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Becoming an Effective Facilitator: Initial Training and Beyond

Blase Brown, DDS MS

Colin Haley, DDS MEd



Objectives

1. Discuss the role of facilitation in the learning process and characteristics of effective facilitators
2. Identify methods of facilitator development and training
3. Describe ways to promote facilitator calibration

Six-Word Short Story



For sale: Baby shoes, never worn.

Hemingway

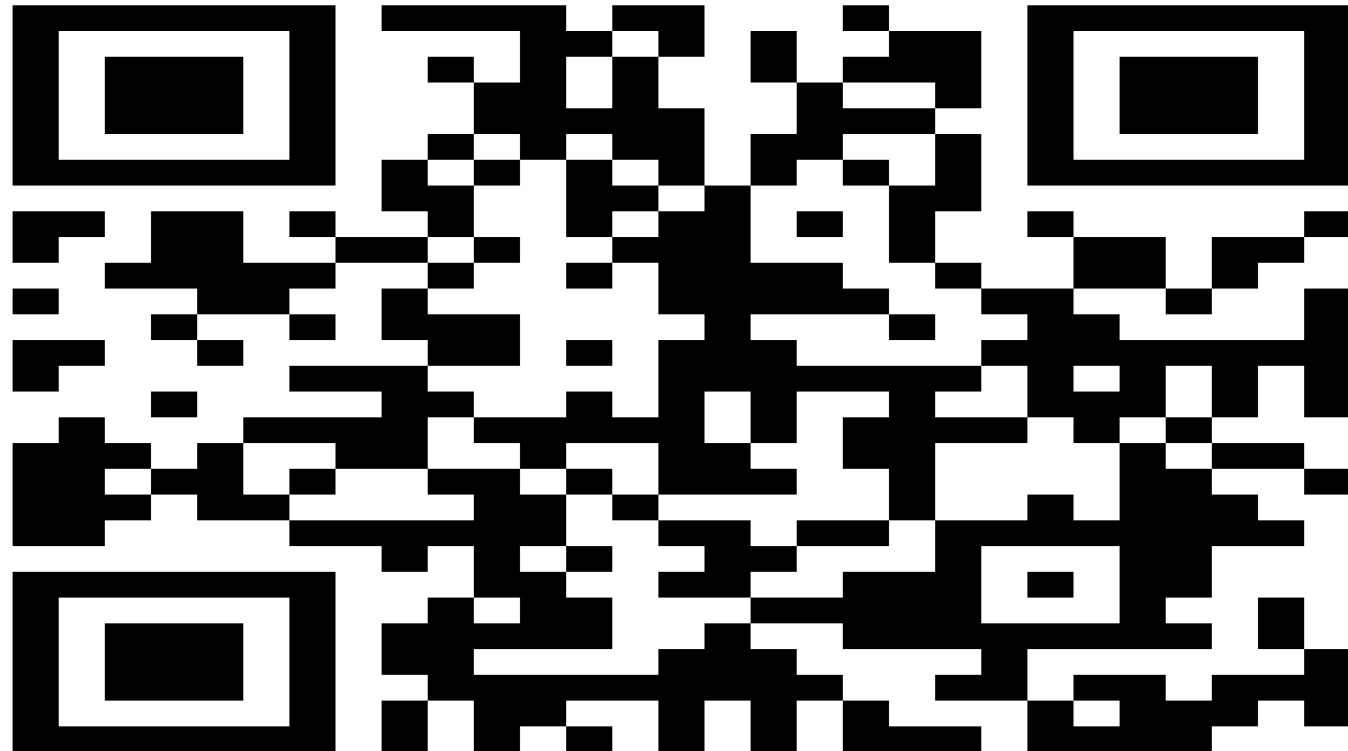


Facilitation: Making learning and thinking visible

Facilitation: What is it?

What are some words that come to mind when you think of facilitation:

<https://padlet.com/chaley11/268p0xsr3boin3pl>





Facilitation Competence



Facilitation

It is the process of helping groups, or individuals, to learn, find solutions, or reach consensus without imposing or dictating an outcome. Facilitation works to **empower individuals or groups to learn for themselves or find their own answers to problems**

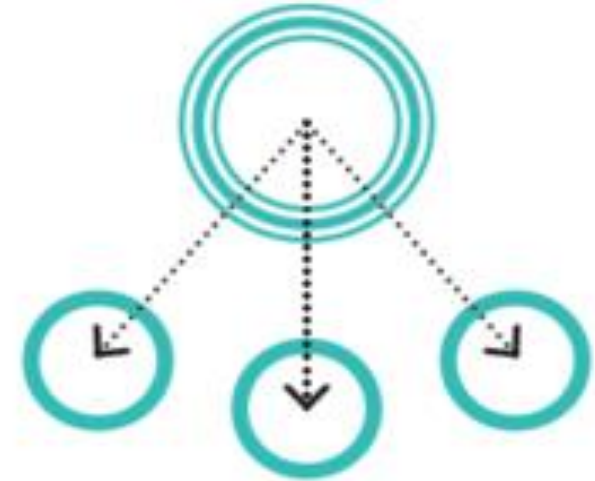


Facilitator

A facilitator is a **process guide** who **focuses** discussions and **clarifies** understanding, while **encouraging** shared decision-making and problem-solving. A facilitator assists the group in creating and achieving common goals and expectations. In general, facilitators do NOT act as content resources.

Instruction

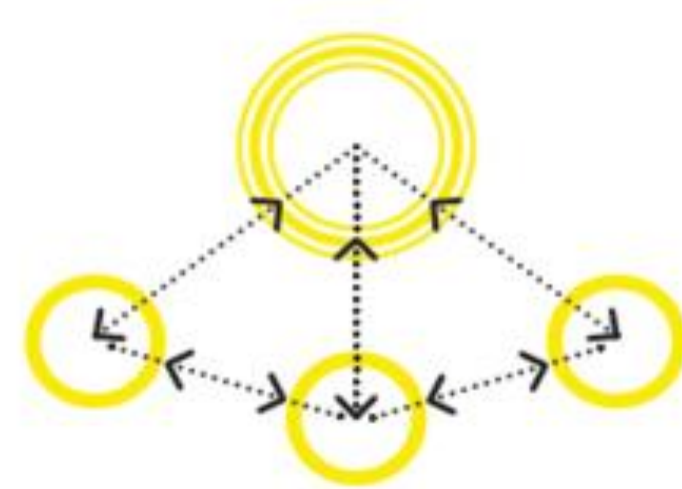
- **Presents information**
- **Provides the right answers**
- **Leads a group in acquiring new skills and knowledge**
- **Starts with instructors knowledge**
- **Presents own perspective**
- **Directs or tells**
- **Maintains a formal relationship with students**



One directional dissemination of knowledge through a teacher

Facilitation

- Guides the process
- Provides the right questions
- Helps the group learn together
- Helps the group discover by themselves
- Encourages express of different views
- Fosters interaction
- Develops relationships based on trust and respect
- Considered an equal



Accompanying and shaping
a learning process together

Facilitation: What are your goals?

Enter your thoughts in the chat!

Goals of Facilitation

- **Help address gaps in student knowledge**
- **Encourage self-directed learning**
- **Allow students to engage with a range of perspectives from their peers**
- **Allow students to test their ideas and attitudes with their peers**
- **Promote a willingness for students to share their ideas**
- **Provide opportunities for students to give and receive feedback**
- **Help students to develop skills in critical thinking and problem solving**
- **Help students to develop communication, teamwork and leadership skills**

What are characteristics of a successful facilitator?

Enter your thoughts in the chat!

Characteristics of Successful Facilitators

- be student-centered.
- empower students to assume responsibility for their own learning.
- allow time for discussions (be patient).
- facilitate and help manage discussions, but do not provide specific content.
- know how to intervene appropriately to keep the discussion on track and to stimulate thinking.
- be an active listener
- know how and when to ask, and how to respond to, questions.
- practice and encourage reflection and self-assessment.
- is authentic, impartial, and enthusiastic

Best Practices for Success

- 1. Set the Environment**
- 2. Support group function**
- 3. Effective questioning**
- 4. Reflection/Feedback**

Set the Environment

- **Set clear goals**
 - **Outline Expectation, Ground Rules**
- **Ensure room is set up appropriately**
- **Icebreakers**
- **Discuss roles and responsibilities**



Support Group Function

- **Build rapport (facilitator/student and student/student)**
- **Maintain a safe environment**
- **Manage group dynamics**
 - **Resolve conflict and unprofessional behavior**
- **Support equitable contributions**

Effective Questioning

- **Evidence**
- **Clarification**
- **Explanation**
- **Linking**
- **Hypothetical**
- **Summary and Synthesis**

Reflection

- **Metacognitive skill**
- **Creates understanding of self and informs future actions**
- **Allows for improved performance for both facilitators and student**
- **Must provide regular opportunities for reflection**
 - **Formal or Informal**

Feedback

- **Should allow for feedback of facilitator AND students**
- **On process, communication, learning**
- **Non-judgmental**
- **Be constructive and build efficacy**
- **Must provide regular, frequent opportunities for feedback**

Common Challenges!

- **Keeping the group on track**
- **Conflict**
- **Low volume – quiet or shy participants**
- **High volume**
- **Disruptive group member**
- **No one is talking/contributing**
- **Wanting your expertise**



Facilitation

High Expectations

PRACTICES OF PBL FACILITATION

1. Problem or content analysis
2. The group process
3. Student learning process
4. Developing students' metacognitive awareness

Connolly & Silen 2010

Student Viewpoints on Facilitator Interventions



Facilitator Inconsistencies

- Role confusion by facilitators
- Facilitator management of sensitive issues
- Facilitation style
 - Dominant student critique
 - Three sub-categories

Student critique on Facilitation style

1. Management of the sessions
2. Facilitating the group process
3. Guiding the group discussion



Conclusions from Literature and Experience

Implications

- Facilitators need to regularly review the processes
 - Facilitation basics
 - Group dynamics
 - Educational theory
- Institutionally—commit to develop from novice to skilled facilitation





Facilitator Development

The training workshop

- Favored strategy
 - Effectiveness
 - Variations
- Training skills at a basic level
 - Effective in a narrow sense
 - May lack flexibility, creativity, or understanding of wider issues
 - Could impinge on use of skills
 - Might be just a “string of orchestrated techniques” (Barber & Norman)
- There is more to the effectiveness of facilitation skills (beyond initial training)

Facilitator Development Challenges

Continued Development
&
Calibration

ADEA Micro-credential in Facilitation

AMERICAN DENTAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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eLearn Micro-credential: Facilitating Small Group Learning

Register

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Introduction

Micro-credential Overview

Overview and Rubrics (PDF)

Submit

Calibration Much Ado About Something

Calibrate to achieve standardization

- Consistent application of
 - Skills
 - Philosophies
 - Techniques
- Consistent student experience
- What does this mean for facilitation?



Models & Concepts for Calibration

Reflection: A Starting Point

Reflection as a facilitation skill requires the design of a process that is

- Experiential
- Consider (1) what happened
- Connects the “what happened” to something internal
 - (2) What does it mean to me
 - (3) How does this inform moving forward.



Reflective technique to use in training or development

1. Provide reflection questions or video of a group
2. Participants depart for a time of journaling reflective thoughts
3. Reconvene in reflective groups to share notes and entries.



Reflective Discussion

What happens in this process?

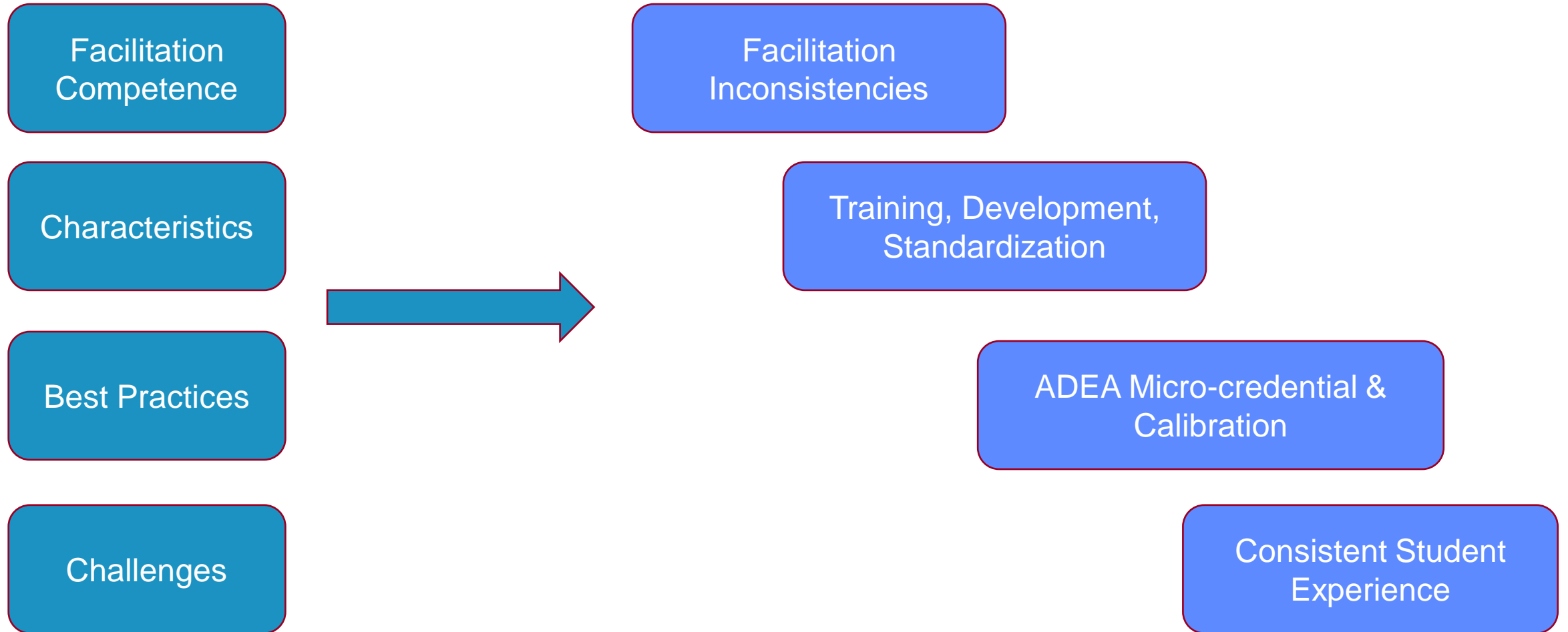
- **Connect a facilitator's experience with**
 - Personal thoughts
 - Feelings
 - Frame of reference
 - TIU—"Theories-in use"

Professional Learning Community Model

Facilitator Calibration

- Reflective group supports reflective individuals
- Peer review

Review & Summarization





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