Facilitation Skills

Facilitation is:

- The art of bringing adults together with the learning, by helping adults learn through self-discovery.
- For facilitation to be effective, the emphasis must be on both the acquisition and the use of the new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities.

What’s the Difference?

Facilitators are: guides to the learning destination, “with” the learners, but not one of them; responsible and accountable to the group. Their goal is to equip the learners for self-development and continual learning.

Presenters are: positioned as the expert with a clear separation from the learner; learners are passive recipients of the knowledge. The goal is to transmit information.

Three areas differentiate facilitators and presenters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>On the learner</td>
<td>On the presenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Shared control</td>
<td>Presenter in control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Based on ability to create and sustain a supportive learning environment.</td>
<td>Based on content knowledge, expertise, control of content and delivery.</td>
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Facilitators:

- Are learner-centered
- With the learners, not observers
- Make learning happen
- Create opportunities for learners to share own experience
- Protect and affirm ideas
- Create a safe and comfortable learning environment
- Remove obstacles to learning.

Adapted from: Facilitation Basics, ASTD Press
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# Facilitation Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator Roles</th>
<th>Key Facilitator Skills</th>
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| Group Leader      | • Modeling appropriate communication skills: listening; repeating and summarizing  
• Ensuring a safe and conducive learning environment for all learners  
• Helping learners apply content to their jobs  
• Providing complete feedback during discussions and activities  
• Managing group involvement processes  
• Promoting the development of action plans |
| Agenda Manager    | • Practice to ensure planned timing is adequate for content  
• Keep discussion on track and balanced among participants by monitoring time spent  
• Return discussion to the topic at hand when necessary  
• Establishes timing  
• Starts and ends on time  
• Manages the time to ensure content is covered |
| Content Expert    | • Asking in-depth questions  
• Answering questions in depth and detail  
• Sharing experiences that enhance credibility  
• Using appropriate terminology for the topic and learners  
• Accurately representing expertise  
• Sharing relevant knowledge |
| Role Model        | • Maintaining positive, professional demeanor  
• Modeling behaviors being taught |
| Consultant        | • Helping participants understand and apply the concepts  
• Identifying environmental factors that support (or hinder) transfer to the job  
• Helping learners manage the above factors to ensure transfer |

Adapted from: *Facilitation Basics*, ASTD Press  
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