thinking about when you leave?

Answering Questions Effectively

Listen to the entire question

Delay forming a response while the question is being asked to enhance your ability to respond, meet a participant’s needs and project confidence.

Pause, use silence to think and decide

Consider these questions:

- Do I understand the question correctly?
- How much detail does the person need?
- Is someone else here more qualified to answer?

Answer only what is asked

Focus on the participants’ needs. Too much information is confusing. If they want to know more, they will ask for more.

Handling “Loaded” Questions

Before responding, consider:

- Should the answer be deferred until later?
- How might I diffuse the question?

While responding:

- Remain non-defensive. Take a deep breath.
- Answer briefly and directly.

Handling Rhetorical Questions

- Use silence and eye contact to show you are listening.
- Be comfortable with silence- no answer is expected!
- Consider paraphrasing as a tool and bridge back to one of your training objectives.