**FACILITATION WORKSHOP
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LEAP
May 25, 2017
10:45- 12:45**

**Objectives:**

At the completion of this workshop, participants will have had the opportunity to:

1. Define facilitation,
2. Identify the key skills involved in effective facilitation,
3. Differentiate facilitation from other meeting skills,
4. And practice key facilitation processes.

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**Activity 1. Your Goals**

**WHAT IS FACILITATION? WHO IS A FACILITATOR?**

**Facilitation** is a process. Facilitators help the group to move towards its own goals.

A **Facilitator** contributes structure and process to assist groups to function effectively and make high-quality decisions. A Facilitator supports others to pursue their objectives.

**Activity 2. Core Skills of a Good Facilitator**

Let’s look at a few skills (the language of facilitation). These are an integral part of the actual facilitation process (During the meeting):

*Paraphrasing: Describing in your own words what you hear the other person saying*

“Do I understand you correctly …”

“Are you saying ….”

Do this continually!

*Reporting Behaviour: Stating specific observable behaviours without making accusations or generalizations*

“I’m noticing that we’ve only heard from a few people …”

“I’m seeing that some people are looking at their phones ….”

“I see there are several other conversations going on ….”

*Describing Feelings: Identifying feelings often with metaphors or figures of speech*

“It appears that we are running out of steam.”

I feel as if we have hit a brick wall.”

*Facilitators also need to be honest and express their own feelings; this allows others to do so.*

“I’m feeling frustrated here.”

*Perception Checking: Describing another person’s inner state in order to check if that perception is correct.*

“You appear upset by that last remark. Are you?”

“You look bored. Is there something that needs to change?”

**STAGES OF FACILITATION**

**BEFORE:**

1. Why do they want a facilitator? OR Why do YOU want to use facilitation here?

2. What are the goals?

3. What is the empowerment level of participants?

**Empowerment Levels:**

**Level I:** Decision made by management. No input from employees.

**Level II:** Decision made by management after seeking input from employees. Employees consulted but have no actual say in final decision.

**Level III:** Employees discuss and recommend a course of action, but are unable to act without approval.

**Level IV:** Group has been given full authority to make a decision and implement action plans without seeking further approvals.

Clarify the level of empowerment PRIOR to the meeting or workshop.

4. Do you need to check in with participants?

5. Create a draft design

6. Choose the right process tools.

**DURING THE MEETING/ WORKSHOP**

1. Use the core skills continuously (see above)

2. The four P’s

3. Decision-making options (how the group will make their final decisions).

* *Consensus*: Effective when decision affects entire group. Must have accurate data and participants should have good interpersonal skills. Can be very time-consuming. Decisions can be high quality if information is accurate.
* *Majority Voting*: Choose the favoured option. Fast. Can be high quality if votes are based on information/ data. Decisions can be low quality if people vote for personal reasons; also creates winners and losers.
* *Compromise*: Creating a middle position where parts of different ideas/ decisions are incorporated. Everyone gets something they want but not everything. Can be divisive in the team.

4. At the end, set up any goals and who will follow-up. Ensure there are dates for completion.

5. Get feedback from the participants.

6. Set up other sessions if required (for example, program review).

**MEETING SKILLS (Part of Facilitation)**

**Activity 3: Helpful/ Not Helpful Brainstorm**

Part of facilitating is managing the meeting and keeping the environment safe, open and respectful for everyone. People will not participate without a level of trust. There are many barriers as to why people will not participate.

**Activity 4: Listing possible barriers to participation**

Encourage participation using a variety of strategies. A critical skill is to overcome participation barriers that people have that hinder their personal participation. Some barriers are:

* Tired from too many meetings
* Confusion about the topic
* Introversion (the extroverts do all the talking)
* Stress/ exhaustion
* Attitude of “why bother”, nothing we say has impact, meeting is just lip-service
* Feel that input is insignificant

**PROCESS TOOLS**

There are several process tools. Here are a few that may be useful:

*Brainstorming*

Brainstorming is used to generate ideas in a creative way. Ideas are often innovative. Use this technique when many ideas are required. It is usually the beginning of a more involved decision-making process. It is free-flowing and all ideas are accepted.

*Visioning*

A highly participative approach used to set goals. It allows people to put forward their ideas in a very supportive way. Often a scenario is set up and questions are designed and given to participants at the beginning. For example, Student Services wants to reorganize to best serve students. Visioning would work well to generate ideas. Questions are the basis for visioning. Some questions may be:

*What problems do you see students coming in with in the near future?*

*What do we do currently that supports our students?*

*What could we be doing better?*

*Ideally, what should we be doing to make our services more effective?*

*Without any constraints and unlimited resources, what would this department look like?*

After participants answer individually, a sharing process takes place. Use the ideas to come up with common themes and ideas. Pull ideas together to set goals/ targets and future work.

For example, everyone agrees that ideally students should get into services faster when in crisis and a fast-track is set up.

*Force-Field Analysis*

This is a structured method of looking at opposing forces; those that help and those that hinder a situation or attainment or development of goals/ making decisions. This method works well when all of the barriers and problems need to be identified and what factors or resources can be used to offset them. Starts with a goal statement, vision, or a plan. Once these are identified, goals and plans are set to reduce or remove barriers and to use resources so that the plan or goal can be moved forward.

*S.W.O.T*.

Stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It can provide a framework at the start of a strategic planning activity. It creates a picture of “where things are at” and what should be considered when planning. For example, the development of a new program. Let’s do this one.

*Strengths Questions:*

What are we doing really well in other programs?

As a college, department what are our greatest assets?

What programs are we currently most proud of? Why?

What strengths do we have that will benefit this new program?

Why would students choose our program over other programs at other colleges?

*Weaknesses Questions:*

What are we not doing well in some of our programs?

What might be some of our limitations in resources, staff, facilities, technology?

Will this program hurt/ negatively impact current programs?

Will there be jobs for these graduates?

*Opportunities Questions:*

What strengths do we have that would make this program a success?

How do we differ from our competitors who also offer this program or similar programs?

How can we incorporate new technologies into this program?

*Threats Questions:*

What/ Who is our biggest competitor?

What do we do if we cannot hire the right people?

Is the student base large enough?

What if students don’t apply?

What if the job market crashes?

*Gap Analysis*

This is a planning tool where steps are identified to achieve a desired goal. This works well when a group wants to identify the gap between current state and where they want to be. It encourages a realistic review of the present as opposed to the desired (future) state. Gap Analysis starts with identifying the desired (future) state. For example, we need part-time teachers who are trained in teaching skills. Current state: teachers are hired with no teaching experience. Gap: We need a teacher-training program for part-time faculty. What factors are part of this gap? For example, we hire on the fly.

*“What are the gaps between the present and future?”*

*“What are the barriers and obstacles in the way of achieving that future state?”*

**Activity 5: Applying a Process Tool (SWOT, Force-Field Analysis, Gap Analysis)**

**Three scenarios (Remember this is fictional so have a bit of fun):**

**SWOT:** Your program is shrinking in numbers and the Dean has to make a decision as to suspend your program or not. You are the coordinator and you want to lead your group into an analysis of the program to make a case to the Dean to not suspend so that you can make changes to the program. You want to lead the meeting with a SWOT analysis. Design your questions that you will use to lead the group through the SWOT process. (If time, see if you can respond to some of these as if you were program faculty).

**Force-Field Analysis:** Your College has an opportunity to open a satellite campus in a nearby town. The building has been donated by a benefactor. Your management team is to examine the possibility of opening this campus and come back with a report of your findings as to the feasibility of moving forward with this.

**Gap Analysis:** Employers from several of your programs, during Advisor y Committee meetings are giving you feedback that your students do not have strong interpersonal skills. As a coordinator, you are part of a team to examine this issue and come up with some solutions to propose to the wider College community.

**The final word is yours ….**