

Play “Host”

As a facilitator, you are the “host” of the event. The participants are “guests.” If you imagine yourself in the role of host, you will very naturally become an excellent facilitator for the training event. Remember what it feels like to be a student not familiar with the facilitator, the physical setting, or the material and content.

Be concerned with the welfare of your participants

This includes everything from physical comforts to the participant’s learning and development needs.

- ❖ Be sensitive to the temperature of the room. Do your best to eliminate the distraction of excessive heat or cold. Remember that you may be the hottest person in the room, because you will be working the hardest. You may need to sacrifice your own comfort in order to enhance the learning environment for your participants.
- ❖ Make refreshments available when possible and appropriate.
- ❖ Arrange the room so that everyone has an unobstructed view of the visual aids.
- ❖ Place the video screen or monitor at an angle that is visible to everyone in the room.
- ❖ Provide a clean and tidy environment.
- ❖ Make participants feel comfortable through friendliness and introductions to other participants when required.
- ❖ Be ready to read the readiness level of each participant.
- ❖ Be open to the learning and development needs of the group, and those of individuals. Adjust where possible.



As a “Host/Facilitator”

- ❖ Be prepared. This includes room set-up and being sure that audio and visual aids are in place and working. All materials should be in place. Advanced preparation sends a number of important messages:
 - That you “know your stuff.”
 - That you care about the participants.
 - That you actually thought about them and this class before showing up.

- ❖ Be available before class to greet people and help them settle into a comfortable learning environment.
 - This means your preparations should be complete at least 15 minutes before class begins so that you can spend those few minutes focusing on your participants needs.
 - Those few minutes before class begins are an ideal time to learn about the learning needs of each individual.



Keys to Effective Facilitation

Project your Enthusiasm

- ❖ Show excitement
- ❖ Be fun
- ❖ Have fun

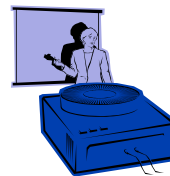
You will be setting the tone of the learning session. Enthusiasm is contagious. Fun is a vital key to an effective learning environment.

Read the Participant's Needs

By paying attention to the faces and body language, you can tell if a break is needed, if content is understood, if questions need to be answered, if the room is comfortable. Learn to read the group at all times.

Speak TO the Group

- ❖ Avoid reading long sections
- ❖ Maintain eye contact
- ❖ Don't turn your back on the group while speaking (such as when writing on the flip chart)
- ❖ Prepare major flip charts in advance



Notes

Set an Appropriate Pace

Going too fast or too slow eliminates learning. By “reading” the group, you’ll be able to judge what pace is best for all participants. It’s easy to lose track of time. Remember to schedule breaks or call them when you can read that the group needs one.

Maintain or Enhance Self-Esteem

A positive learning environment is most effective. If learners feel their questions and contributions are of value, they will be more participative and learn more. Remember to elicit questions and comments often, especially as you segue to another topic.

Listen!

Listen and work to understand your participant’s. This is an often-overlooked facilitation skill. By listening, you will learn which participants are learning what, what strengths they possess, what their learning needs are, as well as other valuable information that will enhance the learning process.



Involve Participants

Facilitators don’t have to do all the talking! You, and others in the room will learn by the contributions of participants.

Check for Understanding of Learning Processes

Once you’ve presented instructions for an activity, check to see that participants clearly understand by asking open-ended questions such as:

- ❖ “What questions do you have about the exercise?”
- ❖ “What can I clarify about the activity?”

Learners will feel more comfortable with the process if they are given plenty of opportunity to have their questions and uncertainties dealt with.

Notes

Use Nonverbal Communication

- ❖ Be “a part of your class” by positioning yourself “among” the participants. This means avoid standing behind a lectern; get as close to your learners as possible without invading their personal space, or positioning yourself where some cannot easily make eye contact with you.
- ❖ Use eye contact.
- ❖ Dress appropriately. To be safe, plan to dress at least slightly better than any participant.
- ❖ Use your hands and gestures for animation (be enthusiastic).
- ❖ Use inflection, and much more so than you would conversationally. This is a part of projecting yourself to the audience.

Use Learning Tools

Be sure to consider some of these useful tools:

- ❖ Flip Charts
- ❖ Overheads
- ❖ Video
- ❖ PowerPoint presentations
- ❖ Models
- ❖ Stories
- ❖ Analogies
- ❖ Personal Examples
- ❖ Wall Charts
- ❖ Pictures
- ❖ Hands-on Experience
- ❖ Role Plays
- ❖ Exercises and “Skill Practice”
- ❖ Energizing Activities

