



# The Art of Skilled Facilitation

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We are delighted that you have chosen to participate in the Adult Facilitation Program.

We have been given the opportunity to study Kolb's work.

We invite you to examine the essence of Kolb's work during our learning journey. Our hope is that this will be a springboard to assist you to develop, refine and perfect the art and skill of facilitation.

The wisdom is in our group and we look forward to the conversations and experiences we will share together.

Sandra, Fiona and Peter (CEWA)

We acknowledge and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First people, the custodians of this land.

# ADULT LEARNING THEORY

**ANDRAGOGY** is the science and art of learning in adults. It is a revolutionary theory created to explain how learning in adults differed from learning in children. According to andragogical theory,

- adults are motivated to learn,
- are self-directed in their learning,
- are responsible for what they learn.

Adults use prior experiences as a template for new learning.

These characteristics of adult learning have important applications for designing workshops for adult learning. Some implications include:

- involving learners in both planning and assessment of instruction
- designing activities that are experientially based, drawing on the prior learning of participants
- designing activities that encourage participants to be active rather than passive
- being collaborative
- ensuring that what is designed is relevant to the learning needs of participants
- being discovery-oriented
- being problems-oriented rather than content-oriented.

**HEUTAGOGY** is the study of self-determined learning. The concept of truly-self determined learning builds on humanistic theory and approaches to learning described in the 1950s. A heutagogical approach to learning promotes:

- the teacher providing some resources but the learner decides the path by negotiating the learning (as opposed to the andragogical theory where new learning is a result of adults using their own and others' experiences),
- learners encouraged to become deeply reflective while developing their capabilities
- motivation to learn stems from self efficacy
- expectations of rewards affect motivation

# ADULT LEARNING THEORY

**CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULTS AS LEARNERS (CAL) MODEL OF ADULT LEARNING** says that adult learners are characterised by four basic tenets:

- participation is motivated by both positive and negative factors;
- participation is correlated to anticipated learning outcomes
- a sense of security precedes the need for achievement

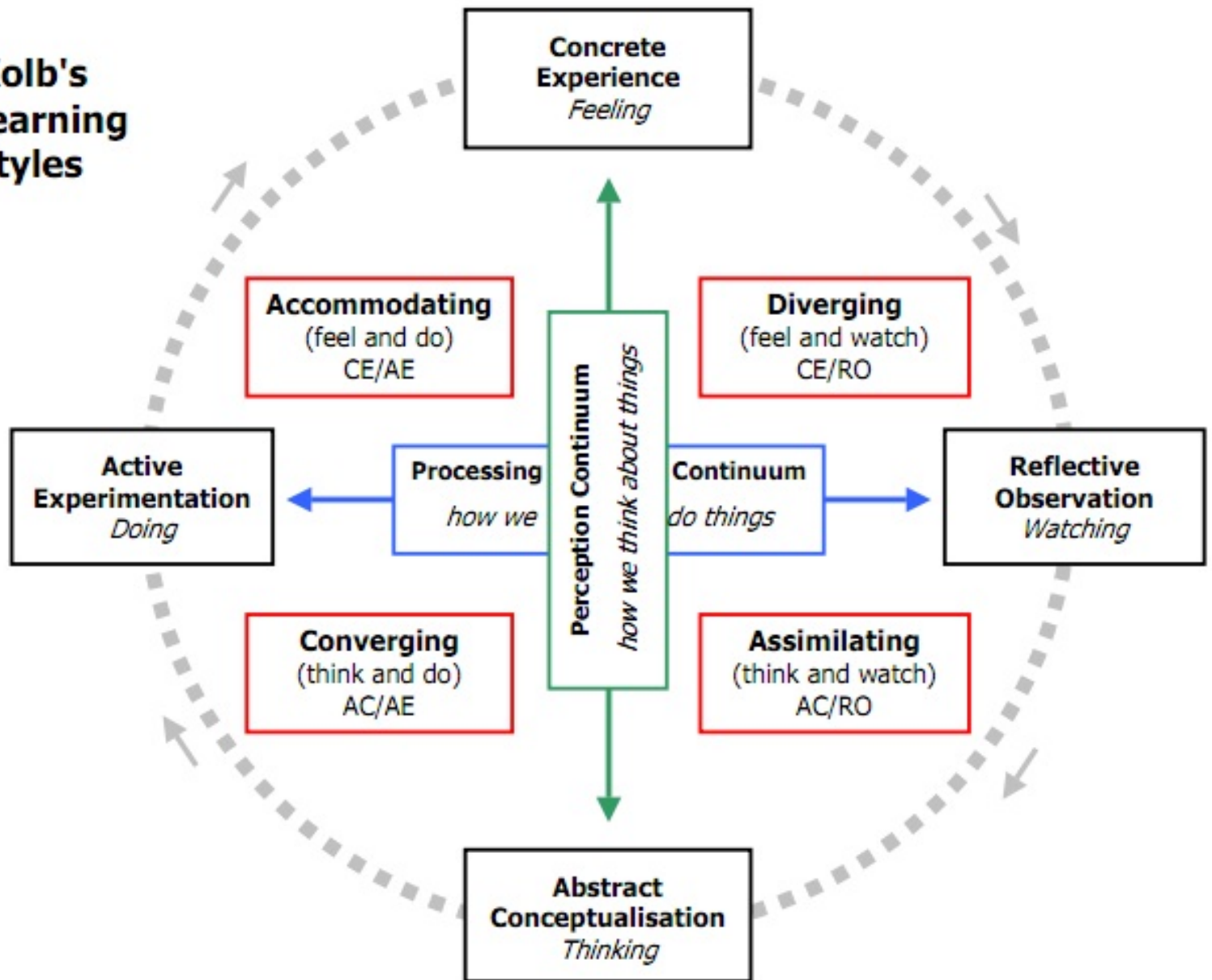
Consequently, adult learning tasks need to be experientially based, be age appropriate, provide choices in the organisation of learning programs, and be centred around adults' experience, knowledge and judgement.

**LEARNING STYLE THEORY** posits that learners can be characterised by how information is preferentially perceived (sensory or intuitive), organised (inductive or deductive), and processed (active or reflective), by what modality is preferred (visual, verbal, or tactile), and by whether progression toward understanding follows a logical, sequential progression of small steps or a global, more holistic, progression.

Three of the most commonly used learning style inventories are the Gregoric Style Delineator, the **KOLB LEARNING STYLE INVENTORY**, Myer-Briggs and the David Keirseley Temperament Sorter.

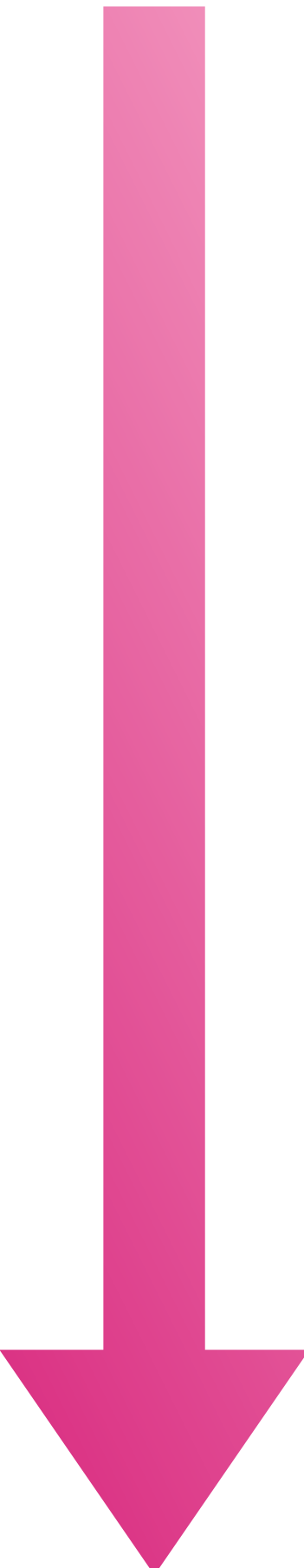
# KOLB'S LEARNING STYLES

Kolb's learning styles



© concept david kolb, adaptation and design alan chapman 2005-06, based on [Kolb's learning styles](#), 1984

# KEY STEPS IN PLANNING A FACILITATION



Assess the needs of the learners

Set Goals and Objectives that reflect the focus of the session, based on the needs assessed.

Design the session to fulfil the goals and objectives and to respect the needs of the learners.

Design the session to fulfil the goals and objectives and to respect the needs of the learners.

Facilitate the session.

Evaluate the extent to which the goals and objectives have been satisfactorily completed.

*(and following the Facilitation...)*  
Plan for implementation.

**FACILITATION** involves being attentive to:

- the CONTENT, whether offered to or elicited from the learner
- the METHODS (activities and technologies) by which this content is offered
- the PROCESS (that is, the dynamic that is happening within and among learners as well as the INNER DYNAMICS of oneself as the facilitator)

The focus of facilitation is always the learners.

The facilitator is not the main event.



Facilitation is a complex way of living  
and a profoundly spiritual activity.

To facilitate process, one needs to be  
self-aware (not self-absorbed),  
self-accepting and other-focused.

Learning to facilitate is like learning to  
mosaic;  
both are skills based on theory,  
both require practice,  
both involve art and skill.

Both seem natural; even effortless,  
when done with skill.



# ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF THE LEARNERS

Assessment of a group's needs takes place in a variety of ways:

- Formally through questions, interview, surveys, brochure.
- Informally through casual conversation, questions.
- Intuitively through a 'sense' of what is being asked for (pointed to) during the formal or informal information gathering.
- Directly through interacting with the Learners.
- Indirectly through the person requesting your skill, or through a Planning Group working with you on behalf of the Learner.
- Prior to the Facilitation Event through registration responses, formal survey responses and all information gathering means.
- During the Facilitation through activities designed to elicit hopes and expectations.
- By periodically asking the group, by group response to activities planned.
- Feedback at a later time.

If a group does not know precisely what it needs when someone approaches you to organise a PLE, your task is to help them identify specifically what they need.

Exploring the hopes and desires of the organisation, as well as the expectations of what will result from a PLE can assist in focusing what the need(s) might be. If needs are numerous and your time with the group is limited, you will together need to focus what is most helpful and needed in the amount of time you have.

It can be more helpful to ask a question like, "What do you hope to have as a result of this session?".



# NEEDS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

When meeting a new group, questions need to determine the morale and readiness of the group:

What's the history of the group?

How familiar are members with each other?

Are there clear goals?

Are there team norms or rules?

Does everyone participate or do a few dominate?

To what extent are members honest and open?

Do members listen to and support each other's ideas?

How does the group handle any conflicts?

How are important decisions made?

Do people leave meetings feeling like something has been achieved?

How would you describe the group atmosphere?

Are meetings thoroughly planned and structured or are they basically freewheeling?

Does the group ever stop to evaluate how it's doing and make corrections?

What's the best thing about the group? What's the worst?

How do people feel about being part of this group?

Describe a recent incident that illustrates how members typically interact.

Are there any reasons why members might not be open and say what they really think?

Why do you need (external) facilitation support? Is there any opposition to this?

What's the worst thing that could happen at this meeting? What could be done to ensure that this doesn't happen?

# SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Assessing what the group needs leads naturally to identifying the focus and purpose of the facilitation or workshop. As much as possible, these goals and objectives need to be formulated in close consultation with the hiring group. When this is not possible, the facilitator can articulate the goals and objectives for the workshop then submit them to the group for response, modification, change. Once they are finalised, the goals and objectives should be published so that all attending the facilitation/workshop are aware of them. When that group gathers, the goals and objectives should be posted in a prominent place and referred to as the session begins.

## **Goals:**

- help maintain clarity by naming the large outcome desired
- are focused on outcomes, results
- should be measurable

## **Objectives:**

- refocus the topic
- are action-oriented and use active verbs
- are concise and clear
- state an end result to be accomplished in a key area within a given period.
- are measurable
- are practical ways of achieving the goal

## **Goals and Objectives:**

- are stated in terms of the learners (not what YOU want to accomplish as the facilitator)
- are sequenced in an orderly way
- are short statements of intent (rather than long, complex ideas)
- are sent in advance of the workshop if possible and posted at the time of the workshop
- are visible to the group during the gathering
- are used at the conclusion of the event as the basis for evaluating the session

# DESIGN

In art, good design is characterised by elements of unity, harmony, cohesion, repetition, surprise and interest. An appealing painting has a centre of interest (focal point) that draws the viewer into and through the picture. The story is 'read' through the use of colour, shape, line. Similar elements apply to music. A well designed facilitation has all these same elements.

Think of a workshop as comprised of a series of activities, each having the same basic shape and differing only in purpose of the activity and in its length. Each activity in the design grows from the goals and objectives of the workshop.

## Preparation

The purpose of the activity  
The content of the activity  
The lead into the activity

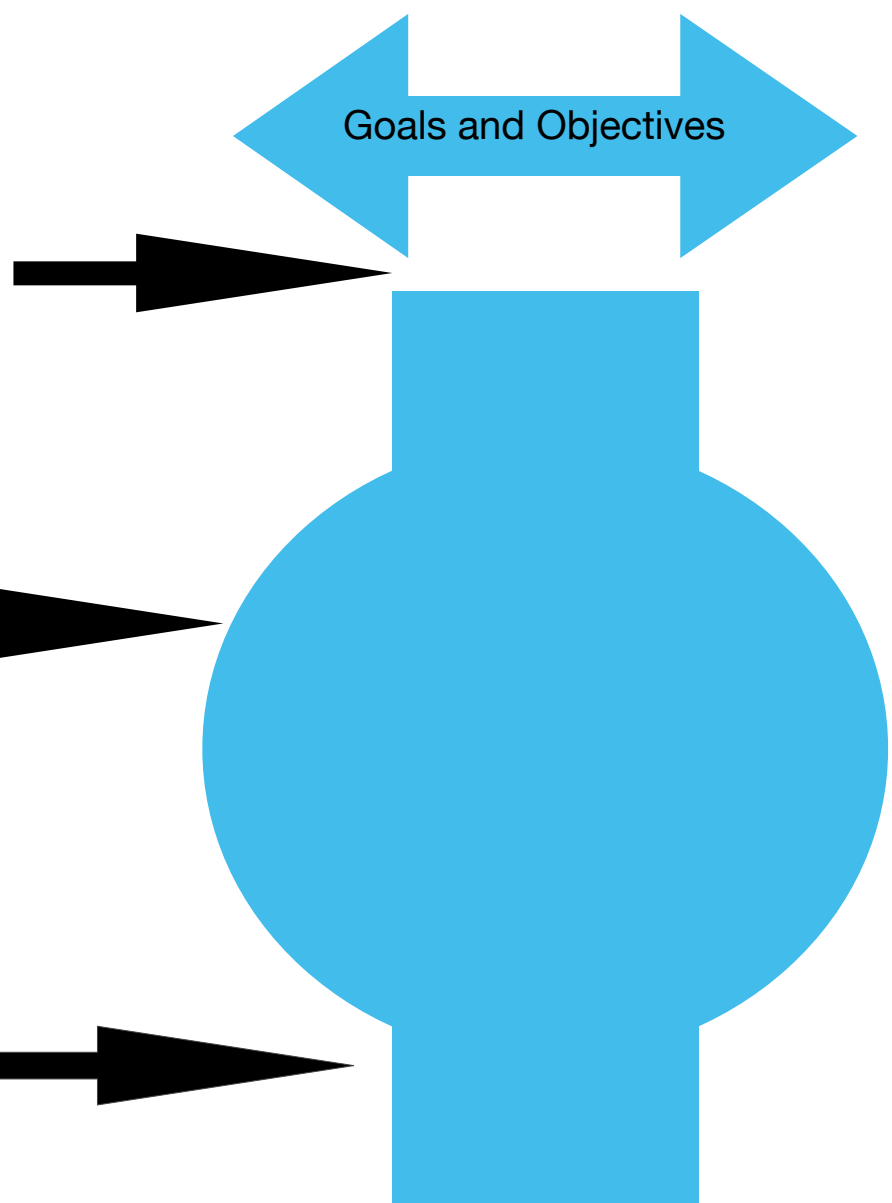
## Body

The place of content.  
A variety of ways to proceed include:

- creativity, play, humour
- reflection, silence
- exploration, discussion

## Conclusion

Making connections of the activity  
Beginning the integration for learning  
Concluding the activity



# DESIGNING THE ACTIVITY

The well designed facilitation whether an hour, a day, or a week's duration, consists of a **SERIES OF INTERCONNECTED ACTIVITIES**, that flow smoothly, each with its specific purpose, sequenced in a particular manner to meet the goal(s) and objectives named. The length and importance of each segment (activity) changes. The shape and structure does not.

Each facilitation design is composed of various activities linked together so that the learner experiences it as a fluid whole. A design could look something like this...

## **A Welcome (greeting at the door, ritual, introductions)**

**An Overview** (a specialised activity) posted Goals and Objectives, posted Agenda- setting a Context for what is about to happen (review the background and/or history) offering a forecast of the content and rhythm of the workshop (giving information).

**A Transfer In** (a specialised activity)- to assist participants to become a group- possible to gather expectations.

**Activities** are of varying lengths and have different purposes related to the overall goal: to open or focus topic; to assist learner identify related experiences; to provide new information; to explore meaning and implications; to gather information together; to apply insights; to conclude exploration.

**Conclusions** give participants a sense of closure and can be done through: ritual; word or chart summary; forecast of next steps; reflection of what has been learned; evaluation of goals and objectives for session; thank you and farewells.



# THE OVERVIEW

The Overview is usually very short in duration and focused in content. It reviews for the group why they have come together, the focus of the work, and how the goals and objectives grew from the planning and will be fulfilled throughout the time that the group is gathered. It helps to prepare the group to begin the task for which it has come together.

The OVERVIEW can satisfy a variety of needs within a group:

- those who need the large picture see where things are going to move
- those who suspect that 'process' means without form or outcome can see the form and where and when conclusions will take place
- those who like to be creative and unstructured see that there is a limited time for this and that outcomes are important within the design
- those who want to immediately 'get down to serious business' can be encouraged to be patient with the needed time of exploration before proceeding to conclusions
- those who sense hidden agendas will see the agenda plainly and come to trust that 'what you see is what you get'
- those who wish to propose a new agenda will proceed with caution and reflection, knowing that the present agenda has grown from the needs of the group
- all can be assured that there is focus, direction and purpose to what will follow

Each one has preferred ways of learning... visual, auditory, kinaesthetic or some combination of these. Using visual forms of presenting the overview to supplement the spoken word is helpful for many people. Such forms can use words or diagrams.

For example, a meeting of 3 days might give an indication of the various 'energies'

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
Identifying and exploring the issue	Identifying possible responses	Choosing response/s and/or Decisions
Exploring the issue	Considering implications	Planning for Implementation

When the overview is completed often two to ten minutes in duration, it is appropriate and often helpful to ask the group if there are any comments or clarifications. This offers the opportunity to voice concerns or to ask for information before proceeding. It allows clarifications that can assist the group to begin the work of the session, and it affirms that at this meeting, each voice is respected. Sometimes it is appropriate for members of the planning committee, rather than the facilitator to give some parts of the overview. When you are unknown to the group and the issue is sensitive, there is value in having committee members upfront and visible at the beginning. It can be a way of saying that the hiring group knows what is happening and why.

The NEEDS ASSESSMENT will suggest how best to proceed with the overview. Sometimes time lines, display boards (displaying various communications sent to the group in preparation for this meeting) and story telling are important ways of doing the overview, especially when there is tension or angst about the topic being considered.

The GOALS AND OBJECTIVES are integral to the overview. A group often does not recall how they arose in the first place.

The AGENDA (posted or written out as a handout for participants) shows how time will be used for the duration of the workshop. The agenda focuses on the CONTENT rather than the way the content will be presented.

Posting the agenda serves several purposes: it assures participants that there is a plan for the session, it can heighten anticipation, it can raise curiosity and entice the learner, etc.

# THE TRANSFER IN

The transfer in serves to **gather, focus and bridge** the personal space of participants to the group space where the group work will take place.

Its entire purpose is to **create one body of energy** and therefore, imparting or eliciting content is **not essential** to it.

Everything is effective for a transfer in, provided it is appropriate for the group gathered and fulfils the purpose of preparing the group to begin or continue the task before it.

Transfer In can include:

- prayer and ritual
- songs, music, sound, rhythms
- movement, dance, charades
- creative visualisation, guided imaging
- reflective questions and space to journal, draw, move
- problem-solving, puzzles
- story



# CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions, as the name implies, bring all the parts of the design to completion.

A number of bits and pieces can contribute to a satisfying ending. Some of these may include:

- a review of the session
- a short reflection on what has happened within participants and within the group ('learnings' ... based on Malcolm Knowles: to learn is to change)
- time for personal implementation plans
- a prayer or ritual
- a verbal or written evaluation of the Goals and Objectives
- forecasting the next steps to be taken in a plan
- thank you and good nights
- directions to refreshments or a social

Sometimes returning to a theme used at the beginning or throughout the session can help bring the group 'full circle' and prepare them to integrate further and to move back to ordinary life.

Designing for the conclusions are important and time must be budgeted in the overall design so that this important activity does not get relegated to last minute scrambling.

# ESTABLISHING GROUP NORMS

Facilitating the group in establishing behaviours helpful to the group's process is simple enough to do, takes little time, contributes to the sense of participants being in charge of their own learning environment and offers enormous potential for guidelines in times of stress and tension within the group.

Setting norms together is useful when a group:

- is going to be spending considerable time together, whether all at one time or over a period of time
- knows one another well, perhaps too well
- brings some challenging history to the situation and familiar ways need to be challenged

Setting norms usually happens early in the meeting and before the group has begun to build its own culture and story. Two simple questions can elicit the information that forms the basis of creating group norms:

1. What helps me say what I need to say in this group?
2. What can sometimes make it difficult for me to say what I need and want to say?

A simple process for establishing group norms includes these steps:

1. Each person reflects briefly and responds in writing to questions posed by the facilitator.
  - responses should be close to the surface of one's consciousness, requiring little thought
  - encourage as many ideas or wishes
  - take a moment to sort through responses and choose 2 or 3 key ones for sharing
2. Form groups of 3 or 4. Each, in turn, shares what s/he chooses from above.
  - consider together what has been shared
  - choose 2 or 3 norms group hopes all will practice
  - print each norm on a strip of paper
  - bring to large group, prepared to comment on each one
3. In a large group, hear, post, cluster, discuss what is being said.
4. Decide on the method for formalising NORMS for whole group and plan to do it.

# THE PROJECT- PRACTICAL APPLICATION

PROJECT- (1hour) + Feedback (30 minutes)

- Give your project topic a TITLE (example: Peak Oil Theory: Challenge or Opportunity?)
- POST your agenda, goal(s) and objectives (use chart paper or be creative in the way to make this information known to participants).
- PLAN for:
  - good timing (neither 'draggy' nor rushed)
  - natural sequencing of activities
  - variety of activities for each learning style
  - smooth transitions from one activity to another

*(A good guideline in planning a one-hour workshop is to have one core piece of content. Use supporting information to build on it: given formally as a short lecture; as an additional item to support what a participant has offered; as posters or quotes posted on the wall, as a handout during or following the workshop).*
- PROVIDE well-crafted questions and clear, concise instructions. These may be oral or written, or both, depending on the complexity of the content.
- Use this opportunity to PRACTISE the skills you are learning AND, if you wish, to try out something new or risky for you. Have fun!

# DESIGN FORMAT FOR PROJECT

Time	Purpose of activity	What will happen	Facilitator's instructions	Groupings	Materials Needed

# CONTENT

CONTENT is the substantive information that is the basis for a particular meeting. Two major sources for this information include:

- The life experiences and knowledge each one present brings to the topic of consideration. This is known as the EXPERIENTIAL MODEL OF LEARNING.
- The knowledge and expertise of those who have studied and considered a specific area. This is sometimes referred to as the EXPERT MODEL OF EDUCATION.

Both models are important and have a place in facilitation. The skill is knowing when to emphasise one over the other and in how to bring the two together so that learning occurs for the participants. Both can be misused, overused, poorly used. Used effectively, they can bring about significant learning with the potential for transformational learning.

Most adults have grown up in a traditional system that values the expert model and they tend to be more comfortable with it.

However, isolated from experience, it is not the most effective way of learning. On the other hand, when the experiences of a group are the only reference points for learning, the breadth of new possibilities and applications can be lost.

## **THE EXPERIENTIAL MODEL OF LEARNING**

Use the experiential model when the learner has life experience directly or indirectly related to the topic of consideration. Activities and questions are designed to elicit the information already inside the learner, to assist the learner to articulate it and then to organise it into a form meaningful and applicable to the new situation. David Kolb's theory of Experiential Learning applies here.

## **THE EXPERT MODEL OF EDUCATION**

Use the expert model when the learner is in very new terrain and needs basic knowledge of the subject under consideration. Even when an expert model is used, the learner should be encouraged to make personal connections and applications to what (s)he already knows.

CONTENT and DESIGN work closely together.

Context:

- The needs assessment has been completed.
- The goal(s) and objectives have been articulated.
- You know the amount of time you have.
- You know the approximate number of participants.

Work out your design giving attention to the following:

1. Identify the CONTENT that is essential for the session.
  - Name the KEY CONTENT in simple statements.
  - Name the supporting ideas that further explain the key idea.
  - Avoid overloading the learner with too much content.

2. Decide the primary source of the content (experiential or expert).

**Expert:** Determine ways to impart expert content (rather than lecture)

- progressively developed charts
- quotes read by participants
- visual focal points for expanding
- objects chosen and reflected on by participants' handouts

**Experiential:** Find ways to elicit the information that learners bring to the situation (experiential content) using such things as imaging, reflective questions small group discussion, large group discussion, etc.

- relate this experience with the new information
- design for implication, application and implementation of new learning

3. Formulate clear and concise instructions for each activity. Giving too much information confuses participants. Break instructions down into short parts and give only a few at a time... or write them out so participants can review them as they are ready.

4. Sequence parts so as to create a cohesive, unified and interconnected design in which each activity leads into and flows out of every other one.

5. Balance time and group size so that the most important content receives the largest amount of time and attention.

Note: this is a description of a rational, logical process of identifying content. One can approach it intuitively also!

# CONTENT

## **Project Content (*A rational, analytical approach*)**

1. From the body of content with which you are working, choose one key idea that you want to convey.
2. State it clearly and simply in your own words.
3. Find a few supporting ideas and state them clearly and simply.
4. Brainstorm ways that this content can be conveyed without directly lecturing.
5. List four or five of your preferred ideas.
6. Identify ways that content can be drawn from participants and list your best ideas.
7. Decide what activities would assist you and how best to proceed with your facilitation design.



Reflect on the information you know and consider:

- What is most important to stress as you facilitate the content?
- Why is it so central?
- How do you hope the learner will be engaged (affected) by this information?
- What size is a 'tasty bite' for someone fairly new to this body of information?
- How can the learner chew on this information and take the nourishment from it?
- What other morsels can support this first bite?
- How can you 'set the table' so that the information is attractive and appealing to the learner?
- How can you present this information so that the learner appreciates the 'flavours' it contains?
- What are the ways that you help the learner savour the tastes of this information?
- Map out how you will proceed with the body of information you are presenting.



# CLIMATE (ENVIRONMENT)

Malcolm Knowles, an educational theorist and pioneer in adult learning theory, says, “to learn is to change”. A primary service of one who facilitates adult learning is to ensure a climate that can best bring about the conditions for change within the learner. By being very conscious of certain aspects that bring about an environment conducive to learning, the facilitator can ensure the most desired conditions to maximise learning.

Adults respond favourably to three particular conditions:

1. Psychological safety.
2. Recognising the meaning and relevance of the particular experience as having meaning and application for one’s life.
3. Being actively involved in and working with the ideas and the experience being considered.

All these must be designed for. Being aware of the importance of CLIMATE can help.

*CLIMATE is a complex network of messages primarily directed to feelings and emotions. They are usually nonverbal and are communicated through the physical setting, the manner in which the setting is organised and through the interpersonal relationships.*

*Climate is experienced by all involved.*

Give consideration to the physical space including:

- placing chairs and tables as needed, ensuring sufficient, but not excessive seating
- ensuring extra pencils and paper are available
- ensuring handouts are ready and organised
- posting charts that include the agenda, goals and objectives

Other ways to create a positive climate include:

- Gathering assumptions, expectations, hopes, and fears of participants at the beginning of the time together and establish norms (ground rules).
- Checking in periodically with the group by asking them how the workshop is going for them.
- Setting up a variety of activities to engage various learning preferences.

# EVALUATING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There is a difference in the purpose of reflection and evaluation.

*Reflection happens inside the learner and is primarily for the sake of the learner.*

*Evaluation happens outside the learner and is for the sake of the facilitator.*

## EVALUATION EXAMPLES

What was especially helpful to you?



Why?



What was not particularly helpful to you?



Why not?



Comments:

# DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS

## **Questions about the activity:**

- How did it work?
- How did the speaker respond when I listened well? When I listened poorly?
- When did I listen poorly? What did I do?
- What happened when you used a reflecting response?
- What approach did you use? How did it work?
- What happened as you and your partner completed this activity?
- What happened as you worked with the group in responding?
- What happened in the negotiation?
- What happened in your group?
- What happened in your role play?
- How did the deadline affect the quality of your work?
- What happened in your team as a result of those deadlines? How did you approach each assignment?
- What information did you consistently want? Why?
- Where did you disagree with the team? Why?
- How easy or hard was it compared to the last exercise? Why?
- What was different between that role play and the last one?
- How would that have been different if you were actually responding to your own manager?

## **Questions about feelings and reactions:**

- How do you feel about that activity?
- Did that role play feel any different when you switched roles?
- How confident are you about the work you did?
- How did you feel about that process?
- How did you feel about the deadlines for your team activity?
- How did you feel when responding to objections?
- How do you feel about the number of options available?
- How do you feel about your potential for success?
- What was your reaction as we negotiated? Did you get more or less comfortable?
- Which questions do you like best? Why?

## **Questions about learning:**

- What did you learn from the feedback from your partner?
- What did you learn?
- What do you still need to learn?
- What insights did you have in that activity?
- Which personal objectives have been addressed?

## **Questions about application:**

- How can understanding this process help you on the job?
- How can you use this on the job?
- How does this relate to a project in your job/area?
- What phrases did you learn that you can use on the job?
- What will you do with this knowledge?
- Which questions will get you the most useful information?
- Which questions would you be uncomfortable asking? Why?
- Why is this important in your job?

# STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Every group goes through various stages in its life together. Most theorists name four stages and, although giving these stages different names, the description for each is very similar.

**John James and Bruce Tuckman** suggest that Personal Relationships move from dependency through conflict, cohesion to interdependence as a group attends to its task functions of orienting, organising decisions, data flow and problem-solving. Such groups move through various stages of:

1. FORMING- when rules and roles are put in place.
2. STORMING- when testing limits and testing control are issues
3. NORMING- when the group experiences a 'honeymoon' stage after negotiating rules and roles
4. PERFORMING- the place in which trust exists within the group and risk-taking is acceptable.

**Charles Keating** names the Stages of Group Development slightly differently. He describes the stages as:

1. POLITE- in the process of getting acquainted and finding that general interests are shared, people usually avoid disclosure and controversy.
2. WHY ARE WE HERE?- The purpose and goal of the group is defined, more risks are taken and the goals are discussed, clarified and adapted.
3. BID FOR POWER- Efforts to influence the thinking of the group, competition, need for individuals to feel that they have some control over what they do (and how) are evident at this stage. Conflict is controlled somewhat here.
4. CONSTRUCTIVE- Group identity begins to emerge as feedback is given, differences are accepted, creative suggestions are welcomed, and individual and group needs are met.
5. ESPRIT- High group morale, high trust, productivity and quality result in personal satisfaction of members.

**Patricia Walsh, OP**, describes five stages in building team as:

1. SEARCHING- with its attendant confusion, anxiety, dependency.
2. DEFINING- the task to be performed is defined. Some clashes may arise
3. IDENTIFYING- individuals learn the need to balance task with group process as the most effective way to be productive.
4. PROCESSING- individuals recognise the value of evaluating their effectiveness.
5. ASSIMILATING- once the reason for which the group is gathered is completed, the group disengages and forms other groups.

# SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## FORMING

The forming stage represents the movement of an individual into the group-member status. Most team members will greatly anticipate their involvement. Expectations are often high, excitement and eagerness at the prospect of a new enterprise dominates. Members wonder what is expected of them and they are wondering: “Do I have the right skills? Will others like me? Can we achieve our goal?”

In reaction to this anxiety, it's common for most new members to sit back quietly until they've sized up the situation. A rare few may respond to the situation by challenging the scope of the assignment, other members of the group, or the leader.

The team members' characteristics and suggested facilitator actions of this 'feeling out' stage include:

Team Member Characteristics	Facilitator Behaviours
- hesitant participation tempered with optimism	- ensure team members get acquainted
- organisational complaints and gripes common	- be sensitive to team members' needs
- some suspicion and fear of team situation	- provide clear direction and information
- looking for sense of belonging	- give simple tasks
- closely watching other team members' behaviours	- provide training on team-building tools
	- recognise that people want and do need a sense of place and structure
	- do everything to provide clear framework in which the team can work
	- assist members to define their goals

# SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## STORMING

Although one would expect progress to pick up during this stage, little actually develops. Storming is a predictable stage and you can expect it to happen. If the forming stage has been handled well, the storming will probably be lighter and short lived. On the other hand, if the team was improperly formed in the first place and poorly led, storming can go on for a long time and be very debilitating.

This stage has great downside possibilities if the facilitator does not effectively counter what is happening. Teams can storm against each other. Cliques can form, or people may start rubbing others the wrong way. Power struggles are common. Since the team leader has the most influence on the team, power struggles can be aimed at you.

Team Member Characteristics	Facilitator Behaviours
- conflict between team members begin to show	- encourage and assist the team in surfacing issues
- 'one-upmanship' develops	- know how to deal with conflict and accept it as normal
- concern over team versus individual responsibilities	- create an atmosphere where people can safely express feelings
- continued confusion about team members- roles	- focus on the interpersonal dynamics
	- assertively referee any heated discussions
	- help members improve skills of working together
	- continue to be positive and informative
	- reassure team members that current conflict is normal
	- deal openly with the conflict



# SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## NORMING

In this stage, the team begins to come together. When a team gets engaged in identifying and solving its problems, it moves into a transitional phase in which members experience an increasing level of satisfaction. Animosity disappears. Harmony, trust, support and respect increase. Trust begins to grow.

Conflict is substantially reduced as the team grows in confidence and begins to find that the team concept is working. Members decide on the new rules that will form norms for the future.

Team Member Characteristics	Facilitator Behaviours
- over-reliance on team leader/ facilitator is possible	- provide less structure as team matures
- conflicts reduced among team members	- give team even more responsibility
- sharing and discussing become customary practices	- ensure team does not overly rely on any one member of the team
- greater team cohesiveness develops	- continue to provide team development and training opportunities
- harmony among team members is common	

## PERFORMING

Team maturity continues, team behaviour becomes the norm. While team members may be occasionally replaced, the team has become self-functioning. The team routinely defines and solves more difficult issues.

# SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## PERFORMING

Team maturity continues, team behaviour becomes the norm. While team members may be occasionally replaced, the team has become self-functioning. The team routinely defines and solves more difficult issues.

Team Member Characteristics	Facilitator Behaviours
intense loyalty among team members develops	- ensure team's information needs are fulfilled
- teams may mask individual dysfunctional members	- ensure that team celebrates its successes
- teams may become competitive with other teams	- encourage team towards continued growth
- teams need greater information	- continue to train; ensure new team members are properly trained
- teams become more innovative	- encourage team members to rotate roles
- team members become more confident	- reduce your involvement as team grows
	- continue to foster trust and commitment among team members

While it is easier to lead a team that is highly functioning, there are challenges for the leader who has to be vigilant against taking back control or dominance within the group. There needs to be mutual respect and more letting go of power. A kind of collegiality can emerge. In high performance teams, leadership and facilitation duties are shared to such an extent that the leader is freed up to act more like a member and offer their technical expertise in the group.

Adapted from *Facilitation Skills for Team Leaders*, Donald Hackett, Charles Martin and *Facilitating with Ease*, Ingrid Bens.

# PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

## Principles of Adult Learning

(drawn from work of Professor Virginia Griffin, OISE)

### **1. Adult learning is enhanced when the learning climate fosters self-esteem and interdependence.**

This climate is one which:

- people feel they are respected, accepted, and valued by the teacher and by other learners;
- openness of self, rather than concealment of self is encouraged;
- difference is good and desirable;
- people are allowed to make mistakes, to not know, to 'mess up';
- teachers and learners are supportive instead of judgemental; collaborative, rather than competitive;
- people's experience, attitudes and knowledge are recognised and built on questioning and disagreement are permitted.

### **2. Adult learning is enhanced when people's expectations are that the learning outcomes will have meaning for them and their lives.**

Conditions fostering this principle:

- what people know and the strengths they already have are recognised before needs, gaps, deficiencies, or new directions are examined;
- needs are uncovered and goals are set through mutual sharing, interaction and negotiation;
- goals or directions are stated by the learners in terms of what they want to know, feel, or be able to do.

### **3. Adult learning is enhanced when people have an active role in decision-making and planning for the learning experience, when authority is shared.**

Conditions fostering this principle:

- the competency of people as learners and as choice-makers for their own lives is recognised and used;
- participative decision-making is used throughout the learning experience;
- people have frequent opportunity to talk with each other and the facilitator about how the experience is for them, and if there are changes needed.

#### ***4. Adult learning is enhanced when a 'synergetic' view of knowledge and learning is held.***

Conditions fostering this principle:

- the orientation to learning is task, problem or growth- centred, rather than subject- centred;
- learning activities are used which promote the individual's discovery of the personal meaning of ideas;
- people are encouraged to trust in themselves as well as in external sources;
- learners are encouraged to integrate external knowledge with their own personal meanings;
- teachers regard themselves as engaged in a mutual exploration, discovery, learning experience with the learners;
- teachers and learners believe that through responsible interaction, they can generate greater knowledge and insights than existed in any one of them;

#### ***5. Adult learning is enhanced when people's expectations are that the learning outcomes will have meaning for them and their lives.***

Conditions fostering this principle:

- people are given the chance to ask their own questions, and seek out information that will help them formulate their own answers;
- people are given opportunity to articulate, formulate, clarify their ideas;
- people are encouraged to be active;
- people are given opportunity to practice new behaviour in a safe, supporting situation;
- people's emotions around ideas and experiences are admitted and dealt with;
- people are given time and tools to reflect on what they have learned, what ideas and experiences have meant to them personally.

#### ***6. Adult learning is enhanced when learners 'evaluate' their own learning outcomes, learning skills, and needs for more learning.***

Conditions fostering this principle:

- evaluation is a cooperative process with emphasis on self-evaluation;
- each learning episode is concluded with reflection on what the learner wants to do next in his learning program;
- discussions are held to help the learner examine the learning processed, and find ways to be more competent and responsible for learning.

# GENERAL SKILLS FOR FACILITATORS

There are a number of behaviours that need to be so habitual for effective facilitation that they can be considered CORE PRACTICES, namely:

**Stay neutral on content-** your job is to focus on the process role and avoid the temptation of offering opinions about the topic under discussion. You should use questions and suggestions to offer ideas that spring to mind, but never impose opinions on the group.

**Listen actively-** look people in the eye, use attentive body language and paraphrase what they are saying.

**Ask questions-** this is the most important tool you possess. Questions test assumptions, invite participation gather information and probe for hidden points.

**Paraphrase to clarify-** this involves repeating what people say to make sure they know they are being heard, to let others hear their points a second time, and to clarify ideas, (e.g. “Are you saying...?”)

**Synthesise ideas-** don't just record individual ideas of participants. Instead, get people to comment and build on each other's thoughts to ensure that the ideas recorded on the flip chart represent collective thinking.

**Stay on track-** set time guidelines for each discussion. Appoint a time keeper. Point out the digression if discussion has veered off the topic. “Park” all off-topic comments and suggestions on a separate “Parking Lot” sheet to be dealt with later.

**Give and receive feedback**

**Test assumptions-** you need to bring the assumptions people are operating under out into the open and clarify them so that they are clearly understood by everyone. These assumptions may even need to be challenged before a group can explore new ground.

**Collect ideas-** keep track of both emerging ideas and final decisions. Make clear and accurate summaries on a flipchart/ interactive whiteboard so everyone can see the notes.

**Summarise clearly-** a great facilitator listens attentively to everything that is said, and then offers concise and timely summaries. Summarise when you want to revive a discussion that has ground to a halt, or to end a discussion when things seem to be wrapping up.

**Label sidetracks-** it's your responsibility to let the group members know when they're off track.

**Park it-** at every meeting tape a flip chart sheet to a wall to record all sidetrack items. Later, these items can be reviewed for inclusion in a future agenda.

From Ingrid Bens

# FACILITATOR LANGUAGE

Our words have power. Be aware of the effect!

**AVOID** saying things like:

**Would you?** That is an invitation for the learner to please you instead of thinking for him/herself.

**What I want you to do is...** That's even worse than "would you?"

**Do me a favour**

**Could you?** This implies that the leader/facilitator doesn't have the power (authority)

**I was just going to ask, could you...** Even more powerless.

**Why don't you...**

**Now you will...** Serves as an invitation to be rebellious!

**I'm going to give you... minutes**

**PRACTICE** saying things like:

**Will you...** It leaves people free to say yes or no

**I invite you...** It offers permission to try out something new

**I encourage you...** This message offers support

**If you are willing...** Reminds people that they are in charge of their own learning

Adapted from J. Clarke, *Who? Me Lead a Group?*



# SKILLS FOR TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

Often a facilitator needs to deal with unhelpful or negative comments from participants. A facilitator can handle these constructively by recognising them as they occur. While all the responses below are sometimes useful, **sometimes ignoring unhelpful statements is the best way to discourage them.** As you review the examples listed, consider how group norms could proactively limit such comments.

## 1. Generalising

“No one cares a bit about how I feel about things.”

*(“Please tell us more specifically about who doesn’t care about how you feel about things.”)*

“These people are always trying to get us off track.”

*(“Please give us a specific example so we can understand clearly what you are referring to.”)*

## 2. Blaming

“They did this and they did that and they’re always...”

*(“Tell us what you would like to see happen in the future.” OR “Tell us about the impact of these events on you personally.”)*

## 3. Statements in Question Form

“Wouldn’t you agree it’s just downright irresponsible to do something like that without group approval?”

*(“Sounds like you really felt it was inappropriate.” OR “Tell us how you feel about it.” OR “My job is to help you express your viewpoint to others here; please help us understand what your thinking is on this.”)*

## 4. Speaking for Others

“I happen to know that a lot of other people in the group feel the same way I do about this.”

*(“Just speak for yourself, tell us how you feel about things.”)*

## 5. Poor Me

“I just get so depressed and discouraged when I see what they’re doing to our good group. They don’t care what they do to the rest of us and I’ve lost all hope for change. We’re too weak to stand up to them anyway.”

*(“You really feel hopeless about things. Tell us about the point at which you really began feeling the most discouraged... Tell us about what you would like to see happen in the group in the next year.”)*

## 6. Interrupting

*(Leader ignores interrupter or simply says, “William, I’d like to hear your thoughts on this, but for now I’d rather not interrupt Mary’s comments.”)*

## 8. Withdrawing

Member sits silently without participating; sometimes orients body away from the group. *(“I’d like to offer a special invitation to those who haven’t yet had opportunity to speak.” OR “Mr. X, are there any thoughts or comments you’d like to share with us?”)*

## 9. Challenging the Facilitator

*(Stay cool, focus on hearing and understanding. “So your main concern is that I haven’t...” Then explain or clarify if appropriate without defending. Recognise the urge to fight back and choose against it. Model self-disclosure: “I feel quite uncomfortable with your comments and I’m not sure exactly how to respond. I’d like to approach these things in a way that everyone respects so I don’t wish to simply ignore your remarks. How do others feel about this?” Ask for input from the group. Great care needs to be taken not to polarise the group by including it in such a situation).*

Ron Kraybill. Reprinted from *Conciliation Quarterly*. Fall, 1987.



# SKILLS FOR NAMING THE REAL AGENDA

The “**Elephant in the Room**” situation

Imagine you’re at a meeting at which no one is putting the real issues on the table. Everyone is being polite and the problems of the group aren’t being resolved. In this situation, the facilitator needs to stop the action and give feedback so the participants can resolve their problems and move on.

## Step 1

Ask permission to offer feedback. Asking permission lets people tell you if this is a bad time to hear feedback.

*“I’m going to stop this meeting now and give you some input that I think you need to hear. Is that OK?”*

## Step 2

Describe specifically what you are observing. Give a clear and specific description of what you observed. Avoid generalising, exaggerating or offering emotional accounts.

## Step 3

Tell them about the direct impacts of their actions. Describe the impact on individuals, the program or the school. Keep it very objective and don’t get personal. Avoid blaming. Deal with the facts of the current situation.

*“Since the issue of people not pulling their weight has not been mentioned, there’s a good chance that these discussions are not going to resolve your most serious team problem.”*

## Step 4

Give the other person(s) an opportunity to explain. Listen actively, using attentive body language and paraphrase key points.

*“You’re telling me that this problem isn’t being discussed because it’s too sensitive and people are concerned about offending each other.”*

## Step 5

Draw out ideas from the others present. Frame the whole things as a problem to be solved. Get people to offer their ideas. Remember that people are most likely to implement their own ideas. The more they self-prescribe, the better. Support their efforts at self-correction.

*“What do you think we could do to make it feel safe enough so that this issue can be discussed? What guidelines will create the comfort we need?”*

## Step 6

Offer specific suggestions for improvement. Make suggestions that will improve the situation. Wherever possible, build on the ideas suggested by others.

*“I think the guidelines you have come up with are excellent. I’d like to add a few ideas about how we can tackle this with sensitivity. Would this be OK?”*

## Step 7

Summarise and express your support. Demoralising people does not set the stage for improved performance; offering encouragement and ending on an optimistic note does.

*“I want to thank you for being willing to tackle this tough subject.”*

## Step 8

Follow up. Make sure you end the feedback discussion with clear action steps. This ensures that the whole exercise doesn’t need to be repeated later on.

*“I’m going to stop the action in about an hour and check with you to see if we’re now tackling our real problems and if the guidelines we set are working.”*



# SKILLS FOR TIMES OF CONFLICT

Most likely, the area of greatest concern for facilitators is the spectre of conflict happening within the group. Such possibilities unleashes all the insecurities one holds about one's skills for handling conflict in one's own life, leave alone within the group one is facilitating!

Without oversimplifying the situation, I believe that preparing oneself with a few simple skills can develop the personal self-confidence needed for such moments, and more importantly, assist the group to work through the conflict in ways that can effectively manage it.

These simple skills are based on deeper realities, **PRINCIPLES FOR GUIDING ONESELF** in times of group conflict.

1. Everyone wants to be heard and to be respected (and deserves to be).
2. There is nearly always more than one right answer so a willingness to hear divergent views can be helpful (Dewitt Jones).
3. A well- designed process has grown from an accurate Needs Assessment and well-crafted goals and objectives.
4. The first responsibility for the facilitator is the group's process.
5. The design changes only when the group agree to do so. Taking a careful reading of the group is essential.
6. **LISTENING** to understand the issue is the first skill needed. Learning to diagnose quickly is helpful in knowing how best to proceed (agenda, relationship, direction being taken in an an issue).
7. **SLOWING THINGS DOWN** is always the **FIRST STEP**. When possible, incorporate a break. This is often enough to change the energy.
8. **ACTIVE LISTENING** to the person(s) involved is often the **SECOND STEP**.
9. Know your 'buttons' and make choices not to get 'hooked'.
10. **PRACTICE MAKES BETTER** and **QUICKER!**

# BASIC STRATEGIES WHEN DEALING WITH CONFLICT

## **Slow things down**

Get the attention of the group by stopping the action and asking people to slow down. Ask them to start over and repeat key ideas.

## **Stay totally neutral**

Never take sides or allow your body language to hint that you favour one idea or person over another.

## **Stay calm**

Maintain your composure. Do not raise your voice. Speak slowly with an even tone.

## **Revisit the norms**

Point out existing norms and remind people that they agreed to them earlier. Engage the group in writing new norms if helpful.

## **Be assertive**

Move into the referee mode. Insist that people speak one at a time. Stop people who interrupt others. Don't stand by passively while people fight.

## **Emphasise LISTENING**

Paraphrase key points and ask others to do the same thing. Call time out. Don't hesitate to stop the action any time emotions get out of hand or if the discussion is spinning in circles. Ask: "Are we making progress? Are we using the right approach? How are people feeling?" Act on their suggestions for improving the meeting.

## **Use a structured approach**

Don't let a discussion rage on without imposing a structure and systematically capturing ideas.

## **Use the flip chart**

Make note of key points so they aren't lost. Read back the notes on the flip chart whenever you want to regain control for a few minutes.

## **Create closure**

Make sure the discussion is really going somewhere. Ask group members to help summarise what has been agreed to. Help the group create action plans to ensure implementation of key suggestions

# CRAFTING QUESTIONS

Well-crafted questions are the most significant part of designing an effective facilitation. Such questions open up the exploration of the issues being considered and allow the creative thinking of the group to provide a new clarity that can lead to viable options for seeking resolutions.

Questions that lead to a yes/no response are unhelpful to any process and should always be avoided.

**Fact-finding questions** are targeted at verifiable data such as who, what, when, where and how much. Use them to gather information about the current situation, e.g. “How much training did the staff receive at the start?”

**Feeling-finding questions** ask for subjective information that gets at the participants’ opinions, feelings, values and beliefs. They help you understand views. They usually contain words like ‘think’ or ‘feel’, e.g. “Do you think that the staff felt they received enough training?”

**Tell-me-more questions** can help you find out more about what the participants are saying. They encourage the speaker to provide more details, e.g. “Can you elaborate on that?”, “Can you be more specific?”

**Best/least questions** help you understand potential opportunities in the present situation. They let you test for the outer limits of participants’ wants and needs, e.g. “What is the best thing about the new program? What is the worst thing about the new program?”

**Third-party questions** help uncover thoughts in an indirect manner. They’re designed to help people express sensitive information, e.g. “Some people find that computer training is too time consuming. How does that sound to you?” “There is some concern about overly-autocratic leadership in many schools. Can you relate to that concern?”

**‘Magic wand’ questions** let you explore people’s true desires. Also known as ‘crystal ball’ questions, these are useful in temporarily removing obstacles from a person’s mind. i.e. “If time and money were no obstacle, what sort of computer system would you design for the department?”

# CREATIVITY

**We are all creative in some way.** Discovering, valuing and developing our creativity is the ongoing challenge of each facilitator. Using it effectively is unique to each individual and needs to be carefully evaluated and utilised at all steps of the planning process.

As a facilitator, know your gifts and creative talents and use them in the service of your facilitation. Integrate them in all aspects of the planning process, but NEVER rely on your creative abilities as substitutes for careful planning.

**Dewitt Jones**, National Geographic photographer and creator of the video, 'Everyday Creativity', identifies nine practices for cultivating one's **creativity**. He says:

1. Creativity is the ability to look at the ordinary and see the... extraordinary.
2. Every act can be a creative one.
3. Creativity is a matter of perspective.
4. There is always more than one right answer.
5. Re-frame problems into opportunities.
6. Don't be afraid to make mistakes.
7. Break the pattern.
8. Train your technique.
9. You've got to really care.

**Roger von Oech**, author of 'A Whack on the Side of the Head' and 'A Kick in the Seat of the Pants', offers tips for cultivating **intuition**. He says:

1. Readiness is everything.
2. Believe in your intuition.
3. Be open to unorthodox ideas.
4. Be willing to take some risks.
5. Don't resist change, ambiguity, uncertainty.
6. Cultivate flexibility.
7. Broaden your horizons.
8. Get away from it all.
9. Be the prey- not the predator.
10. Get familiar with your own intuition

# EXEMPLARY EDUCATOR GUIDELINES

Drawn from the work of Renee Stevens, Professor Virginia Griffin, Gerald Pine and Peter Horne. Lewin, Kolbe

## PROCESS FACILITATION

- The session involves simultaneous attention to content (whether offered to or elicited from the learner) methods ( by which this content is assimilated by the learner) and process (the dynamics that are happening within and among learners)
- The needs of the learners are assessed prior, during and following the session ( eg discussions, questions, surveys, interacting with learners)
- Inquiry question is focused and purposeful
- Clear goals and objectives (that flow from the needs assessment) are articulated clearly
- Designed activities are learner centred
- Each activity has a beginning, middle and conclusion that links it with the activity before and the activity that follows
- Seamless, interconnected series of activities that are ordered logically to fulfil the goals and objectives
- Participants find relevance and application from relating new information to previous experience.
- Participants are invited into the process and enabled to bridge from personal space to group space through a transfer in activity
- Participants review and plan for future needs in order to conclude the session (transfer Out)
- Group norms are established
- The session is facilitated in ways that honour principles of adult learning

## ADULT LEARNING

- Learning outcomes have meaning for participants
  - Participants experiences, strengths and knowledge are valued
- Participants have an active role in decision making and planning for the learning experience
- The goals of the PD are negotiated and clearly articulated
- Goals are allowed to emerge and be acted upon throughout the learning experience
- Participative decision making is used throughout the learning experience

- Participants have frequent opportunity to talk and share
- Learning activities promote discovery of the personal meaning of ideas
- Participants are encouraged to trust in themselves as well as the consultant and other external sources
- Learners are encouraged to integrate external knowledge with their own personal meanings
- Participants are engaged in a mutual exploration, discovery learning experience
- Participants are given the opportunity to ask questions, seek out information, articulate, formulate and clarify their ideas
- Participants are given time and tools to reflect on what they have learned and what the experience has meant to them personally
- Learners evaluate their own learning outcomes, learning skills, and needs for more learning
- Each learning episode is concluded with reflection on what the learners wants to do next in their learning program

## **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

- Participants own experience and their own reflection about that experience is used to generate understanding and allows for the transfer of skills and knowledge.
- Participants learn as a consequence of carefully planned experiences
- The workshop involves moving through four stages – Experience, Reflect, Think, Act

## **DIFFERENTIATION**

- Where appropriate, differentiated tasks that consider participants learning preferences (KOLB), interests and prior knowledge are facilitated
- Various resources are used to differentiate content, process and product activities

## **FEEDBACK**

- The Facilitator is actively involved in self-reflection
- Opportunities are provided for participants to be involved in reflection and feedback about their learning

## **CLIMATE & CONDITIONS**

- Participants are respected, accepted and valued
- Questioning, disagreement and difference is acceptable and desirable
- The meeting space sends a message of care and purpose (orderly, comfortable and appealing)
- Consideration of physical space ( central focus related to the purpose of the meeting, welcome sign, posted agenda, charts)



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