Facilitation Handout

**Best Practices for Success**

1. **Set the Environment**​

* Set clear goals​

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* Ensure room is set up appropriately ​

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* Icebreakers​

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* Outline expectations and ground rules​

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* Discuss roles and responsibilities

1. **Support group function**​

* Build rapport (facilitator/student and student/student)​

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* Maintain a safe environment​

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* Manage group dynamics​
* Resolve conflict and unprofessional behavior​

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* Support equitable contributions

1. **Effective questioning**​

* Evidence: What evidence is there to support that
* Clarification: Can you explain what that mean
* Explanation: Why do you think that would be the case
* Linking: How does this idea support what we mentioned earlier on
* Hypothetical: What would happen if
* Summary and Synthesis: What are we still uncertain about

1. **Reflection**

* Metacognitive skill​

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* Creates understanding of self and informs future actions​
* Allows for improved performance for both facilitators and student​
* Must provide regular opportunities for reflection

1. **Feedback**

* Should allow for feedback of facilitator AND students​
* On process, communication, learning​

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* Non-judgmental​
* Be constructive and build efficacy​
* Must provide regular, frequent opportunities for feedback

**Common Challenges**

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| **Challenge** | **Possible Causes** | **Facilitation Strategies** |
| Keeping the group on track | \*High Volume/High Impact  \*High Volume/Low Impact  People focused on their own knowledge and expertise | -Ask them to summarize  -Thank them, summarize, and move on to refocus on the agenda or topic  -Restate the objectives of the session  -Promise to give space for related tangents |
| Conflict | Personality clashes Perceived hierarchies Disrespect Generational Issues  Emotionally charged issues | -Get opinions from others  -Note points of disagreements and minimize where possible  -Draw attention to the agenda/topic/new question  -Review ground rules/engage |
| \*Low Volume—quiet or shy participants | Personality  May be lost or confused Cultural differences (familiarity/comfort with collaboration processes; different educational traditions; different approaches to time  management; language barriers | **-**Seek out their opinions  -Sincere and subtle recognition  -Include adapted forms of participation—reflection questions, pair discussions; praise low volume participant when active |
| \*High volume/High Impact participant—talk all the time | Personality Natural leaders  Need to make their point known Well-informed  Over-eager | -Ask them challenging questions to slow them down  -Summarize their statements and use as a way to bring in quieter members  -Ask, “What does everybody else think?” |
| Use of discipline specific language/jargon | Interdisciplinary group Showing off  Unaware language might not be understood | -Ask for a definition or clarification for yourself and the group  -Point out that the group may not be familiar with a particular term  -Create a ground rule for anyone to say “jargon”—model this yourself when it first appears |
| Perceived hierarchies | Interdisciplinary group Cultural differences | -Ask group members for different perspectives  -Acknowledge value of all contributions |

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| Challenge | Possible Causes | Facilitation Strategies |
| Disruptive group member | Bored  Does not see the relevance of discussions  May not understand something | -Repeat or summarize the last opinion offered and ask for theirs  -Ask the group how they are doing with ground rules  (respect?) |
| No one is talking/contributing | Instructions might not have been clear  Lack of Leadership  An entire group of Low Volume/High Impact members | -Stimulate interest by seeking their opinions  -Pair/share—allows participants to get used to talking in a situation where being silent is much more awkward for them (in a pair)—which segues into a  group discussion |
| Wanting your expertise | Genuine interest  Think there is a “right answer” | -Redirect the question to others  -Reaffirm your role as a facilitator, and that there are benefits to peer-based  investigation |